

# Hilo, Big Island 2017



Animal Balance identified the Big Island of Hawaii as an area to support with veterinary services in 2016. Working closely with Donna Whitaker, the Executive Director at Hawaii Island Humane Society, we developed a plan to serve the island's community cat populations.

To help fulfill the need for trap-neuter-release and sterilization resources for community cats, Animal Balance offered free sterilization services and vaccines for all cats during the week of July 15-23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 in Hilo, Hawaii.

The overall goal for this project was to develop more sustainable solutions for community cats and caretakers on Hawaii Island. To help achieve this goal, Animal Balance has developed partnerships with local organizations focusing on the welfare of animals. Hui Pono Holoholona, Aloha Animal Advocates, Rainbow Friends, and Hawaii Island Humane Society all played integral roles within the success of this campaign and will continue to serve the cats and caretakers on the Big Island.



The Animal Balance team of volunteers landed in Hilo with the intention (and supplies) of serving approximately 500 cats over 6 surgical days. As the week progressed, it became clear that the team was capable of easily surpassing that number, with 3 highly skilled surgeons and an incredibly strong medical team behind them doing all of the prep and recovery work. After a mid-week order for more supplies, the team ultimately performed 683 spay/neuter surgeries in just 4 ½ days. Partly the success of this program may be quantified by the number of patients the Animal Balance team was safely able to serve each day. This tremendous team of highly skilled volunteers worked efficiently and collaboratively as a team each day to achieve these high-volume surgical numbers.

Animal Balance also shipped 50 humane box traps and 50 transfer cages to utilize during this project. This equipment will remain on-island so that it can be used to increase the capacity of local community cat organizations. A trap library has been established at Hui Pono Holohlolona for the community to utilize for future community cat sterilization events. During the campaign, Animal Balance's trapping team utilized these traps and transfer cages in the local parks, marinas and neighborhoods that were identified as 'hotspots' of community cats living in Hilo. The trapping team successfully targeted these hotspots throughout the week; trapping each colony until at least 70-80% of cats are sterilized before moving locations.



Not only did our trapping team do an outstanding job trapping the community cat colonies identified hotspots, but the response from local residents bringing cats to our clinic was also very positive.

Each morning when the clinic team arrived at 7 am, there were already people waiting. On most days, the clinic reached or exceeded capacity by 8:30 am.

Surgery began early each day, and the team worked tirelessly until 7 pm. Had they not ran out of critical anesthetic drugs, they would have been impossible to stop. They truly wanted to sterilize as many cats as possible and make the greatest impact that they could in the time that they were on Hawaii.

Many generous contributions were granted to Animal Balance to provide these life-saving services to the cats on Hawaii Island. Through the continued support of Alley Cat Allies, Animal Balance provided the necessary medical supplies, traps, and transfer cages for this campaign. The County of Hawaii and Mayor Harry Kim generously provided transportation and accommodation for Animal Balance's team of volunteers.



Moving forward, Animal Balance will continue to support the incredible work of our partners on the Big Island. Through these partnerships, Animal Balance envisions a "Humane Hawaii" in which organizations collaborate and focus their efforts on providing life-saving solutions for all animals residing on these beautiful islands.



*Saving*  
**ALL** *Species*

**ANIMAL BALANCE**

