



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **PETLAND VETERINARIANS AND RESCUES COLLABORATE TO SPAY/NEUTER 1,291 CATS - REDUCING OVERPOPULATION**

**CHILlicothe, OHIO** - (Jan. 12, 2026) – During 2025, 1,291 feral and rescue cats were spayed or neutered through a collaborative effort led by Chillicothe-based Petland and its veterinary partners. The extraordinary milestone is already reducing cat overpopulation and improving animal welfare across the Chillicothe and south-central Ohio communities.

As shelters and rescues nationwide braced for another intense “kitten season,” local rescue groups found themselves overwhelmed by the rising number of homeless cats and kittens. Several turned to Petland for help placing animals into permanent homes. What followed was a far-reaching, community-wide response focused not only on adoption, but also addressing the root cause of overpopulation.

The initiative was led by Petland veterinarians Dr. Rebecca Atwood and Dr. Sarah Hettinger, who also directs operations at Animal Health Center of Chillicothe. Together with their dedicated veterinary team, they dramatically expanded spay and neuter capacity throughout the year. Between January and December 2025, the clinic completed 817 spay surgeries and 474 neuter surgeries, marking a significant increase over prior years.

“We know how overwhelmed shelters and rescues become every year,” said Dr. Atwood. “With Petland stores serving as an outlet for cat placement, we knew we could - and should - do more. Spaying and neutering protects the health of these cats and directly addresses the overpopulation issue in our communities.”

Dr. Hettinger and her team worked closely with area rescue partners including Cats & Company, The Cat Round Up Rescue, Purrfect Companion, and Petland’s Adopt a Kitten/Cat program. While kitten season typically peaks between May and October in Ohio, the veterinarians emphasized that feral cat overpopulation is a year-round challenge.

“While we see a seasonal spike every year, the feral cat population doesn’t take a break,” Dr. Hettinger explained. “We made room in our schedule to perform as many surgeries as possible to help put a dent in the local homeless cat population.”

Every cat received a pre-surgical health exam and appropriate medical care. Cats entering Petland’s adoption program were also vaccinated, tested for FIV and FeLV, and evaluated to ensure they were healthy and ready for placement.

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“The health benefits are substantial,” said Dr. Hettinger. “Spaying and neutering prevents unintended litters, reduces medical and behavioral issues, and increases the likelihood that cats can be placed into loving homes.”

Thanks to this collaboration, hundreds of cats are now healthier, fewer litters will be born in the future, and many animals are already living in, or on their way to safe, permanent homes. Planning to continue this effort in its home community, Petland is encouraging its U.S. franchisees to also partner with local shelters and veterinarians to help reduce cat overpopulation and strengthen their communities.

-30-

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*Petland, Inc. is a specialty pet retail franchise operation with nearly 250 global locations. For nearly 60 years, Petland pet counselors have been dedicated to matching the right pet with the right customer and meeting the needs of both. To its customers who already have pets, Petland is dedicated to enhancing their knowledge and enjoyment of the human-animal bond. Petland was founded in 1967 and is headquartered in south central Ohio. For more information on Petland, visit [www.petland.com](http://www.petland.com).*



*Kittens Cheddar and Cheese rest while recovering from spay/neuter surgery*



*Kitten rests up preparing for spay/neuter*