**The Paw Project – We Must Spread The Word: Declawing Is Inhumane!**

In the United States, around 25 percent of domesticated cats are declawed. Declawing is considered mutilation in many countries, because it basically consists in amputation the last joint of the cat’s paw, along with the claw. Consider how this might feel on your own hands: having the nub of each of your fingers cut off would summon one of the most excruciating pains imaginable.

Despite the physical and behavioral harm inflicted on cats who are declawed, many veterinarians continue to recommend the procedure, which costs upwards of $1,200. per hour — even for very young kittens.

A declawed cat faces a number of potential risks, the first of which being infection. Declawing surgery is not a sterile surgery, and thus puts cats in immediate risk of infection, which can be incredibly harmful, if not fatal. Futhermore, it can result in permanent lameness, pain and arthritis. These are torturous experiences for a cat.

Declawing can lead to extreme behavioral problems for cats. Removing their claws deprives them from their primary source of defense, and cats can develop aggressive behavior because they feel threatened and defenseless. The pain caused by the lack of this last joint can cause cats to refuse to use in the litter box because the litter hurts their maimed paws.

The Paw Project, founded by Dr. Conrad, is an organization whose mission is to educate the public about the painful and crippling effects of feline declawing, to promote animal welfare through the abolition of the practice of declaw surgery and to rehabilitate cats that have been declawed.

The Paw Project advocates for domesticated cats as well as bigger felines. Indeed, a lot of people who want to keep big cats such as lions and tigers declaw them, believing that they will be protected against injuries. But big cats often prove to be poor pets, weighing hundreds of pounds and eating enormous quantity of food, and because of that are often neglected, and then abandoned or confiscated by animal regulatory offices, only to end up in compounds or sanctuaries.

The Paw Project actively advocates campaigns to legally ban declawing and in 2002, Dr. Conrad approached West Hollywood City Council members and convinced them that declawing of all animals should be banned. The council adopted an anti-declawing ordinance soon after (April, 2003) and became the first city in all of North America to ban declawing.

In September 2013, The Paw Project will release a documentary, written and directed by Dr. Conrad, about the inspiring David and Goliath story of a grassroots movement to protect large and small felines, from the cruelty of declawing and how the movement has prevailed, despite the efforts of well-funded professional veterinary associations. The documentary will be in theaters in New York City, Los Angeles and Chicago, and afterward, it will be run on VOD.