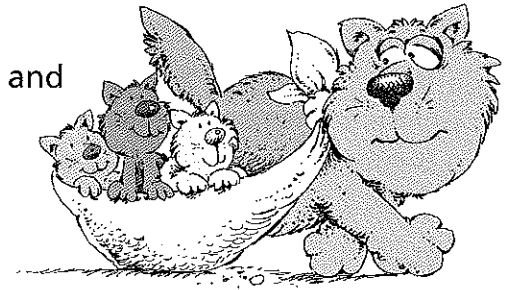# Fay and Nick

Objective:
Students will recognize the problems of pet overpopulation and the importance of having pets spayed or neutered.

Materials:
- chalk and chalkboard

Activity:
Students will participate in drawing the family tree of an unneutered and unspayed cat.

Procedure:

1. Draw two Xs on the board. Label one "Fay" and the other "Nick." Say, "Here is a cat called Fay Unspay. Here is another cat called Nick Unneutered. Fay and Nick had four kittens." Put four Xs under the first two.

2. Say, "Each kitten grew up and had an average of four kittens each. There were not enough homes for them." Draw 4 Xs under each of the four Xs or ask students to come to the board and help you keep track. Continue until the pattern completely fills the board with Xs in a pyramid shape.

3. Tell students, "In reality, Fay and Nick could have three litters each year—so what you see on the board could actually be multiplied by three. Imagine trying to find good homes for all these cats! Most of them would never receive the love and care they deserve, so how can we prevent unwanted litters?" Guide students in understanding that the answer is to have pets spayed or neutered.

4. Continue your discussion by explaining that spaying and neutering not only help stop pet overpopulation but are also good for your pet. Spaying and neutering
- help pets live longer, healthier lives by preventing certain kinds of diseases
- usually make pets more affectionate
- make pets less likely to bite
- make pets less likely to roam, run away, or get into fights

For more information, **visit www.hsus.org**.

Extension:
Discuss the following myths (in **bold** type) and facts about spay/neuter operations.

Spaying or neutering makes pets fat and lazy. Pets usually become overweight and less active because their caregivers overfeed them and don't give them enough exercise.

It's better to have one litter first. False. In fact, medical evidence indicates just the opposite. It shows that females spayed before their first heat are typically healthier.

It's too expensive to have my pet spayed or neutered. The operation is a one-time cost. And it's a bargain compared to the cost of caring for litters of puppies and kittens.

I'll find good homes for all the puppies and kittens. Even if you're lucky enough to find homes for all your pet's babies, you could be taking away a home for an animal waiting for one in a shelter. Also, your pet's babies will start producing their own babies, adding even more to pet overpopulation.