



## THE MEOW MISSION

PROACTIVE POPULATION CONTROL  
THE HUMANE WAY

*Founded in 2011, the Meow Mission is organized exclusively for charitable and educational purposes. These purposes include: to humanely and proactively reduce the free-roaming cat population of NW Indiana/SW Michigan, to eliminate the barriers that free-roaming cat caretakers encounter with spaying and neutering colony cats, and to educate the community on the merits and methods of Trap/Neuter/Return practices*

# Cat Tales

Volume 6, Issue 1  
September 2017



905 W. McKinley, Mishawaka  
(across from Town & Country)  
Hours: 10-6 Tues-Sat.

We'd like to take a moment to say a huge **\*thank you\*** to our friends at **Resale to the Rescue**. If you've not visited the store, please do so. These wonderful folks have taken your donations and turned them into gold for area rescues.

Resale to the Rescue is an upscale, not for profit resale store that financially assists local animal welfare organizations like the Meow Mission. Their goal is to assist these organizations in their mission to:

- \*Increase the number of animals spayed/neutered
- \*Increase the adoption rate of homeless animals
- \*Decrease the euthanasia rate at local animal shelters

We've been fortunate enough to be one of the recipients of Resale to the Rescue's successes. Please continue to donate your gently used items to Resale to the Rescue—they could not be in better hands.



Presentation of our first donation from Resale to the Rescue.  
(left to right) Valerie Schey of C.A.R.E., Pam Comer of Pet Refuge, Kelly Adelsberger of Heartland, Gayle Dantzler of Frantz Fund, and our very own Kylie Carter



While you're at Resale to the Rescue, please be sure and stop by the Giving Tree where you'll find our wish ornaments—take an ornament and fulfill one of our wishes. Here's our Kylie with a wish—a check to sponsor one spay.



# A peak into our world...

There's a lot more to trapping cats than you'd ever imagine. .. Here's a quick snapshot into our daily activities

## PREPPING

We place the traps on site a week prior to trapping. This allows the cats time to gradually get used to them. We're often in not-so-safe neighborhoods and have to chain our traps to make sure they're not stolen. While on site, we take an inventory of all the cats in the colony so we make sure we get them all on trapping day.



## TRAPPING DAY

As quietly as possible, we set the traps with smelly tuna—food is withheld the day prior to ensure cats are very hungry. Tuna's strong odor helps attract the cats and keep their attention. Once the traps are set, we hide. If a cat sees or hears us, it is very unlikely to go in a trap. We frequently duck behind bushes, cars, anything with cover.



Sometimes we need to use the drop trap for those cats that won't go into a regular trap. The drop trap is a large box propped up with a post. A rope is tied around the post. When the cat(s) we're targeting enter under the trap, we quickly pull the rope, trapping the cat we want. You have to be very cautious with this method and only pull the rope when all of the cat is under the back of the trap, otherwise kitty's tail or legs can be hurt. Very carefully, we transfer the cat into a regular trap.



Once a cat is trapped, it will become very frightened and thrash about. This can be dangerous for kitty so we keep a close eye (tucked out of the cat's sight) on the traps. As soon as kitty is trapped, we run to cover them with a sheet or blanket as quickly as possible. This calms kitty down right away. It's imperative that a **trapped cat remain covered at all times.**





Since we typically trap at multiple colonies, it's very important we label each cat so we make sure it gets returned to the proper colony. Each cat is labeled with its name, description, colony caretaker's name and the date it's trapped. This step is very important, returning a cat to the wrong colony could be disastrous for the cat.



We use special dividers to keep the cat safe on one side of the trap while we insert a towel wrapped in a puppy pad into each trap so the cat doesn't have to sit on the wire cage. Since we withhold food the day prior to trapping (to ensure the cats are hungry enough to trap), we give each one a can of wet food and water. They have surgery the following day.



Once the cats are labelled, fed/ watered, and have clean pads to sit on, they're tucked in for the night and await surgery the following day.



After surgery, the cats are wrapped in warm towels and placed on a warming pad until they are awake enough to go back in their traps

Kitties are loaded up in the Meow Mobile and taken to Meow Manor to recover for the night.



