



Alley Cat Rescue, Inc.

# ALLEY CAT Mews

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[www.SaveACat.org](http://www.SaveACat.org)

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## From the Desk of *Louise Holton*

Dear Compassionate Friends of ACR,

We want to dedicate this newsletter to all the wonderful cats we have had the privilege of helping over the years. In this issue, we share their stories and give thanks to all of the ACR supporters who have made our work possible! Without your help and compassion for alley cats, strays, and all the dumped cats of the world, none of this would be possible and thousands of cats would either be dead or suffering in silence.

Alley Cat Rescue's commitment is to help stray and outdoor community cats here in the United States and around the world, to implement humane nonlethal practices to help improve their lives, and reduce the number of feral cats living in colonies — ending cat overpopulation.

But, as I found out in 1990, when I co-founded the first National Cat group for feral cats, you cannot ONLY work on the feral cat issue; you must also become involved in the WHOLE cat issue. Domestic housecats are also a part of our work, just as cats who live in outdoor colonies are. You may find friendly cats who have been dumped living in your colonies, so you have to find new homes for them. You find tiny feral kittens who can be socialized and placed in new homes. In fact this is one of the major reasons there is a drop in colony numbers; because some cats and kittens are removed from the colonies.

Over the 14 years ACR has been in existence, we have saved thousands of cats. We have placed anywhere from 150 to 250 cats per year in new homes, some rescued from high-kill shelters. We have spayed and neutered over 130 cats per year for low-income residents, and TNR'd thousands of feral cats for compassionate people who want to help their community cats.

Once you get involved with TNR (trap-neuter-return), you run afoul of bird groups who hate outdoor cats and want them gone. Over the 40 years that I have been doing this work, I have tackled every issue that affects outdoor community cats and that face caretakers in protecting and advocating for them: predation (by cats and on cats), rabies and other zoonotic diseases, and the real reasons birds are under threat (habitat destruction, climate change, pollution).

When I started on this journey to help outdoor community cats, the Internet was in its infancy and when I wanted to research rabies, the only book I could find was *The Natural History of Rabies* by George M. Baer. I see the second edition of the book costs \$592.80, and I think the first edition cost even more. We did not have this kind of money at the time, and so I spent weekend after weekend at the Library of Congress going through this book to create the very first Fact Sheet on Rabies and Cats. My point is we have shared all of this work with you through our newsletters over the years, plus in our new Handbook that will soon be published.

In the meantime, as said above, we do plenty of rescue work and TNR for feral cats. When the opportunity is presented, we work with local animal control agencies to save cats' lives, and we run a low-cost spay clinic, subsidized by ACR with help from your kindness in sending us donations.

This newsletter is dedicated to the cats we have helped! Plus, at the same time, we wish to celebrate all those caring people of the world! Those who care about the strays and ferals, the cats who are vilified by some and treated as pests to be eliminated from this world. I would like to end this letter with a profound quote I recently came across in Marc Bekoff's book, "Ignoring Nature No More." When writing about feral cats, environmentalists are prone to calling them "invasive species" and "pests" to denigrate and belittle their role within ecosystems.

"As Caughley and Sinclair (1994) note in their textbook on wildlife management, 'the notion of humane treatment is often the first casualty of turning a species into a pest.'"

For the Cats,

Louise Holton  
President and Founder



**Coming Soon!**

### FEATURES

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# Giving Hope to Cats in Need

By: Adam Jablonski

Cat lovers like us relish the opportunity to meet new felines. Every cat has a unique personality and history, and that is what makes them so fascinating to us. We love looking into their eyes, making a connection, and forming a bond. Even more special is when that connection is made in the context of a rescue. Rocky, Oliver, and Spike are cats who each came to us in a different way and followed a unique path to their forever home. We think of you, our readers, as “virtual” rescuers right alongside us, and hope you enjoy these stories that your support made possible.

**Rocky** – Rocky is a big ol' boy, all black with giant feet, who we took in earlier this year. He was dumped on our doorstep early one rainy morning before we arrived, and had to sit inside a carrier, wet, for who knows how long, wondering what would happen to him next. Well, what happened was he got a bath, a full belly, and a whole bunch of love from ACR staff! There was nothing wrong with Rocky physically and he was very well behaved; it broke our hearts to know he had to experience being abandoned, and we resolved to find him a new home that would give him the life he deserved.



