

Cat Tales



THE MEOW MISSION
PROACTIVE POPULATION CONTROL
THE HUMANE WAY

Newsletter Volume 7 Issue 1

Spring 2020

THE MISSION OF MEOW ...

Our number one priority is proactively and humanely lowering the free-roaming cat population. How do we do that? With Trap/Neuter/Return, or TNR for short. What exactly is TNR?

Trap: free-roaming cats are trapped in humane, live traps.

Neuter: captured cats are brought to a veterinarian to be spayed/neutered (and typically vaccinated & eartipped)

Return: after recovery, the cats are returned to where they were trapped and set free.

How does Meow Mission TNR? We are often asked how we find the colonies we trap... the answer is simple... we don't. They find us. How you ask?

- Referrals from animal control: our two local animal control agencies support TNR as the preferred method of community cat population control. Animal Control Officers educate cat colony caretakers about TNR and provide them with Meow Mission's contact information.
- Contact form on our website or Facebook page. Often people find us online and reach out to us either on social media or our website.
- Referrals from animal rescues: many of our requests come from our friends in animal rescue like Pet Refuge. Caretakers often think the best thing for the cats is to give them to a rescue where they can be socialized and adopted out. In a purr-fect world, that would be fantastic. The reality, however, is that there is no place in rescue for unfriendly or feral (completely un-socialized) cats. The best option for them is TNR.
- Veterinarians' offices. Caretakers call to find out information on neutering their colony cats.
- Word of mouth. Caretakers love their cats and they love to talk about them. TNR fans love to encourage spay/neuter. It's often family members, friends, or co-workers that educate the caretakers about TNR and Meow Mission.

1,391 cats

2019 was busier than ever - we trapped year-round, placed 94 cats in barn homes, helped injured cats, and collaborated with South Bend Animal Resource Center and the Humane Society of St. Joe to save even more cats. We moved to a new location and also gained some great new volunteers to join our already fabulous volunteer crew. We broke all past year's records and neutered 1,391 of Michiana's community cats. WHEW WHAT A YEAR!

Our mission is to:

- 1) humanely and proactively reduce the free-roaming cat population of Northwestern Indiana/Southwestern Michigan
- 2) eliminate the barriers that free-roaming cat caretakers encounter with spaying and neutering colony cats
- 3) educate the community on the merits and methods of Trap/Neuter/Return practices



Murray

This past November, we received a message from the Facebook group, South Bend Lost & Found Pets. A woman posted that she found a cat by Papa John's on Ironwood that had been hit by a car. She said its tail had been run over. We made arrangements to pick up kitty and rushed him to our vet. The cat was very, very friendly but looked like he'd been through a warzone. As it turns out, he wasn't hit by a car, he was the result of living a rough life on the streets as a Tomcat (unaltered male cat). His tail wasn't damaged, it simply was matted flat with filth. Even though he looked like hell and was clearly suffering, he was incredibly friendly and loving. We named him Murray and he quickly became a favorite of many volunteers.

Our vet estimated Murray at approximately 12 years old which is absolutely ancient for an unaltered cat. Typically, unaltered cats only live a few years (due to injuries and illness caused by the burdens of mating). For Murray to have lived this long is very rare. At just 7lbs, he had a bad upper respiratory infection and he was emaciated. His teeth were broken or missing altogether, and he had uncontrollable diarrhea. Yet all he wanted was to be held and loved. He purred nonstop and could not get enough attention.



Murray's first visit with Dr. Huffer



Murray's horrible teeth

The first thing we had to do was get his rotting teeth out. His mouth was full of infection and actual pockets of pus. Our wonderful dental veterinarian, Dr. Huffer, removed the majority of Murray's teeth and cleaned out all the infection. You all know our main focus is neuter, so, we asked if it would

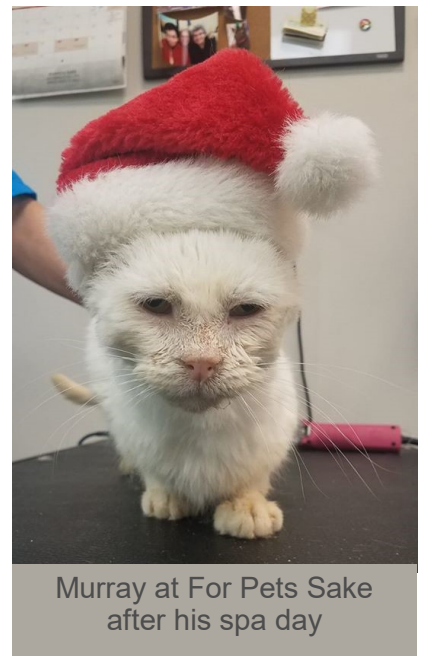
be possible to have Murray neutered at the time of his dental. Dr. Huffer doesn't provide neuters but one of the other doctors, Dr. Jen, thankfully volunteered

to pop in and neuter him while he was getting his dental. Murray woke up with more missing than just a few teeth!

