

# Countdown to No Kill...

By Shelley Thayer  
Executive Director, Cat Depot

The mother cat looked like a young teen. She rejoined her four tiny kittens as her first litter of two kittens, now several months old, played nearby. All seven had been rescued from the tangled shrubs behind an office building where they had been living.



The mother cat had barely survived her first two kittens when she became pregnant again.

Stepping in to help, a woman who worked in the building began calling every humane organization in Manatee and Sarasota counties for help. Unfortunately, every organization was full.

Kitten season in Florida is traditionally long, and this year is no different. Abandoned cats and kittens seeking refuge have prompted caring people to pick up the phone and start dialing for help.

Manatee County has declared they are no-kill, and they are working diligently to live up to their commitment, but they are not yet there.

Sarasota County has not made such a declaration, but several humane organizations have banded

together this year to save all the kittens, along with an equal number of cats. They remain several hundred cats away from making no-kill a reality.

So, what steps can we take to make no-kill a reality in our communities?

**1. Spay and Neuter**—Do you have free roaming cats in your neighborhood? Look for an ear notch or tipped left ear. If you see this, the cat has been sterilized, but may need assistance with food. No ear tip or notch? The cat may need to be spayed if it is female or neutered if it is male.

**2. Resources**—Several organizations in Manatee and Sarasota counties provide FREE and low-cost spay and neuter services for community cats and/or personal pets. Pick up a copy of the “Animal Resource Guide” at any humane

organization in our area for a list of organizations and the services they offer, including FREE and low-cost sterilization, vaccines, traps and food support. Or, visit [www.catdepot.org](http://www.catdepot.org) and click on the “Resources” tab to view the entire list.

**3. Rescue**—If you find kittens, look for the mother, too. Please do not leave her behind. If you want to help, take them all. Kittens have a greater chance of survival with their mothers. And, grabbing the kittens will not solve the problem. The mother cat eventually must be spayed and, if friendly, placed for adoption, or if feral, returned to the neighborhood.

**4. Traps**—Can't catch the mother? Borrow a trap. Check the “Animal Resource Guide” to find which organizations are willing to lend you a trap. These organizations also will help you with instructions, food and even transportation, if needed.

**5. Foster**—The shelter environment is no place for pregnant moms or



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moms with small kittens. So, if you rescue kittens, please consider becoming a foster parent. Most healthy kittens are ready to spay or neuter at eight weeks and two pounds. Helping the shelter by becoming a foster parent is not only rewarding, but lifesaving.

**Note:** Always keep stray cats and kittens separate from your own cats until they have been tested for FIV (compromised immune system) and FeLV (Feline Leukemia).

**6. Adopt**—Promote the no-kill movement and save a life by adopting your next family pet from a shelter. Together, we can end the killing of animals in Manatee and Sarasota counties.

Wouldn't it be great if we could celebrate this day within the next five years?

Why not? Working together, everything is possible. And, every cat deserves a chance to grow old. 🐾

*Kitten photo by Lynn Rasys*

Dedicated to saving lives, Cat Depot, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) free-roaming facility, is recognized for its progressive design and commitment to helping homeless, abandoned and injured animals. Open seven days a week, Cat Depot is located at 2542 17th Street in Sarasota. For more information, call 941-366-2404, or visit Cat Depot online at [www.CatDepot.org](http://www.CatDepot.org).



## ...The Clock is Ticking!