A few nibbles of interest in Rocky showed us we just needed to get the word out about him in enough places, and he'd catch the right family's eye. We featured him on our Instagram feed for Black Cat Appreciation Day and the inquiries came in just as we'd hoped. Now, it can be a struggle sometimes for those of us working in the rescue community to keep from adopting every cat we make a special connection with. (Sometimes that feels like every cat!) But when we are in a position to add a new member to the family, we've got the advantage of proximity. It's not hard to get to the front of the line when the line begins at your desk!

So after seeing Rocky on Instagram and at our special adoption event that weekend, a PetSmart employee offered to adopt him if he was still waiting at the end of the event. Well, Rocky clearly only had eyes for our PetSmart colleague, so that's where he found his forever home. He's with a true animal pro and we couldn't have asked for more for Rocky. Except maybe that his adopter be named Adrian!

**Oliver** – Even the cutest of kittens can experience some hardship during the adoption process. Young Oliver came to us with three other siblings... while still inside his mother, Angel! (Two members of our maintenance staff, Gilbert and Maria, discovered

Angel outside their apartment complex and brought her in for TNR. Angel gave birth at our office.)

Oliver had all the usual energy and curiosity of a kitten, and was friendly and gently playful, so we knew he'd be a star at adoption events. And we were right! Potential adopters fawned over him and he was snatched up right away, but unfortunately that wasn't the end of the story. It turned out that not all members of the household were ready to share space with a cat, so we took Oliver back. There were no problems with Oliver, it just turned out not to be the right time for the adopters to add another member to the family. So Oliver spent another week with us before his next chance at adoption.



We were not surprised when Oliver quickly caught the eye of a family looking for a new feline companion for a second time. The family had experience caring for cats and dogs together and it felt like a great match. The kids were especially excited to add a feisty new kitten to the mix. Alas, Oliver's poor luck continued! Even with other cats and dogs in the home, one family member began to experience intense allergy symptoms once Oliver was there. The family couldn't find any new variable in the home that could be causing the allergic reaction aside from Oliver. We'd never experienced a person having an allergic reaction to a particular cat, and neither had the family, who'd been living with cats for years, so we were all left at a loss for an explanation. Thus, we welcomed Oliver back again.

For each cat we find a home for, we commit to accepting him back to ACR should the situation not work out. This stipulation is in our adoption contract and we make sure our adopters are aware of it, so that none of the cats who spend time with us end up at shelters that do not follow the No-Kill philosophy. It is essentially a long-term commitment to finding the right home for a cat, no matter how many tries it takes.

So we gave Oliver extra love and attention before the next adoption event, just in case he was feeling a bit down about his chances of finding the right forever home. Once at PetSmart, Oliver drew the biggest crowd again, and this time just the right adopter came along! Oliver's been with his newest family for a few months now and we're convinced he's found his forever home. He's integrated into the house very well and has a blast romping around with his older step-sibling.

*...continued on page 2*

# Giving Hope to Cats in Need, cont'd

By: Adam Jablonski



**Spike** – Spike is a sweet fellow who came to us from the Prince George's County municipal shelter. Like many city or county shelters, Prince George's has a time limit on how long any particular animal can remain at the shelter. If that time, typically around three days, expires before the animal is adopted, she is usually euthanized to make room for other incoming animals. We've rescued many cats from this local shelter when their allotted time ran out; we got Spike the night before he was to be put down.

Spike's name evokes thoughts of a tough canine with a studded collar, and when he was picked up as a stray by animal control he looked the part of the streetwise feline. He was quite dirty and a bit wary when we brought him in, so we were careful to take things slow with Spike. After just a few days of giving him space to gain his bearings, we found out he was a total lovebug! It wasn't his style to ask for attention, but when we gave it, he really soaked it up. He stayed mellow through his ordeal of moving from his former home, then to the shelter, and finally to

ACR. He got along well with our other cats and kittens and enjoyed meeting the few dogs that occasionally visit our office too. We determined he'd be a great fit for many households, as he took so much change in stride and remained confident.