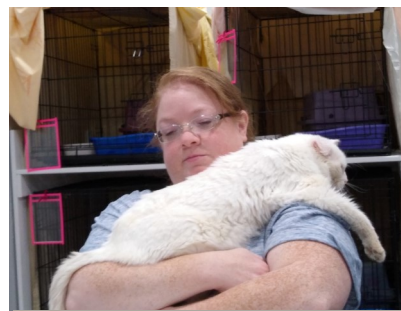
We brought Murray back to Casa Meow and set him up in our infirmary. Next, we had to get the diarrhea under control—diarrhea, especially in an old cat, can be very dangerous. Dr. Huffer put him on a very expensive prescription food that thankfully, our wonderful donors purchased for him. After a couple of weeks of quality food, probiotics, and a warm, comfy bed, Murray turned the corner and began to thrive. The diarrhea got under control, the upper respiratory infection cleared, and he was feeling much better.

We had hoped he would start grooming himself, but he was still so filthy, he needed more cleaning than he could do so we took him to our groomer friend, Diann at For Pets Sake. Murray got a mani-pedi, a moisturizing shampoo (she even scrubbed his toes!) and a blow-out. Diann said he was an angel and purred the up until the toe scrubbing. He felt like a new man.

Murray definitely should not be back out on the street—not at his advanced age and the lack of teeth. We all fell in love with him and figured that we had room for him at Casa Meow. Our volunteers built him his own little room where he has a big window, a cat tree, several comfy beds and all the food he could hope for. He gets lots of visitors and he loves to help us with tasks.



Murray at For Pets Sake after his spa day



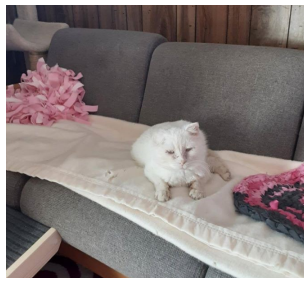
Murray loves to cuddle. Here he is with volunteer Lisa.

Since we brought Murray home to us, he has gained a whopping three pounds and looks amazing. He's definitely living his best life. *Continued on next page*

Murray

Continued

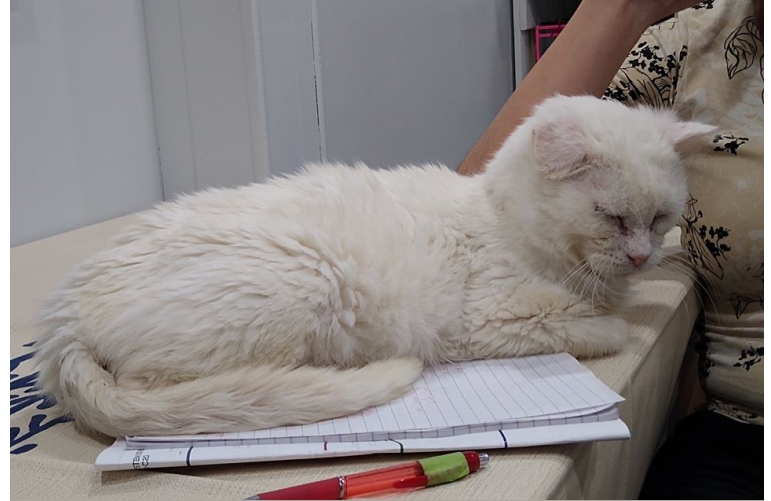
We posted Murray's picture on our Facebook page and received several messages from people who had been feeding him. This particular message blew us away:



never cats. Even with evidence that he had been through quite a journey, it was still difficult to believe he found his way home. He is definitely a amazing old man.

"We want to thank you for taking such great care of "Murray"! We knew him as "Charlie" for many years in our neighborhood. Before my wife started feeding him he had belonged to a family in a rented home down the street. When they moved away they just left him to survive on his own.