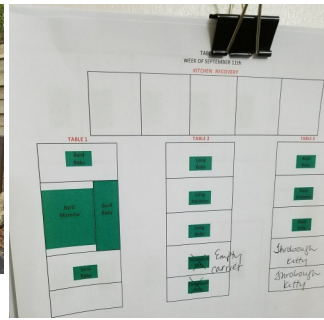
*meow manor*



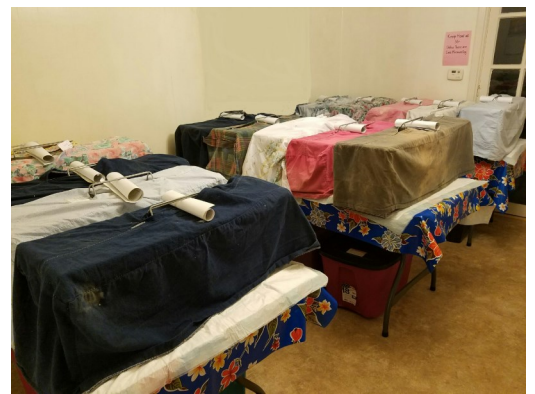
Our friends, **Coco and Don Schefmeyer** have generously donated the use of a house to Meow Mission. The house, "Meow Manor" is a fantastic place for our cats to recover after surgery where they're warm and safe. We are incredibly grateful to the Schefmeyers for their generosity and support. With their help, the community's donations, and our dedicated volunteers, we have the capacity to trap, transport, and care for 20-40 cats in one weekend!



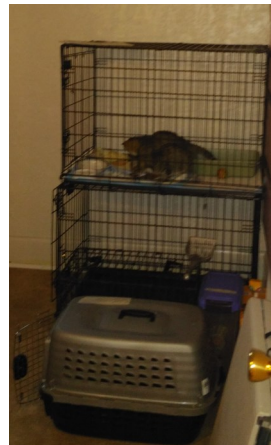
After surgery, we transport cats to Meow Manor. Once there, the cats are unloaded, and brought to the Main Cat Room where they are placed on tables that are covered with puppy pads to absorb any mess. Once they're all unloaded, we check the pre-made chart that tells us where to place each cat.



Our Main Cat Room holds 20 cats comfortably in addition to all of our trap covers, blankets, and miscellaneous medical supplies. We're as quiet as possible while tending to the cats so as to ease their stress. We turn the thermostat to 75-77 degrees to keep them toasty after surgery when they're not able to regulate their body temperatures.

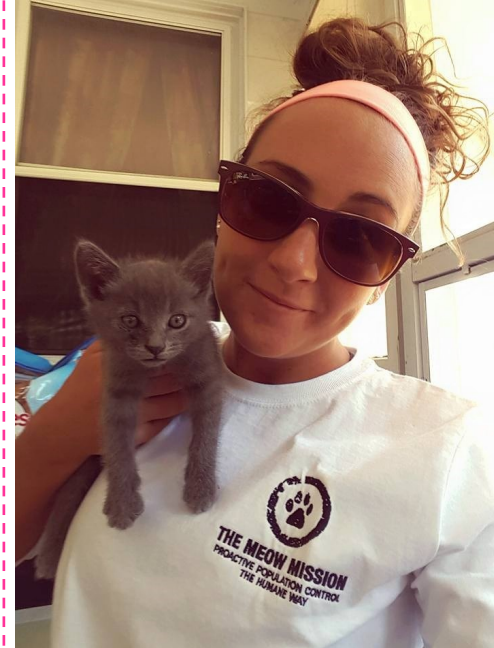
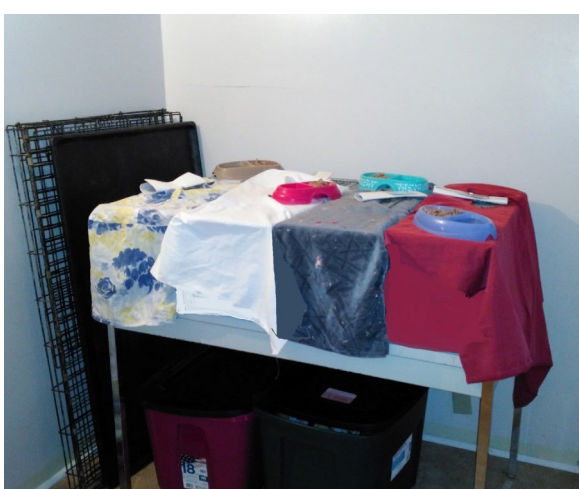


The Small Cat Room holds up to 10 cats. We have kennels set up at all times hold tame cats that can be handled. (so they don't have to stay in a trap over night.) We also have a huge linen closet in this room where we are able to keep all our towels and miscellaneous linens and laundry supplies.



