



## THE MEOW MISSION

Trap/Neuter/Return  
PROACTIVE POPULATION CONTROL  
THE HUMANE WAY

Volume 4, Issue 1  
Spring 2015

# Cat Tales

In our last newsletter, we predicted we'd fix 400 cats by year's end—well, we were wrong! 2014 was one heck of a year for us. We fixed a record 562 cats! 2013 was a little under 300, so you can see what tremendous strides we've made in just one year. Even though it was cold and the snow was flying, we still trapped—and trap we did! We have some incredibly dedicated trappers that don't let weather deter them. November and December were incredibly busy—we trapped, transported, and cared for 29 cats in one weekend alone.



Hey did you hear  
the news? Meow  
Mission fixed  
**562** of us!

For those of you that don't know our process, here's how it goes: when a caretaker calls us for help, we schedule a site visit. Our trappers head over, meet the caretaker and assess the feeding station(s). We evaluate if the caretaker is willing and able to trap the cats themselves—with our instructions. Our goal is to "teach a man to fish" instead of "feed a man for a day." While we'll always help those that aren't able, however, we first and foremost teach the caretaker how to trap, transport, and care for the cats. Cats—as you all know—are super smart and can be very leery of people—especially those they don't know. Caretakers are almost always more successful at trapping than we are—the cats know them and aren't as afraid to enter a trap.

We help the caretaker as much as they need—trapping, transporting, aftercare. After their surgeries, it is very important to keep the kitties in a warm (a minimum of 70°) dry, secure location. In the summer, this isn't much of a problem for most, however, in the winter, very few folks have a suitable recovery place. We are happy to keep the cats in our cozy, warm workshop. Our volunteers take special care to provide a soft towel (covered with a puppy pad for messes) in each trap for their comfort. We give each cat a full can of food once trapped (we have the caretaker withhold food the day before so they're quite hungry). They usually gobble it all up quickly, but, if not, we remove the dish at least 8 hours before their surgeries. Once they're fixed, we give them each a full can of food again—they're usually ravenous—and another can the next morning. We want our kitties to have a nice, full tummies before we release them the afternoon of the day after surgery.

Needless to say, we go through a LOT of cat food! We used 87 cans of food the record weekend of 29 cats! At an average cost of \$ .50/can, that's over \$40. Along with food, we purchase puppy pads, laundry detergent for cleaning the towels and trap covers, and lots of paper towels. TNRing cats is expensive! And that's one of the many reasons we're grateful to you—our supporters, we couldn't have fixed 562 cats without you.

PO Box 192, Mishawaka, IN 46544  
[themeowmission.org](http://themeowmission.org) | 574-300-3353

# Thank you!

# Barn Fire Kitties

This past December, we were contacted about five cats who lived in a barn that caught fire. The caretakers had to move out, leaving the cats to fend for themselves. A kind soul stepped in, feeding the cats every day, and eventually trapping them. She brought the cats to us and we had them spayed /neutered and vaccinated. Two of the cats had terrible eye infections so we paid for their extra medical care and medicines. As it turned out, the cats were actually quite tame—just very frightened. Because they'd been abandoned, they were very, very thin and their coats were matted and dirty. After surgery, we kept them overnight before they went to their new home. We noticed their coats were in awful shape—tons of painful mats and covered in feces and dirt. We couldn't let kitties go like this! Unfortunately, it was New Year's Eve and every place was closed. We reached out to our friend DiAnn who owns For Pets Sake Pet Grooming on Mishawaka Avenue in South Bend. We told her the predicament the cats were in and wondered if she would be able to help the cats. Without hesitation, DiAnn said yes (although she jokingly prefaced it with "how sober do I have to be?"). DiAnn and her helper, Taylor, **came into the salon on New Year's Day and groomed the barn fire kitties!** She refused to take anything other than a Starbucks coffee for payment. We are so incredibly grateful to DiAnn and For Pets Sake—what a wonderful thing she did for those cats! We encourage you to visit DiAnn for all your pet grooming needs—she's great at what she does and has a very kind soul.



3023 Mishawaka Ave, South Bend, (574) 234-4546



Pickles sticking out her tongue in protest



Missy was such a good girl!



Maynard was horrified at the indignity of the tummy brushing!

# Spring Cleaning?

We've started collecting for our annual rummage sale, Wags to Riches, and

**we're in need of donations!**

We'll pick up your gently used items!

Call or email for pick up: [info@themeowmission.org](mailto:info@themeowmission.org), 574-286-9404

## Wags to Riches IV Rummage Sale

All proceeds will go towards caring for Michiana's free-roaming cats through Trap-Neuter-Return. The Meow Mission is a 501(c)3 registered non-profit. 100% of your donation is tax deductible.