One other neighbor knew the people and they called him "Mister Mister". We were not financially able to do more than keep him fed and would allow him on our porch in extreme weather. He has always been a very loving soul.



Murray helps take notes during our volunteer meetings



Murray provides quality control while we care for cats in traps.

We grew quite fond of him, but was worried about him living outside in such a busy area. We did find someone in North Liberty with a heated barn that was willing to take him in and make sure he stayed fed. So he was taken to North Liberty to live what we believed to be a better, safer life for him.

This is where his story becomes even more amazing...after several days we called to check on how he was doing, when we learned that Charlie escaped from the barn, and they hadn't seen him. We were so upset that we had made the wrong decision moving him to a farm. We worried how he would survive. One day, nearly 2 weeks later my wife walked out the back door of our home and found who else but her buddy Charlie sitting patiently waiting under our car port (the place where she fed him twice a day) he was in bad shape, covered in burrs, and his paws were a mess, with some bleeding and fur missing.

We could not believe our eyes. I have heard of dogs finding their way home from long distances but

So when he hadn't been around for several days we feared something had happened to him. Then I happened across his original Facebook post from your page...We knew exactly who Murray was! While we were elated to see he was being well taken care of...we were a little embarrassed about not being able to give him all the care we were able too. So thank you so very much for all you do. We couldn't be happier about the love and care he is getting now. I just thought you all might appreciate a little bit of a back story about Charlie. But we have been quite fond of that little old man over the years...especially my wife...she is missing his attention when she would sit with him on the steps, listening to that incredible loud purr he is now famous for."



Carol cuddles Murray while we watch a webinar on trapping tricks. This is Murray's favorite position & he can cuddle for hours.

Shelters

We all know how brutal our winters can be. We've also heard horror stories about cats climbing into car engines to keep warm. Every cat needs a warm, dry safe place to lay its head. There are lots of options for cat shelters; but the majority cost money or take skills and materials to build. Our caretakers typically have neither. That's where we come in. We take one man's trash and make it into



gold ... and by that, we mean we take Styrofoam coolers used for shipping into cat shelters.

PATTY & PETE: SHELTER SUPERSTARS

"We have volunteered at Pet Refuge since 2013



and got involved with Meow Mission shortly after they helped us drop trap and get an injured outdoor cat we had been feeding and sheltering fixed and medically tended to. Within a month and a half of releasing him, he let me touch him. He's been living indoors the past 2 1/2 years. We never knew there were so many free roaming cats until we got involved with Meow Mission. After they moved from the Manor to a smaller (outdoor) location and didn't have room for making and storing shelters, we took on the job of collecting materials and making them for pickup at our home. They are free and available to anyone who shares the compassion of all the volunteers at Meow Mission to try and help the numerous free roaming cats the best way we can. We are a small part of a very big village. It indeed does take a village. So grateful for Meow Mission and all the volunteers"



There is no kitty menopause ... they are fertile their entire lives ...

MEOW MUNCHIES

Cat Food Program

Often, our caretakers don't have the funds to provide the cats with enough nutrition. It's not uncommon for some to only be able to provide table scraps. Once we determine the need is there, we sign up the caretaker for our cat food program, Meow Munchies. Our only requirement is that all the cats must be spayed and neutered, then we will provide cat food on a monthly bases indefinitely. We distribute approximately 250# of food each month. We recently had a cat food donation drive and were thrilled at your generosity. We're able to keep colony cats fed well thanks to your donations!



Meet Blackie, a new colony cat. While neutering, ABC found he was already neutered and actually had a microchip. We called the chip company and got the owner's information. Turns out Blackie is actually Midnight and had been missing for a year! They desperately wanted him back. They had been going to shelters looking for him and figured he was just gone. Midnight got out by accident. The owner's brother left the door open unbeknownst to them. Midnight's owners were so grateful to have him home. Ironically, Midnight's owners had just chipped him the week before. What an amazing story. He's been gone a year and, he traveled 30 miles! Lesson here is please microchip! It's a small cost to bring your baby home.