When we have mommies and kittens, we always put them right next to each other and cover them so they can see each other for comfort.

The cat food room also serves as our cat overflow room. When the Main and Small cat rooms are full, we have additional space for 5-10 cats. We also store extra kennels in this tight space.



Sometimes we run into tame kittens. We don't like to see any tame cats outside, especially kittens. We reach out to local rescues and ask if they're able to take them.

Want to help with cat food? Drop your donation off at ABC Clinic, South Bend Animal Care & Control or at 211 W. 16th Street, Mishawaka on the back porch.





Each cat receives a bowl of hard food, can of wet food and lots of fresh water as soon as they arrive. They are typically ravenous after surgery so we make sure they have plenty of food and water. They each get a fluffy towel wrapped in a puppy pad to sit on for comfort while they recuperate in their traps overnight.



We are up bright and early the next morning to clean out any dirty pads, replace, and give the cats another can of food and fresh water.



After the cats have recovered, we load them up again and take them home. Releasing them is the very best feeling—their caretakers are so happy to see them and we know the cats are going to have much healthier lives. Spaying and neutering a community cat actually triples its lifespan and they can live as long as pets.



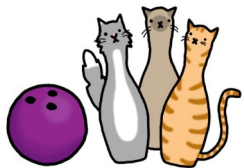


Once the cats have been returned, our work isn't done—we are left with mounds of dirty, stinky laundry and very messy traps and food dishes. The clean up takes several people and several hours. Once the traps are clean, we're all ready for the cycle to begin again.



Cold weather brings quite a challenge with trap cleaning—we don't want to turn our lawn into an ice skating rink! Instead, we load up our van and head to the car wash. It's a very cold job, but one that must be done! Clean traps get stored in our nice, dry shed.

*And then it starts  
all over again ...*



# 7th Annual Alleys for Alley Cats!

## Bowling Fundraiser & Bake Sale

Sunday, October 15th, 12:00—2:00

Strikes & Spares, Grape Rd, Mishawaka

Tickets: \$15 or \$10 with a bag of cat food donation

You don't have to bowl to come to our biggest fundraiser of the year—we'll have some awesome raffle items including **NOTRE DAME FOOTBALL TICKETS!!!!**

Not to mention..... A yummy bake sale.



# *Our Amazingly Successful Workshop!*

## **Trap-Neuter-Return & Colony Care Workshop**

- ♦ Instructors: Mike Phillips, NYC Feral Cat Initiative of the Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals, and Urban Cat League, Kathleen O'Malley, NYC Feral Cat Initiative of the Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals
- ♦ Hosts: Karen & Don Schefmeyer, The Meow Mission, NYC Feral Cat Initiative

The Meow Mission sponsored an 8-hour TNR workshop taught by Michael Phillips and Kathleen O'Malley of New York City Feral Cat Initiative. Mike is the president of The Urban Cat League and is affectionately known as "The Mother Teresa of Community Cats" in Hell's Kitchen, NYC. Kathleen is also a world-class TNR expert who educates humane trappers and handles many other duties from their Manhattan-based offices.

Our workshop gave attendees TNR certifications and we educated nearly 70 people from four states. We had veterinarians, humane trappers, grass-roots TNR groups and several humane directors and staffers.

It was an extraordinary convergence of people with one thought in mind - how to increase the "save rate" in our shelters through the use of TNR for feral and community cats. It was inspirational.



Kathleen & Mike during Q&A with the group

Our other speakers included Genny Carlson, Director of Humane Society of St. Joseph County; Dr. Kari Hatch and Dr. Kristin, two "rock star" vets at ABC Clinic which has fixed over 3,000 of our TNR cats in 5 years. (BTW - ABC Clinic stands for Animal Birth Control.) We also had Jenny and Greg Smith, the owners of Tomahawk Traps, drive from Hazelhurst, Wis.