## Did You Know?

- *A female cat can get pregnant as young as 4-5 months and have 3 litters per year*
- *She remains fertile her entire life—there is no kitty menopause*
- *We spay kittens as little as 2 pounds—the earlier we spay, the quicker they bounce back*
- *Free-roaming cats pose no higher risk of disease than pet cats*
- *Cats are Scapegoats for human wildlife destruction: humans own impact on environment is #1 cause of species loss—250 million birds die each year from collisions with windows and cars*

## Mishawaka's Animal Ordinance

As you may be aware, the common council of Mishawaka is in the process of revising the animal ordinance. This ordinance dictates how Animal Control (Humane Society of St. Joe County) operates. As the ordinance reads, if a cat is fed outside for three days, it must be brought inside and registered as a pet. Additionally, there is a trapping ban—this prohibits people from trapping on their own property! The current ordinance is ancient and hasn't been updated in decades. When we learned about the revision, we immediately reached out to the council to see what changes were in order. Their main concern was breed specific language (defining a "dangerous" dog) - the council wasn't aware of TNR—can you imagine?! We launched our campaign to get TNR included in the ordinance—just like South Bend did last year. Catch and Kill—as is currently practiced in Mishawaka and the County—is an archaic practice, not to mention, cruel and pointless! TNR is the only proven effective solution in controlling cat population.

We provided the council with hard data and reached out to the media. The South Bend Tribune did a fantastic article about TNR and many people wrote in to Voice of the People in support of TNR. We are keeping our paws crossed that the council does the right thing allowing TNR and defines a free-roaming cat—this will protect it from pet laws, however, at this time TNR has NOT been added to the ordinance—we really need your help in getting this important piece of the ordinance included. If you live in Mishawaka and haven't contacted your council person to ask for these changes, please do so.



[www.facebook.com/TheMeowMission](https://www.facebook.com/TheMeowMission)

[themeowmission.org](http://themeowmission.org)



# Spay-tacular Snip-n-Tip:

**World Spay Day, Tuesday, February 24th**

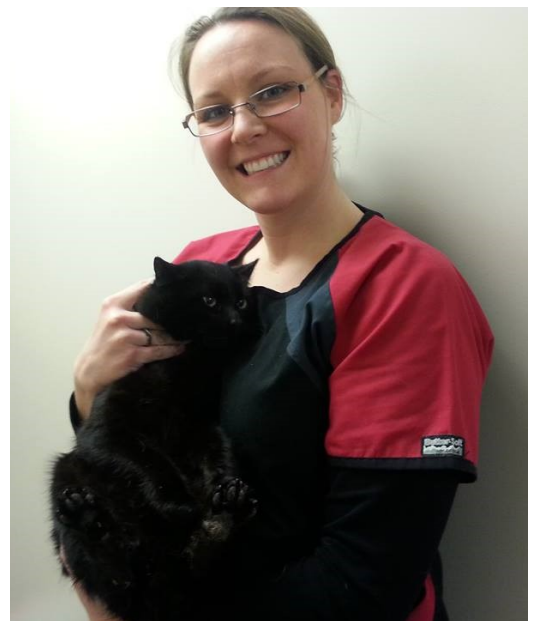
In celebration of World Spay Day, we partnered with the Animal Clinic of Granger to build awareness about spaying and neutering free-roaming cats. With financial support from our friend, Del Meyer (Weichert Realty), we were able to provide spay/neuters for just \$5 to the first 5 cats, \$10 for the next 10 cats, and \$15 for the final 15 cats. Needless to say, the appointments booked up and we are still issuing vouchers for caretakers to bring their cats to the clinic for a \$15. In case you missed it, WNDU reporter Kate Chappell came out and interviewed us and Dr. Jennifer. They ran the segment on the morning and evening news! Thanks to the Clinic for helping us help Michiana's free-roaming cats!

## *Spay Day* by Dr. Sara Porter of Animal Clinic of Granger:

I joined the veterinary community to help end the suffering of animals in any way I can, so it was wonderful to be able to help The Meow Mission decrease the feral population by decreasing the amount of new cats. Early spay and neutering is the best way to stop the increasing population, and the Meow Mission made it possible for the local community to afford and participate in this endeavor. I was trained in high volume spay/neuter from the Asheville Humane Alliance in North Carolina, where they not only have their own facility, but also help clinics across the country create and successfully operate a high volume spay/neuter clinic. I was ecstatic to be able to help the local community by using the skills I had learned.

In preparation for the spay day, the staff at The Animal Clinic of Granger set out a strategic protocol for the day's event. Everyone had a specific task to make sure that the animals were healthy, and a good candidate for surgery. The front staff made sure that the caretakers of these feral cats understood the release instructions and overnight care, while the surgery staff prepped the animals for surgery. When the animals were recovering, the staff made sure the cats had an ear tip to signal that this cat was indeed spayed or neutered, flea control, and a rabies vaccination. A staff member had a sole purpose of making sure the animals were recovering well throughout the day and releasing the cats back to the caretakers. All surgeries went smoothly and the animals recovered without complications.