EDUCATION INITIATIVE

By Heather Magee

We are constantly amazed when we run into folks who aren't aware of TNR. One of our major initiatives is education. The more people know about the necessity of neutering outdoor cats, the sooner Michiana can become a no-kill region. In order to aide our community and provide the best quality of life for the free-roaming cat population, the Meow Mission established the Education Initiative Group. Our goal is to combat misinformation by shedding light on



Lauren, Misty, Heather, & Susan at downtown South Bend's Trick or Treat (left to right)

the best means of caring for, and controlling the ever-growing feline population. We provide community outreach events giving an opportunity to interact directly with us and consult one-on-one regarding any concerns. We post weekly facts on Facebook and have plans to establish in office / in school presentations to further our mission. If you have a group or event you'd like us to present to, contact us at education@themeowmission.org.



Heather (above) & Lauren (below) at Pet Supplies Plus meet & greet.



So this happened ...

While trapping this past summer, we noticed one of the cats looked like she was nursing so we set about looking for babies ... and babies we found. Ginger mommy had five look-alike kittens. We scooped them up and placed them in the trap with mommy as they were too little to be without her. We reached out to area rescues in hopes they would take them for their adoption program. Unfortunately, it was the middle of summer and all were flooded with kittens and no one had room for them. We were heartbroken, but this is not the first time we've not been able to find a rescue for kittens, so we spayed mommy (yes, she can still nurse) and had to put the kittens back outside with her. This is always the last option, we never want to see kittens outside, but we do not have rescue and adoption capability. This proves why what we do—preventing the births of homeless kittens through TNR— is absolutely imperative. There will never be enough homes for them, prevention is the **ONLY** option. In this case, Ginger's caretaker was great and was able to get the kittens to us for spay/neuter as soon as they were big enough.



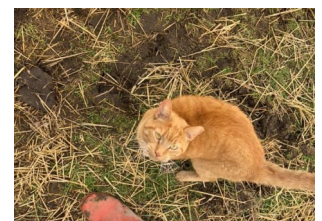
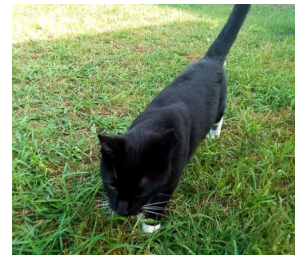
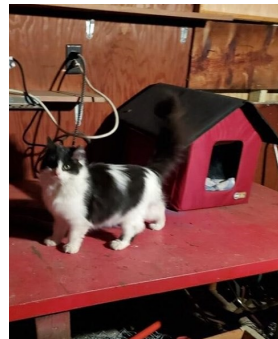
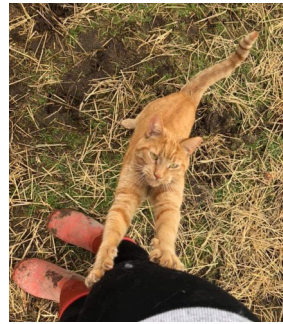
Our volunteers love Halloween!



Neutered BARN CATS Available 574-300-3353



You know that saying 'it takes a village to raise a child'? Well, it takes a village to save animals. And that's just what we're doing. We've partnered with local animal control agencies to get unadoptable cats out of the shelters - where they don't belong - and into barns where they're wanted and appreciated. The cats earn their keep by providing all-natural rodent control. This frees up shelter resources for adoptable animals, helps alleviate shelter staff burn-out, as well as saves the cats' lives. A win-win. We have the cats neutered, vaccinated, and tested negative for FIV and Feline Leukemia. The adopters fill out a contract agreeing to provide food/water, shelter, and care for the cats for the remainder of their lives. They also agree to quarantine the cats in a secure room or in dog kennels we provide while the cats acclimate to their new homes. Cats are very territorial and the four-week quarantine period is absolutely essential for successful relocation. To date, we've placed a little over 100 working cats.



"Through our partnership with The Meow Mission, the Barn Cat Program offers a safe home and better life to cats that wouldn't otherwise be candidates for adoption. This includes cats turned in to the shelter who are inconsistent with using the litter box and cats who react negatively to routine handling by people and would not do well as a house cat. With this program, approximately 50 healthy, vaccinated, and altered cats were given a second chance in 2019 and saved from being euthanized. Partnerships like this truly saves!"

Genny Carlson-Brown, Executive Director
Humane Society of St. Joseph County

My favorite part of the Barn Cat Program is when I go back to pick up the kennels and I get to see the cats roaming about and playing on the property. It's so amazing seeing them going from scared, shy cats in carriers when we pick them up to healthy, happy cats playing and enjoying life."