We featured a potluck lunch prepared by The Meow Mission members. We had door prizes including a Tomahawk trap and hanging baskets of organic catnip. We gave away TNR workshop manuals, dried catnip and catnip stems. During an impromptu 15-minute presentation of "Catnip Confessions," we share how catnip stems are being given to shelter cats, especially at night to reduce anxiety and give them something to focus on. We told trappers how to use combine catnip with diatomaceous earth to address flea issues of ferals.



"Catnip Confessions" with Karen, "Coco" Schefmeyer



The hands-on workshop was designed by Alley Cat Allies, the ASPCA, and the Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals. In this workshop, attendees:

- ⇒ Learned about feral cats, their history and behavior
- ⇒ Learned the steps of humane trapping and pre- and post-spay/neuter surgery care with the help of video and live demonstrations
- ⇒ Practiced using a box trap and divider for trapping and in-trap care
- ⇒ Learned the basics of caring for a cat colony
- ⇒ Learned how to build good relationships with neighbors throughout the TNR process and how to help the cats be good neighbors
- ⇒ Attendees became Certified TNR Caretakers and received the NYC Feral Cat Initiative's Guide to Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) and Colony Care.



Nancy & Del Meyer, Genny Carlson



**Weichert, Realtors®**

Jim Dunfee & Associates  
**Del Meyer, ABR  
Broker Associate**

Our friend, Del Meyer of Weichert Realty, sponsored an awesome Krispy Kreme coffee break!

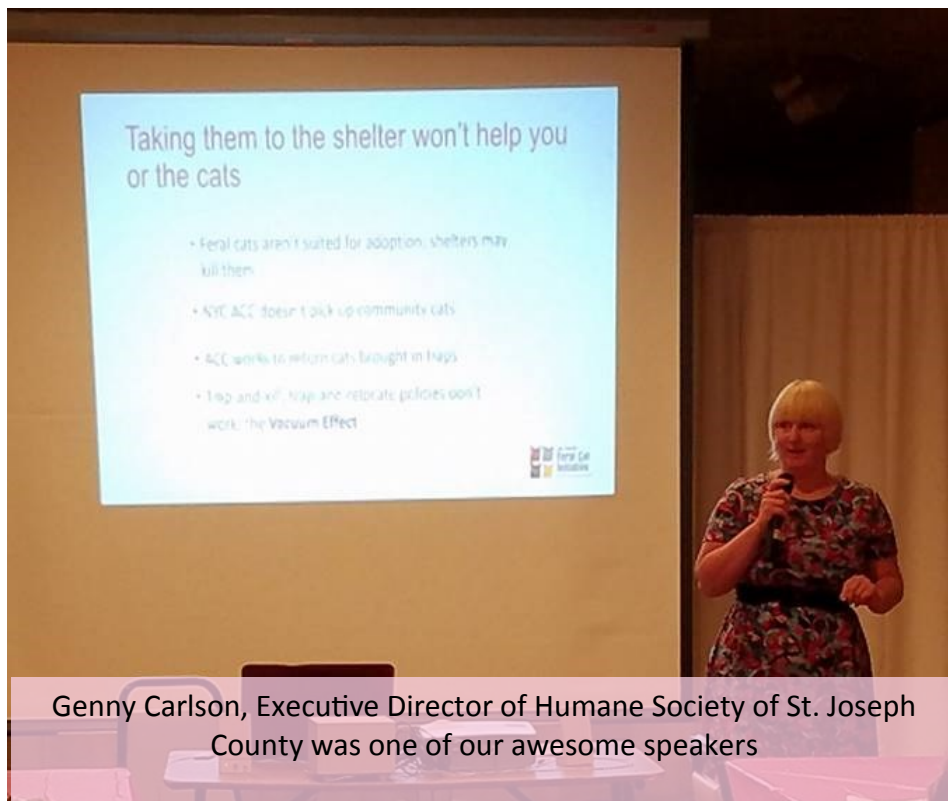


A volunteer donated Meow Mission logoed cupcakes!



Meow Mission volunteers supplied an awesome lunch for all attendees!





