

## Income Predicts Whether Housecats Are Neutered



**F**amily income is the strongest predictor of whether housecats are neutered, according to a peer-reviewed study published in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*. The study used nationwide data to scrutinize the relationship between

household income and whether cats are neutered.

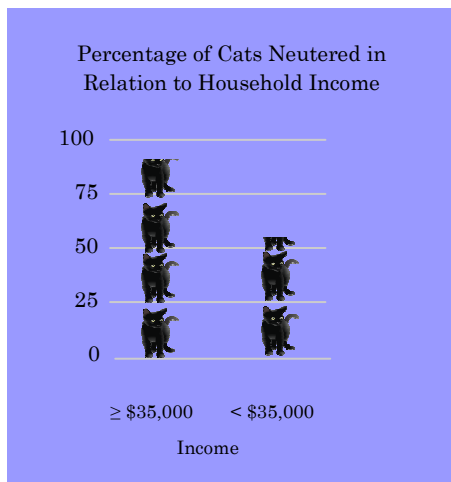
While the study showed that around 80 percent of all housecats in the United States are neutered, households with incomes of \$35,000 or more per year boasted neuter rates of over 90 percent. However, only 51 percent of cats in households earning less than \$35,000 are neutered. The lower income households that participated in the study cited cost as the primary reason they did not neuter their cats.

The study was funded by Alley Cat Allies, a nonprofit organization. The data was gathered by a cross-sectional, random-digit-dial telephone survey, and used a sample population of 1,205 adults in the United States.

“This study indicates that

spaying and neutering is an accepted, established practice among the large majority of Americans with pet cats,” Becky Robinson, president of Alley Cat Allies, told *Veterinary Practice News*.

Alley Cat Allies points out that housecats may be only half of the total cats in the U.S., and that only an estimated 2.3 percent of stray and feral cats are neutered.



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SNAP's mission is to eliminate the need for euthanasia in our community's shelters, to reduce the number of homeless animals, and to educate the public about the importance of spay/neuter.

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SNAP is a Missouri  
501(c)(3) nonprofit  
corporation.



## In Memoriam

*Gail Harris' cat Julian*

## New Member Welcome

### *Individual*

Amy Grisham  
Steve Kimberling  
Dana Stinson

### *Senior / Student*

Anne Fearman  
Phyllis Fotopulos  
Marilyn Morriss

### *Honorary Lifetime*

Susan Colburn

## Reserve These Dates !

**Dogfest:** September 26th

**Pets and Pumpkins:** October 24th



*We need volunteers to work both events and tabling at PetSmart.*

◆Please contact Liz Tracy at 234-7933 or [indigo4ever@hotmail.com](mailto:indigo4ever@hotmail.com).◆

## Client Letter

Dear SNAP,

Thank you very much for your kindness and charity in helping myself and so many others. May God Bless you and prosper your organization.

Sincerely,  
T. Thompson



# Goodbye, Ramsey

By Rhonda Lewsader

I adopted Ramsey on a whim. He was sitting in a cage in front of PetSmart one Saturday, a dirty Bichon Frisé watching the legs of people who walked by. He never looked up at the faces, afraid, perhaps, to start hoping. I had three dogs and did not need another one. But as I watched him listening to the voices of the people that paused briefly by his cage to look him over, my heart ached for him. Here was the chance to make someone's life better, I thought. I didn't realize that spur of the moment decision would lead me to grapple with one of life's most difficult ethical and moral decisions: when do you end the life of another?

Maybe I was too wrapped up in Ramsey to make the decision objectively. Part of the reason I felt especially protective of him might be traced back to that first morning I saw him yearn for acknowledgement while so many walked by. No one seemed to see how special he was that day but me, and that proved true after I took him home, too. He allowed only my sister, who he adored, to see glimpses of his true personality. For her, he was a capering clown and affectionate friend. With others, he tended to be aloof. But when we were alone, he showed me how very special he was.

The day I adopted Ramsey, the lady who filled out the paperwork asked if I would hug him every day. "Yes," I lied. Dogs don't like being hugged, so I had no intention of doing it. A few nights after I took him home, he butted my chin while we were lying on the couch. After several painful clashes, I realized he was trying to press his head against my chest to hug me.

One of his other special qualities became obvious a few months later, when he first became seriously ill. Miserably cold, he grew to love being placed in a chair and covered up with a blanket, and he showed his appreciation by the way he looked at me or laid his head against my



chest when I picked him up to put him in the chair. I have never met anyone else, human or animal, who was so grateful for small acts of kindness.