Courtney Hopkins
Barn Cat Program Manager

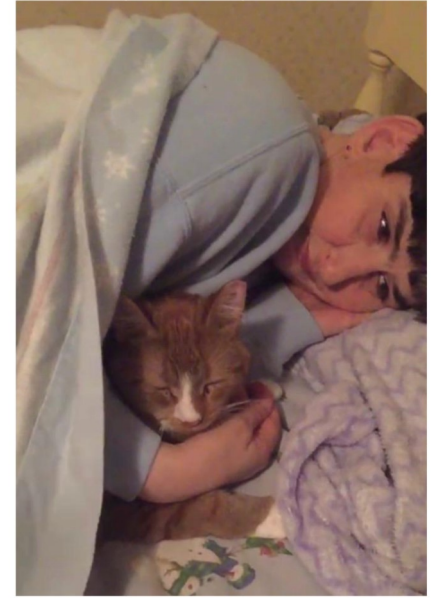
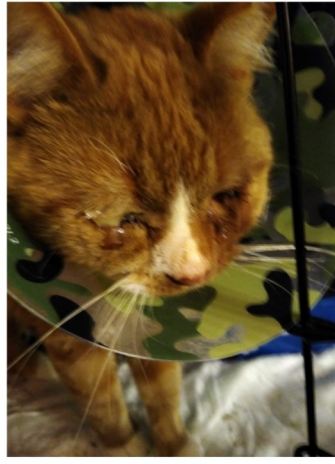


Courtney & Cleo



Injuries

Population control through trap/neuter/return is always our first priority. Unfortunately, we come upon injured cats during the TNR process. We help every cat we can, within reason. Unaltered cats have high instances of injuries—many caused by fighting for territory and/or females. The short time a cat spends with us is likely the only time they'll ever receive medical treatment. We feel it is important that we provide as much care as possible while we can. Here are a few of the special kitties we helped.



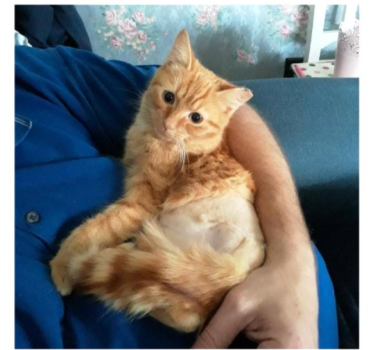
Andy came to us with swollen, infected eyes. His eyelashes actually grew inward and caused a tremendous amount of discomfort. He had surgery to correct his eyes and while we provided after care, one of our volunteers fell in love with him and took him home (with his caretaker's permission). He's quickly become best buddies with his special needs friend, Aimee. They cuddle every night.



Max was neutered through our TNR program a few years back. He had an accident and fell through a building. His front leg was badly damaged. We tried to save it by splinting, but it continued to swell and had to be amputated. Max healed beautifully and went back to his nice barn home with his wonderful caretaker.



Leon was trapped along with his siblings. While at ABC for his neuter, it was noticed that his hip bone was sticking out of his fur! Upon x-ray, we learned it was a terrible break and his leg could not be saved. Turns out little Leon isn't

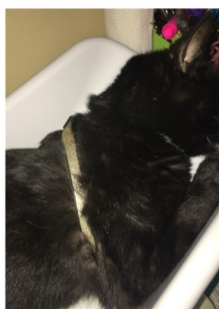


feral at all, just a little timid. Once he was better, he went home with his caretaker's family and is enjoying life inside.



Unable to walk on of his front legs, Kevin dragged it which caused lacerations that then became infected. He was found to have extensive nerve damage and the leg could not be saved. We had it amputated and cared for Kevin while he recovered. Because Kevin was friendly, living outside with three legs isn't ideal. We were very fortunate that someone who had a three-legged cat in the past reached out to us and gave Kevin a forever home.

Ollie ran his neighborhood for weeks with a collar wrapped under his arm. Many tried to catch him, but he was too scared. Our volunteer was able to drop trap him and run him to the vet. The collar had to be cut off, it was embedded into his skin! His collar had a rabies tag so we were able to trace the owner. Our vet reached out and was told he didn't want Ollie so he abandoned him outside!



Since he lives in South Bend, we reached out to our friends at South Bend Animal Resource Center for prosecution as abandonment. We of course had him neutered at the time, and recovered him. He healed very well and joined one of our caretaker's colonies. Please make sure you tell anyone with cats outside that collars are dangerous. Microchip instead.

When we trapped Gracie, we noticed she was drooling profusely; she had swollen gums & bad teeth. We had them removed, the swelling went down and Gracie went home with her caretaker who made her an inside kitty.