THE MEOW MISSION

## Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) & Colony Care Workshop

**Saturday, July 29th, 9:00a.m. — 4:00p.m.**

**Mishawaka Event Center FOP, 1825 E 12th St., Mishawaka, IN 46544**

**Breakfast & Lunch Provided**



Meow Mission only uses Tomahawk TNR –specific traps. They are made in the USA and are of great quality





# Volunteer Spotlight: Kylie

*What do you do for Meow Mission?* As the Education Ambassador, I give presentations to community groups explaining why TNR is so important & discussing all the ways the Meow Mission helps our community caretakers to provide food, shelter, & spay/neuter services to the community cats of Michiana. I also train new volunteers, trap, & do PR work for the Meow Mission's events & promotions.



*How long have you volunteered with Meow Mission & why did you choose to volunteer?* I started volunteering in February of 2013. I was looking for a volunteer opportunity & found the Meow Mission on VolunteerMatch.org. I am crazy about cats, & was excited to hear about the amazing things the Meow Mission was doing, so I decided to join the cause.

*What do you like about volunteering with Meow Mission?* I love knowing that our group has helped so many cats & their caretakers. I personally also really enjoyed teaching kids at Pet Refuge's Summer Camp & seeing how passionate they were about animals & how much they enjoyed learning about TNR & ways they can help our cause.

*Why is TNR an important issue to you?* I love cats & I hate the fact that there simply are not enough resources available to support the number of cats living outside. I wish that every cat could have a warm, loving home, but unfortunately that is far from reality. I hate to think that so many of them are hungry & cold, so I am appreciative of the fact that we are able to help reduce the overpopulation humanely & make the limited resources become stretched a little less thin. I am also happy that it makes for fewer animals entering our shelters, where many unfortunately are euthanized. Reducing the euthanasia rate & making conditions better for the existing community cats is an amazing mission to be a part of.

The Meow Mission's work is crucial to the TNR progress in Michiana, because most caretakers do not have the resources that we have in order to fix the community cats: traps, trapping ability, transportation, an amazing network of volunteers, generous donations, etc. It's great that the Meow Mission can help fill this need. We also help provide food assistance for caretakers who need extra help. I also love that we have been able to provide medical care to animals like Sherbert who had his tail & leg amputated earlier this year after being injured.

*What do you do when you're not volunteering?* I am the Events Coordinator for Downtown South Bend, so I plan community events like First Fridays, Art Beat, & more. I also enjoy making pottery, & I have a very unique hobby – my family & I ride antique bicycles, from the late 1800s, & we belong to a national organization called "The Wheelmen." Our group wears period costumes & rides these old bikes in parades & public demonstrations. My bike has a 50 inch front wheel!

*What has been the most rewarding, touching, or memorable experience for you?*

I loved the story of Sherbert's rescue & rehabilitation, & how he now has a forever home. He was the poster-cat for what we do & why it matters. It was amazing the way other people followed his story & it went viral, bringing much-needed attention to the Meow Mission & our cause.

*What has been the biggest challenge for you volunteering?* When the caretakers do not follow the instructions about when to withhold feeding & such, & then you end up going on a trapping mission where you only get a fraction of the cats you were hoping to catch.

*One thing that would surprise someone about me is...* Prior to volunteering for the Meow Mission I had never heard of TNR & was very ignorant about best practices for community cats. I honestly thought you were doing a cat a favor taking it to a shelter – even though I never did that. Growing up, my mom always provided food, water, & shelter to about 20-30 neighborhood cats, & would try to trap them & get them fixed, so I was raised with a great model of TNR, without even knowing what it was & how important it is.

*Why would you encourage others to volunteer with us?* It's great for anyone who is passionate animals & helping to make their lives better. It's a very rewarding volunteer opportunity, & there are so many different ways to help. Some volunteers like to clean traps, some like to do trapping, some provide transport – there is something for everyone, & it's all very helpful & appreciated!

*Do you have any pets?* I have two long-haired cats – Rose & Sir Fluffington. They are going to be three in May. I also have an outdoor cat I feed named Mr. Biscuits, & am working on transitioning him to be an indoor cat.