It's no secret that kittens tend to get adopted more quickly than adult cats, and Spike spent a few adoption events playing the sidelines. Spike came to us at just about the peak of kitten season (which may have been the reason the shelter was stretched for space), and it happened that the young ones simply stole the show for a few months. As the influx of kittens needing care and homes passed, Spike was able to come forward and get noticed for the wonderful companion he is. We're happy to report he's found his forever home and has some enthusiastic grandkids to pal around with.



## TNR is Rescue Too

By: Emily Patnode



Earlier this year a long-time client of our Trap-Neuter-Return clinic had an issue with a few of her colony cats. A female cat, Snowboots, had joined the colony and given birth to five kittens. Within a few hours of their birth, a male cat from the colony became very aggressive towards those kittens. Given the danger of this situation, we decided to intervene. One of Alley Cat Rescue's staff members met this caretaker at the colony location and trapped Snowboots and her kittens. While at the location this staff member found three other kittens that seemed to have been abandoned by their mother. Since these kittens appeared to be just a few days older than Snowboots' kittens, they could not survive on their own and were taken back to our office along with Snowboots and her kittens.

At the office the three abandoned kittens were introduced to Snowboots and her five kittens. Snowboots accepted these kittens as her own by nursing and caring for them. Over the next few weeks the ACR staff worked together to socialize the kittens. Once they were old enough, we spayed/neutered, vaccinated, and microchipped all of the kittens and put them into our adoption program. Each kitten has now found their forever family and we have received updates that each kitten is thriving in their new home.

While at Alley Cat Rescue, Snowboots remained true to her feral roots and was very uncomfortable being in such close proximity to the humans at the Alley Cat Rescue office. Because she was not comfortable being in an indoor environment and interacting with people, we decided that the best option for Snowboots was to spay, vaccinate, microchip, and ear-tip her, and find a sanctuary to take her in. After locating an available spot, we took Snowboots to a local sanctuary for feral cats where she will be cared for each day by a team of dedicated volunteers. Alley Cat Rescue continues to work with the caretaker of Snowboots' colony and has been able to TNR the rest of the colony.

# The Alley Cat Rescue TNR Clinic: Where Community Cats go to be Fixed, Pricked, and Fluffed

By: Adam Jablonski



*Feral cat waiting for health check, surgery, and vaccinations during TNR.*

The Alley Cat Rescue Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) clinic is at the core of our mission and is probably the most unique of our programs. Any veterinarian will spay or neuter a cat, but they don't all have traps to lend, expertise to impart, or even the willingness to treat a feral cat. That's where our TNR clinic comes in; it bridges the gap between residents who wish to help community cats and veterinary medical service providers.

Our clinic is a resource for a wide variety of cat caretakers and community members, from the highly experienced who already manage colonies and own traps, to the greenest novice eager to find out how she can help the outdoor cats in her neighborhood.

The process begins when caretakers contact our office for assistance. For beginners and first-timers we schedule an in-person meeting to explain the full details of our TNR program and how to properly and safely use a humane trap. We help the new caretaker outline a plan of action, so that the TNR process proceeds smoothly from one step to the next, and provide information and literature so that the caretaker is educated and fully informed about feral cats and Trap-Neuter-Return.

The second step in our TNR clinic usually involves the lending of a humane trap. (We require a small deposit to borrow a trap, which is refunded when the trap is returned.) We have a few different sizes, from the smallest for catching kittens or young cats up to the largest for accommodating the biggest Tomcats. We've also found it important to pick the appropriate trap size for the person using it. (No silly, not to fit the human inside!) It can sometimes be difficult for a single caretaker to carry or maneuver the largest traps on her own, so it's good to have medium and small sizes available too. We make sure our traps are in good condition, easy to use, and reliable, and that our borrowers are practiced and confident in using them.

The third step is planning when to trap and bring the cat to the veterinarian. ACR coordinates with our vets to make sure space and time are available each day for cats going through our TNR program. We then choose an available day and go over with the caretaker when to trap the cat before the appointment. We also discuss how to care for the cat after surgery and when it is appropriate to release her back to her outdoor colony.