9th Annual

October 20th

Alleys for Alley Cats

Sponsored by:

Weichert

REALTORS

Jim Dunfee
& Associates
Del Meyer, ABR
Broker Associate

We celebrated our 9th annual bowling fundraiser, Alleys for Alley Cats this past October. We had an amazing time, had tons of great raffle items and raised enough to neuter 200 cats! Thank you to all that sponsored and all the great attendees!



Alleys for Alley Cats

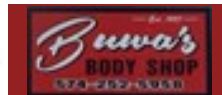


Thank you to our Sponsors:

Sophia Miller
 Joe & Kim Franczek
 Jim & Gloria Niemier
 Dale & Julie O'Chap
 Don & Coco Schefmeyer



edible
 arrangements



In Loving Memory



Del and Nancy Meyer have cared for a feral colony of cats for years. Because they practiced Trap/Neuter/Return, their colony dwindled in size until Lit'l G was the last of his colony. The Meyers enjoyed this feral fella for eight years, even though they never were able to touch him. Lit'l G was a

gorgeous grey kitty with quite the personality, he was very punctual for his breakfast and enjoyed lounging in "his" yard. Sadly, he started not feeling well and passed away. With our feral kitties, they tend to hide their illness so well, we rarely know about it until it's too late. Lit'l G passed away as he lived, on his terms. Rest in peace little guy, you were very loved.

The world has lost some amazing people. These folks had tremendous compassion for community cats and lovingly cared for stray and ferals. Rest in Peace sweet friends, you will be missed.



Doug Rice



Mary Bethe



Mary Troxel



Deb Ornat

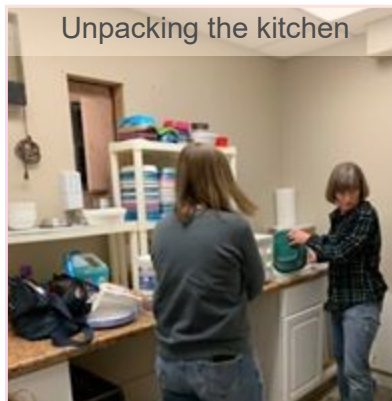


Ted Deguc



We're always busy, but last year was especially crazy. In addition to trapping and caring for cats, we also took on moving to a new location. We had been very fortunate to have been blessed with the use of Meow Manor, a 130-year-old super cool house in the Howard Park area. Don and Coco Schefmeyer were kind enough to let us use the Manor for nearly three years. Prior to that, we'd been operating out of several volunteers' homes so it was great to be able to move under one roof. As we've grown exponentially over the past few years including adding the barn cat

program, our needs changed and we outgrew the Manor. We lucked into finding a great little building in River Park that suits our needs really well. And, we actually found a landlord that didn't freak out when we revealed that we would house feral cats overnight! We now have a secure room for holding our barn cats between placement. We are also thrilled to have a separate infirmary that can be closed off; any sick cats are quarantined instead of having to share space with healthy cats. We're looking forward to having the space to provide exceptional care for community cats.



Unpacking the kitchen



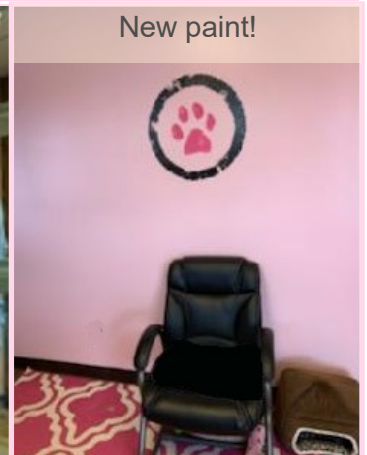
New floors for proper sanitation



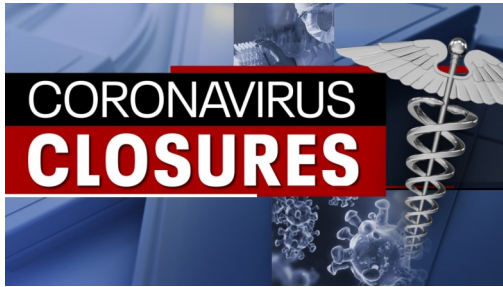
Assembling shed to hold our trapping equipment



Painting over the red wall!



New paint!