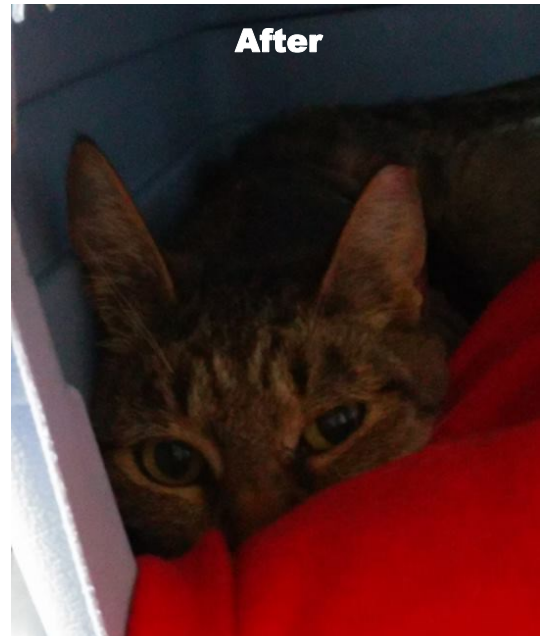
# Mend-a-Cat

We run into many challenges while trapping including finding kittens and injured cats. Needless to say, we can't just leave the kittens nor can we ignore injured cats. Kittens are sent to rescue where they can find inside homes. We often treat injuries—small and large, regardless if the caretaker can pay for the treatment. When we take a cat for spay/neuter surgery we know that it is more than likely the only medical care that cat will ever receive, especially if it's feral. Because of this, we provide as much care as possible, often at our own expense. We deeply care for these animals and want their quality of life to be the best it can be. That comes at a price and often one in which Meow Mission supplies. While more than 90% of our funding goes towards TNR, we set aside a small percentage for injuries. We call this the "Mend-a-Cat" fund. We've used it to amputate legs, tails, and eyes. We provide lots of antibiotic shots for wounds, and at \$25/shot, that adds up fast. Our wonderful Dr. Kryder helps us tremendously by donating his time to help our injured cats yet the medical costs can still add up. We often keep the cat for recovery, often for weeks at a time. Here is a small sampling of a few cats who benefitted from the Mend-a-Cat fund.

Little Tabby Girl was trapped and found to have a broken leg. She'd been suffering with it for quite some time, the wound was raw and she was in tremendous pain. We amputated her leg and kept her for recovery. Completely feral, this little girl wouldn't do well in a home. Luckily, her caretaker tried to make her a garage kitty, getting all the food and comfort she likes, all while staying safe, however, Little Tabby Girl had other ideas and charged out of the garage, you'd never guess she was missing a leg! Her caretaker reported that "The three-legged Tabby has finally come around and has realized she is back with her friends. She's still skittish when she comes to eat, and waits until the others eat, but she was like that before. She'll get in there and eat when she's hungry enough, but I'm happy she has come around and seems to be getting along fine. Hops up those stairs with no problem! " Way to go little Tabby Girl!



**Before**



**After**



**Mia**

While under anesthesia for her spay, a huge mass was found in Mia's abdomen. We transported her to Dr. Kryder who found she had an enlarged kidney that needed removed or she wouldn't live much longer. Mia had her kidney removed and was spayed. She recuperated with us and was able to return to her colony healthy.



If you'd like to make a donation to help with our emergency medical needs cats, please send your check to PO Box 192, Mishawaka, IN 46546 or donate on our website at: <https://www.themeowmission.org/donations/donate-money/>. Be sure to make a note "Mend-a-Cat".



### ONE-EYED JACK

A woman contacted us regarding a stray cat she found with an injured eye whom she named One-eyed-Jack. We picked up Jack and took him to be neutered and evaluated. His eye had sustained such injury that it couldn't be saved and was amputated. While recovering with us, we learned this big handsome fella was a lover, not a fighter. A Meow Mission friend quickly fell in love with Jack and took him home where he reports Jack is "fat, lazy, and happy".