At step four, we're finally working with a real cat! At this point she's trapped and then transported on the scheduled morning to our veterinarian, who performs a spay/neuter surgery, ear-

tipping, health check for injury and internal or external parasites, and administers vaccinations for rabies, distemper, and Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV). At our clinic, cats also receive a microchip, which will help in identifying a cat and where her home is should she ever be picked up by animal control. Our vet also gives an injection for pain as well as a long-acting antibiotic to guard against infection.

Assuming there are no complications, the community cat is ready to be picked up from the vet on the same evening. Male cats are held in the trap for 12-24 hours after surgery, at which point it is safe to release them, while female cats should be held just a bit longer, 24-48 hours, before releasing. At this final step, the caretaker checks to make sure the cat is clear-eyed and alert before re-releasing him or her back to the colony home.

We strive to make our TNR clinic as accessible as possible, and we do that by offering the service at a very low cost and by being present for the caretaker every step of the way. The low cost, as supported by our members, is the most important factor. Many who inquire at our clinic begin by putting food out for a single, friendly outdoor cat, only to discover there is a whole colony nearby. For a caretaker, the retail cost at a private vet to spay or neuter and vaccinate a colony of ten cats would easily run into the thousands of dollars, but through our program the same can be achieved for a few hundred dollars.

Over decades of practicing TNR we've found solutions for every imaginable community cat situation, and caretakers know they can count on us for help at any point along the way. For example, trapping can be a hit-or-miss endeavor, so we are always flexible with our appointment days. We know some cats are trap-shy, and can give tips for luring them in or disguising the traps. And our years of partnership with the vets at the Brentwood Animal Hospital have led to a clinic well-versed in safely and humanely handling feral cats.

Clients come to our Trap-Neuter-Return clinic because they're looking for a humane way to help the community cats in their neighborhood. And we believe our program succeeds because it is straight forward and comprehensive. As of press time, we've already surpassed our 2014 TNR program numbers by more than ten percent! This program exists because of the generous support of members like you. Please help us continue our work by donating today!



*Feral cats post-surgery and treatment. Covering the traps with towels helps to keep the cats calm.*

# Call to Action: Be the Change by Getting Active for Cats

A large part of changing people's attitudes and creating positive political change is by getting involved at the local level. When we take a stand against the status quo and voice our opinions in a compassionate and kind way, that's when we start to see *real* change. Leading by example has a profound affect on those around us, which in turn creates a ripple of change that continues to reach out and educate countless members in our communities. And this is exactly how we are seeing positive change taking place for feral cats and TNR. When we work together and encourage our local shelters and local governments to embrace nonlethal animal management practices, that's when we are able to save more lives.

ACR has created a sample letter and petition that can be presented to city council members to convince lawmakers to take the humane approach to managing feral cats. Please feel free to reproduce the sample letter and petition, while altering them to include your town's information and any additional verbiage that may convey your personal message more clearly. At the same time, we encourage you to utilize ACR's factsheets to establish and implement a TNR program in your community, while appropriately addressing common resident complaints about feral cats. Please click on the "Get Involved!" tab on our website to access sample letters/petitions and use the "Cat Information" tab to locate helpful factsheets. You can also request our Cat Activist packet by contacting our office.

## Coyotes and Cats: In Response to your Comments

By: Maggie Funkhouser

Following the publication of "Cats and Coyotes, Living in Harmony" in our July newsletter, we received quite a bit of feedback with lots of mixed reactions and we wanted to take a moment to address some of those responses.

Let me begin by saying that I (and ACR) had no intention of downplaying how tragic and sad it is to lose a beloved companion animal and I apologize if the article came across that way. Whether it's a housecat or a feral community cat, we care for them just the same and treat them as members of our family. Both myself and Louise have lost cats to raccoons and foxes and we certainly felt a deep loss. We also found ourselves upset and angry at the animals who killed our cats and caused us such grief.

At Alley Cat Rescue, we support the nonlethal control of feral and outdoor cats, and in doing so, this requires us to look at keeping them safe in their outdoor environments; which has lead us to also look at other predators who may kill cats.

Yes, our mission is to protect cats, but it is also to encourage our supporters to extend their circle of compassion to include *all* animal species and advocate for nonlethal management practices for all. Every species plays a vital role within the ecosystem, and they should not be vilified for simply acting out of instinct. Just as we fight everyday to protect cats from being scapegoated for killing birds, we must not denigrate coyotes when they kill cats.