I have hopes that in the future the Michiana community can have more spay/neuter events such as the Spaytacular day at The Animal Clinic of Granger. It not only brings the community together, but also helps the animals we care so much about. I feel it is part of our human duty to protect and decrease suffering of animals, because we have the advancement and skills to do so. By spaying and neutering these feral cats, the community can decrease the population of animals that have to be euthanized due to the inability to adopt them.



Dr. Porter and Lint, one of the friendly free-roaming cats fixed

## volunteer spotlight: Kendall



As a volunteer for Meow Mission, I help to trap the free-roaming cats in the community. Then, I take the cats to ABC Clinic so they can get spayed or neutered and vaccinated, and then I release the cats back where they were living so that they can live a happy life in a familiar place. Volunteering is my passion because I get to help and save the lives of cats. Helping these cats makes me feel great because I know I have just helped an animal in need. The cats that I trap and return will not have more litters of kittens, which means that there will be less homeless and unwanted cats roaming the streets. Reducing the number of hungry, suffering cats on the street is why TNR is an important issue for me, and it is also why I would encourage other people to volunteer for Meow Mission. There are countless free-roaming cats in the community, and they need help if we want to prevent future litters and generations that could suffer from hunger, the cold, or injuries from cat fights. I enjoy trapping for Meow Mission, but when I am not trapping, I do lots of other activities. I love school and doing my homework, and I often work ahead. I also play hockey during the winter and I participate in Speech Team at school. Lastly, I like to play with my cat, Lilly, by throwing little catnip pillows that she bats around my room.

# Cat Shelters

This past winter was brutal and our feline friends sure felt it. We've always made the foam board shelters and have been brainstorming for more affordable options. Many of our caretakers have more than 10 cats so multiple shelters are needed. Our friend, Jocelyn, thought making shelters out of Rubbermaid containers would be a great easy and affordable way to keep community cats warm. She talked to South Bend Animal Care and Control to see if they would be willing to offer a space for the build. They offered up their facility to use as well as donated all the necessary straw, so she hosted a cat shelter build on February 25. The event was very successful—so much so that she has a long waiting list; more than she can handle on her own. That's where we came in; we've decided to pool our resources and work together to keep our community cats safe, warm, and dry. Jocelyn is now our volunteer in charge of Rubbermaid shelters and she'll be hosting shelter build nights every quarter. We'll keep you posted on dates and locations. We have a new Facebook page for all things related to sheltering our community cats: [www.facebook.com/TheMeowMissionShelters](http://www.facebook.com/TheMeowMissionShelters) (we still have our main Facebook page). We could use your help for collecting shelter supplies:

- Large Rubbermaid Totes (approximately 30 gallons or larger)
- Foam Board—any size
- Large Styrofoam Coolers

If you'd like to make a donation, please contact Jocelyn at 574-217-5489 or [jocesweet@yahoo.com](mailto:jocesweet@yahoo.com). As always, all donations are 100% tax deductible.





## Don't free-roaming cats belong in the country?

Many people think they're doing a cat a favor by taking her to a barn or another place they feel is "safe." Nothing could be further from the truth. Cats form very tight bonds with their colony and are very territorial. When you remove her from her outdoor home, she will do all she can to return and often meets a painful death from unknown predators, unfamiliar roads, or starvation. Relocation should never be attempted, unless the cats' lives are at stake. If there is no other option, relocation can be done by kenneling the cats in a secure location (inside a barn or garage) for several weeks while they become acclimated to their surroundings and new caretaker. Contact us for a relocation guide.



# Ways You Can Help

## Help Us Recycle, So They Don't Have To

Did you know a way to help us raise money is by donating your used printer cartridges, cell phones, GPSs, digital cameras, MP3 players, and aluminum cans? Did you know Purina Cat Food weight circles are valuable? They are to us! We collect and send them to Purina who then sends us rebate checks we use to buy cat food for our Meow Munchies food program. Please save your Purina Cat Food weight circles for us, every bit helps! You can mail them to PO Box 192, Mishawaka, IN 46546 or contact us for drop spot locations.

For Printer/Cell Phones/Electronics, contact:

[info@themeowmission.org](mailto:info@themeowmission.org) 574-300-3353

For Cans, contact: [joybaiz@aol.com](mailto:joybaiz@aol.com) | 574-286-9404



## Wish List

- Cat food
- Bleach
- Puppy Pads
- Paper Towels
- Hand & Bath Towels
- Rubbermaid Totes (30 gallons or larger)
- Tuna for Trapping
- Styrofoam Coolers
- Laundry Detergent
- Anti-bac Dish Soap

## Shop at AmazonSmile

and Amazon will make a donation to:

Meow Mission

Get started

amazon smile

## Cat Food Donation Drop Spots

Pet Refuge 4626 Burnette Drive, South Bend  
For Pet's Sake, 3023 Mishawaka Ave, South Bend  
Martin's Paw-Mart, Bittersweet & Lincolnway, Mishawaka  
211 W. 16th Street, Mishawaka—back porch  
50963 Redstone, Granger—front steps or back deck



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