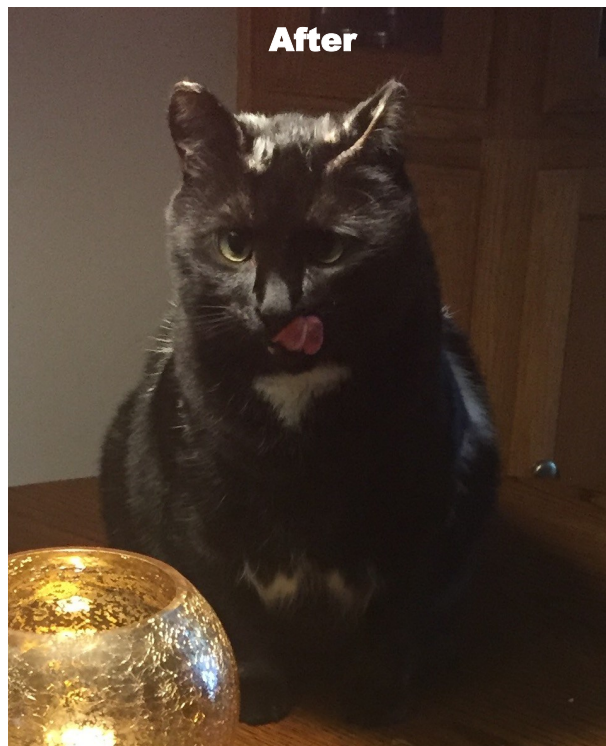


### HAILEY, OUR BURN KITTY

A caretaker of a colony we had scheduled gave us a call about a week prior to trapping. She said one of her cats, Hailey, had terrible seeping wounds all over her body and she was terribly concerned. She tried for several days to trap Hailey with no success. Luckily, we were able to trap her and her colony. Some type of liquid had burned Hailey so badly that her entire back was covered in oozing wounds. Our wonderful veterinarians cleaned her up and gave her pain meds and antibiotics and sent her home with us for recovery. Hailey's caretaker was pretty sure it was a neighbor who did this to Hailey and we just couldn't let her go back. She stayed with us for several weeks while recovering. We originally were told Hailey was feral, but as time went on, she



learned to trust us and started to work her magic on one of our volun-



teers who quickly fell in love and took Hailey home to be a part of her family. Hailey's wounds eventually healed and she's become quite an active, happy girl. She chases her big brother around and has put on a nice amount of weight. Her fur grew back, however it's now a soft, silky white fur instead of black like the rest of her body.



# Ways to Help

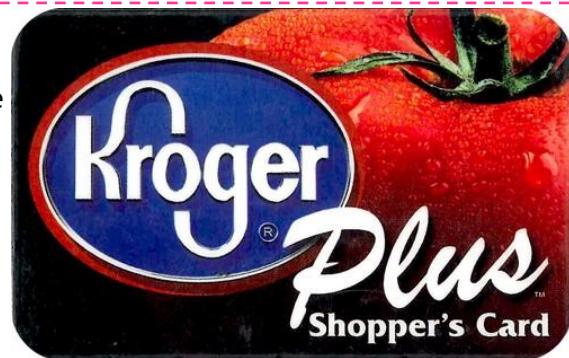


Save your Purina weight circles for us! Purina cat food bags have a "weight circle" on a side of each bag, near the top. Cut those out and save for us.

When we receive enough, we send them in for rebate checks.

This really helps keep our food costs down. You can mail them to us at PO Box 192, Mishawaka, IN 46546 or drop them off in our food donation barrels at ABC Clinic or South Bend Animal Care & Control.

We know not everyone can afford to donate money, but did you know there are a lot of other ways you can help? One of the easiest ways to help us is to shop at Kroger and register your Kroger card online at [www.kroger.com/](http://www.kroger.com/) community rewards. Select Meow Mission (#53859) as your charity and Kroger will donate a portion of each sale to us. It's that simple! Please pass the word how easy it is to help us while you shop for your family.



Donate your Paw Points to Meow Mission

Shop at AmazonSmile

and Amazon will make a donation to:

Meow Mission

Get started



THRIVENT FINANCIAL®

Connecting faith & finances for good.™



Coming this December....

Purses for Paws online purse auction fundraiser

**WE NEED YOUR BAGS!** Our last designer purse auction raised enough to spay and neuter 81 cats! Won't you help us by donating your gently used designer bag to us? You'll get a tax deductible receipt and an excuse to treat yourself with a new bag (or two!)

Donations can be dropped off at:

Resale to the Rescue, 905 W McKinley Ave, Mishawaka

ABC Clinic, 4525 S. Burnett Drive, South Bend

Or call/email for pick up: 574.300.3353 |

[info@themeowmission.org](mailto:info@themeowmission.org)

PLEASE PLACE PURSE IN A BAG

LABELED "MEOW MISSION"



**Gently Used  
Designer Bags  
Wanted!**