Along with Mr. Gehrt's research on coyotes (as presented in the article), Dr. Robert L. Crabtree, one of the country's foremost wildlife ecologists, has also conducted decades of extensive research on predator ecology and coyotes. His findings demonstrate that indiscriminate killing of adult coyotes, like that done by USDA Wildlife Services, actually increases the coyote population. Lethal control drives coyotes to target unnatural prey sources in order to feed larger litters of pups.<sup>1</sup>

The same can be seen with most culling circumstances, even with cats. Killing animals actually causes an increase in the number of individuals. And even if it was possible to kill every coyote, that would only cause greater problems for the ecosystem, as seen with the numerous examples (Macquarie Island<sup>2</sup>, Little Barrier Island<sup>3</sup>) where cats were removed from habitats, causing rabbit and rat populations to explode, which caused even more damage.

Ecosystems are delicate and any human interference can cause great catastrophes, including their entire collapse. That's why nonlethal management methods, like TNR, that stop the breeding cycle but do not remove the individual animals from the habitat are more effective and successful than catch-and-kill methods. These methods allow a gentler hand in managing the natural world, so as to not upset the established balance.

As we become more educated on topics related to caring for outdoor cats, we strive to share this knowledge with the utmost of good intentions. Again, we are very sympathetic to those who have lost cats to coyotes and we will continue to help folks keep their companion animals safe as much as possible. As mentioned in the article, there are numerous precautions one can take to protect cats (and dogs) from encounters with coyotes and other wildlife, such as supervising companion animals when they are outside and bringing them indoors at night, securing food sources, erecting climbing posts for cats, and "hazing" or scaring away coyotes when you do see them in your neighborhood. These steps will certainly help to limit interactions, but when animals share space, there is always the possibility for unwelcome encounters.

Just as we feel strongly for the cats and dogs in our lives, may our hearts have room to include *all* species and treat them with the same level of respect, kindness, and compassion. Nonlethal methods for controlling animal populations exist and should be advocated by all who are trying to instill a more compassionate ethic towards the earth and its inhabitants.



Photo Credit: Steve Creek, stevecreek.com

<sup>1</sup>Predator Defense. "Coyotes at Risk." *PredatorDefense.org*, 2015. <http://www.predatordefense.org/coyotes.htm>. 13 Aug. 2015.

<sup>2</sup>Irvine, Dean. "Cat Control Lead to Eco Disaster on World Heritage Island." *CNN.com*, 13 Jan. 2009. <http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/asiapcf/01/12/eco.macquarieisland/index.html>. 13 Aug. 2015.

<sup>3</sup>Mosher, Dave. "Birds Glad Cats Eat Rats." *LiveScience.com*, 10 Dec. 2007. <http://www.livescience.com/2102-birds-glad-cats-eat-rats.html>. 13 Aug. 2015.

## Visit Us Online!

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## Revolutionary Outdoor Feeding Station



Whether you're feeding a few outdoor cats or caring for a large colony, the **Outdoor Pet Feeder from Carter Pets** is a must have! The unique design saves food, time, and money.

ACR has proudly partnered with Carter Pets, so **for every feeder purchased, a donation will be made to ACR.** Upon check out online, simply add "Alley Cat Rescue" in the special instructions to the seller or mention our name when ordering by phone. It's that simple! Order online at **OutdoorPetFeeder.com** or by phone at 602-245-4247.

### **Mission Statement:**

Alley Cat Rescue (ACR) works to protect cats on several levels: locally through rescue, rehabilitation and adoption of cats and nationally through a network of Cat Action Teams. ACR is dedicated to the health, well-being and welfare of all cats: domestic, stray, abandoned and feral. ACR also assists the international animal community.

### **Alley Cat Rescue Staff:**

Louise Holton - *Founder and President* - Denise Hilton - *Director of Operations*  
Maggie Funkhouser - *Director of Communications and Development*  
Tom Ragusa - *Finance Associate* - Adam Jablonski - *Communications Associate*  
Liz Kurzawinski - *Community Outreach Coordinator* - Emily Patnode - *Member Relations Manager*

### **Join our Cat Circle**

When you join our very special Cat Circle by pledging a monthly contribution, you will be providing our rescued cats with daily necessities, like nutritious food, warm shelter, and quality medical care. As little as \$10 a month will feed a homeless cat for an entire year. And \$15 a month ensures she receives essential spay/neuter surgery and helps cover other medical costs. To join our Cat Circle, simply provide your credit card information on the enclosed envelope or setup your donation online at [SaveACat.org](http://SaveACat.org).