He was supposed to die during that first illness. But he didn't. Despite the fact his liver seemed to be failing and the cause could not be determined. Despite the fact his treatment could only be a shot in the dark with no diagnosis to work from. Despite the fact that all the flesh on his neck became necrotic. He slowly got better, although not quite back to where he started from. And I learned something else about him: no matter how bad his health got, he never gave up, never complained, and never stopped doing the best he could. Each day, he harnessed his patience and optimism and did all that he was capable of doing.

I hoped that his illness was a one-time thing. That did not prove to be true. One evening, as I rubbed his belly, I found a sore on it, and I burst into tears. Ramsey rose up on his back legs and gently licked my nose.

*(Continued on page 4)*

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His life from then on was a series of health problems. Dogs tend to be more tolerant of pain than humans, but his tolerance was enormous even for a dog. He survived several health problems that could have been fatal. I could only conclude he valued life so much, that he could will himself to survive.

In the months before his death, a few people offered gentle hints that I needed to let Ramsey go. What these advisors did not know was that I had already given up. It's true that when he became ill, I went a little crazy looking for answers. If we could only determine what was wrong with him, perhaps there was a treatment. But eventually, I realized it didn't matter what was wrong with him – he had several problems and every one of them would eventually lead to euthanasia.

Those last months, I didn't keep Ramsey alive because I couldn't let go. I kept him alive because he didn't seem to want to die. "You'll know when it's time. . . ." I read again and again about euthanasia, as I tried to determine the right thing to do. But he didn't show the signs I read about – apathy, not eating, or unmanageable pain. Even as his condition worsened and the boundaries of his life grew more limited, he maintained a boundless cheerfulness and a joyful interest in life.

As Ramsey struggled with his health, I strug-

gled with the issue of whether I should honor his apparent desire to live. How much pain do you let another living thing go through when it is within your power to stop it? How limited do you let someone's life become? Do you have an obligation to honor someone's desire to live or an obligation to ignore it?

Even at the end of his life, I could not choose an answer. Early one morning, after a restless night of pacing, he had a stroke. His veterinarian explained the options to me: give him supportive treatment until we saw if he could recover or euthanize him that morning. I could not decide, unsure what he would want for himself. He had shown by surviving against the odds before that his will to live was tremendous. But the damage from the stroke appeared devastating. I held him in my arms while his vet gave him an injection of sedative to make him more comfortable and to give me more time to think. After spending those last minutes with him, I chose euthanasia.

So which is the correct decision: to honor someone's wish to live or to ignore it and choose comfort for someone with an extraordinary tolerance for pain? I still don't know, because in the end, I never had to decide. I received one last grace note from a dog that had given me so many. As I held him after the injection, he resisted the sedative long enough to lift his head and look deeply into my eyes. And he let me know that he was ready to say "goodbye".



We are looking for fresh ideas for fundraisers. Any and all ideas will be considered. No pay, great benefits!

If interested, please contact us at [spayneuter123@gmail.com](mailto:spayneuter123@gmail.com).





## Meeting Dates



### ***Board of Directors Meetings***

*6:30 pm*

October 19 (Room A)

November 16 (Room A)

December 1 (Auditorium)

### ***Volunteer Meeting***

*6:30 pm*

December 2 (Room B)

All meetings are held at the Library Center, 4653 S. Campbell, unless otherwise noted.



## Special Thanks

### ***Pocket Change for Pets Program***

SNAP thanks the newest members:

**All God's Creatures Dog Biscuit Bakery**

**Candy House**

**Thrift Store On the Plaza**

And these members for their continued support:

**Village Inn**

**Charley's Place Flea Market**



The spare change collected in the donation canisters at these and other locations adds up to a significant contribution to SNAP's fund for spay and neuter surgeries. Please support the businesses that support us!



PO Box 14354, Springfield, MO 65814

417.823.7627, [www.snap123.org](http://www.snap123.org), [spayneuter123@gmail.com](mailto:spayneuter123@gmail.com)

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Spay Neuter Assistance Program, Inc.  
*The Humane Solution to Pet Overpopulation*

**YES!**

I would like to become a member of SNAP to help reduce the number of unwanted animals born in Southwest Missouri. I understand that by becoming a member, I will receive a quarterly newsletter, acknowledgement on the SNAP website, and an invitation to SNAP's annual meeting. (Membership is renewable annually and is tax deductible. Payment may be made by check or money order.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student/Senior (60 & over) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$125 Business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Individual                 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Lifetime |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40 Family                     |   |

**OR...**

- \_\_\_ I want to help! Please send information about becoming a SNAP volunteer.  
\_\_\_ I want to support SNAP's work with the enclosed tax-deductible donation.  
\_\_\_ Please make a donation in memory of \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_ Please send me information on estate planning .  
\_\_\_ I would like to "Sponsor-a-Spay." I am enclosing \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to sponsor:  
\_\_\_ A specific pet (indicate pet's name) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_ The pet at the top of SNAP's waiting list

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