

**November 2006**  
**IDA's Guardian of the Month – Ann Allen**

Ann Allen of Tiburon, California has always been involved in rescuing and caring for animals. During the many years she volunteered and worked as Adoption Coordinator for the local shelter she learned about the cat and dog overpopulation crisis in the U.S. She particularly became aware of the tragedy of adult cats - how "throwaway" they are viewed as through no fault of their own, and how frightened and confused they are when abandoned.



So it is no surprise this one-time Pan Am flight attendant abandoned her successful career in real estate to volunteer full time to help these unwanted animals. Ann started the Marin Cat Connection ten years ago to address the homeless cat problem in Marin. Marin Cat Connection is dedicated to cat rescue, adoption and education. Additionally Ann and the organization of 40 volunteers very actively support trap, neuter, and return (TNR) for adult feral cats. Allen rescues feral kittens, which are brought into the adoption program to be fostered and socialized. The group successfully adopts out an estimated 250 cats and kittens each year and has another 125 plus spayed and neutered. Since one female cat and her offspring alone can produce as many as 420,000 cats in just seven years, every cat Ann's group spays or neuters means thousands of cats that won't reproduce.

Marin Cat Connection's success is even more remarkable considering the group does not operate out of a shelter. Instead, Ann relies on the kindness of the group's dedicated volunteers who help trap cats using humane traps, foster orphaned kittens, and socialize shy or feral kittens. The group showcases animals available for adoption each week at the local Petco. When she's not answering the dozens of phone calls the group receives about cat sightings or from people in the area seeking advice, Ann can be found trapping cats in the middle of the night, bottle-feeding abandoned kittens around the clock, or educating local residents about the importance of spaying and neutering animal companions to curb the homelessness problem.

Ann's tenacity and dedication is so desperately needed in a day and age when animals are regarded as mere property. "We are a very disposable society when it comes to animals," she recently told the Marin Independent Journal. "It is heartbreaking because of the sad reality of what happens to these cats. But I feel very good about finding homes. We're making it better - and that's good."

IDA is honored to name Ann our Guardian of the Month for November, and is grateful for all that she continues to do for animals. If you live in the Marin County area and are interested in volunteering with the Marin Cat Connection, fostering animals, or adopting, please visit [www.marincatconnection.org](http://www.marincatconnection.org).