### **Wills and Bequests**

Consider Alley Cat Rescue in your estate plans. This will ensure that your love and care for cats continues beyond your lifetime. Suggested bequest language: "I give (specific dollar amount or property) to Alley Cat Rescue, Inc., with mailing address PO BOX 585, Mt. Rainier, MD 20712, for its general purpose to help stray, abandoned, and feral cats. Tax ID: 52-2279100."

## Advocate for community cats everywhere you go!

All cotton T-shirts, long-sleeve shirts, and sweatshirts are available in sizes **small, medium, large, XL, 2XL, and 3XL**. Grocery bag measures 16" wide by 13" tall and is white with lime green handles. More detailed descriptions and photos can be found on our website, along with additional items.



**(FRONT)**



**(BACK)**

**Grey or White "Cat Face" T-shirt \$20 each**  
MD residents add \$1.20 sales tax



**Long-Sleeve Shirt \$20 each**  
MD residents please add \$1.20 tax.



**Hooded Sweatshirt \$30 each**  
MD residents add \$1.80 tax.



**Grocery Tote Bag \$10 each**  
MD residents add \$0.60 tax.

### Order Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Order Total \$: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Item	Price	Size (S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL)	No. of Items	Total
<b>Cat Face T-shirt (grey)</b>	\$20			\$
<b>Cat Face T-shirt (white)</b>	\$20			\$
<b>Long-Sleeve Shirt (black)</b>	\$20			\$
<b>Hooded Sweatshirt (navy blue)</b>	\$30			\$
<b>Grocery Tote Bag (white)</b>	\$15	N/A		\$
Order total				\$
Sales tax (6%)*				+\$
Shipping**				+\$7.00
Total with tax & shipping				\$

\*Maryland residents ONLY please remember to add the appropriate sales tax for each item.

\*\*There is a flat shipping rate of \$7.00 for ALL purchases.

**Please send checks made out to Alley Cat Rescue or provide your credit card information.**

Visa    MasterCard    Discover    American Express

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

RETURN COMPLETED ORDER FORM TO: ALLEY CAT RESCUE, PO BOX 585, Mt. Rainier, MD 20712

## (Amazon) Smile! Your Wish has been Granted.

Cat rescuers are always looking for creative ways to help more cats with limited resources. Did you know there's a way to increase the impact of your support at no cost to you? Start your online shopping at the happiest of Amazon sites, **smile.amazon.com**. When you shop from the Amazon Smile page and choose Alley Cat Rescue as your charity, a portion of the purchase price is donated to ACR automatically. So, when you donate a soft bed from our wish list, a cat gets a new napping place AND Amazon sends us a small bonus for the cat care fund. By bookmarking and shopping from the Amazon Smile page you ensure ALL of your online shopping supports community cats.

**A few of the items we go through most quickly are:**

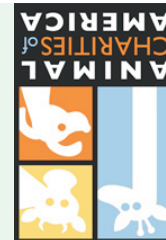
**Wish List** (easy to find by typing "Alley Cat Rescue Wish List" in the Amazon search bar)

- food (dry and canned) - Friskies, Purina, Meow Mix
- litter (UNSCENTED, clay or recycled newspaper) - Ever Clean, Yesterday's News
- small litter boxes, approx. 14" x 10" (to fit inside of cages)
- larger covered litter boxes (for office cats)
- laundry detergent
- brushes
- nail clippers




We are also in need of a new washer and dryer. When you care for as many cats and kittens as we do, there's no shortage of dirty beds and blankets! Unfortunately, the endless supply of laundry is too much for our current washer and dryer to handle, and we need to upgrade our models to meet our kitties' demands. When you donate to our "Clean Beds 4 Cats" project, you'll not only be providing a clean and cozy bed for a homeless cat, but a second chance at a healthier and happier life. Donate online at <http://bit.ly/cleanbeds4cats>. Thank you!!

**Find out all the easy ways you can help cats! Details inside!**



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