The pandemic has forced the cessation of spay/neuter surgeries. Apparently, our government doesn't find them "essential." We, of course, disagree. It's the time of year when love is in the air and many cats are pregnant or about to be pregnant. We're devastated we can't be trapping, but we respect the law and of course want what's best for our veterinary partners. We anxiously await the return to business as normal. In the meantime, we're throwing our energies into placing roadside barn cat signs, providing deep cleaning and equipment maintenance. We have 12 brand new traps thanks to our wonderful donors and we can't wait to put them to use! Paws crossed this ends soon.



THE MEOW MISSION
PROACTIVE POPULATION CONTROL
THE HUMAN WAY

6:30pm
FRIDAY
APRIL 17TH
PNA - 55969 Tulip Road

- => Doors open at 6:00
- => Trivia starts at 6:30 sharp
- => Come at 6:00 to shop and hand-made cat
- => Enjoy \$4 cocktails!

\$10/person (teams of any size)
8 rounds - 10 questions
Multiguns Available

Teams are encouraged to dress and decorate their table in theme of their choice. Team with the best score wins!
Bring your own drinks & munchies (please no alcohol)

REGISTRATION REQUIRED
by Monday 4/13

Payment due at time of registration.
Space is limited.
Prizes are limited.

1ST PLACE CASH PRIZE
CASH BAR * 21 AND OLDER
All cell phones must be stored out of sight during trivia.

The Meow Mission is a 501c3 nonprofit dedicated to proactively and humanely controlling our community cat population.
themeowmission.org | 574-300-3353

Weichert Realtors
Jim Dunfee & Associates
Del Meyer, ABR
Broker Associate

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, we are postponing April's Trivia Night. We'll announce the new date ASAP

Postponed

We'd love your help with community cats! The following volunteer opportunities are available:



Trappers (Sundays, various hours available. You're predominantly outside for several hours)

Morning Cat Care providers (inside cat care - scooping boxes, feeding and water and cat cuddling as time permits)

Trap Cleaners (at your convenience, anytime after Tuesday but before Sunday)

Call or email us: 574-300-3353
info@themeowmission.org

IF YOU ♥ THEM

GET A PET FRIENDLY LICENSE PLATE



For more information go to:

Pet Friendly Plate.org

Do you have a pet friendly license plate? The little extra cost of these plates goes into a pool for Indiana non-profit rescues, like us, for free spay/neuter vouchers. If you don't have a pet friendly license plate, please consider supporting spay/neuter and get your plate today!

easy ways to help us:

SUPPORT US THROUGH



community rewards

Register your Kroger online, go to **Community Rewards**, and select **Meow Mission** as your charity of choice and we'll receive a portion of each sale!

Shop at **AmazonSmile** and Amazon will make a donation to:

Meow Mission

Get started

amazonsmile

Donate items from our **amazon**wishlist

resale 
the rescue



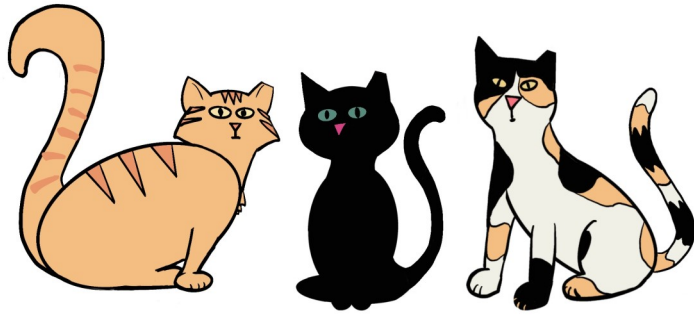
Every box of Fresh step kitty litter has a special code on the inside flap. Register online and donate your points to Meow Mission. We're able to redeem them for cleaning supplies and litter.



WISH LIST

- ⇒ XL Puppy Pads
- ⇒ Hard Cat Food (any brand)
- ⇒ Canned Tuna
- ⇒ Paper Towels
- ⇒ Hand Soap
- ⇒ Dish soap
- ⇒ Pine-sol
- ⇒ Odo-ban
- ⇒ Stamps
- ⇒ Gas Fuel Cards
- ⇒ Bleach

These are items we use every day can always use. Feel free to drop off at ABC Clinic or 211 W 16th Street, Mishawaka (back porch) or call to arrange pick up; 574-300-3353



T_{rap} **N**_{euter} **R**_{eturn}

Leave Us Where We Are

Save the Date

Tuesday, November 17th
Cabernet for Cats Pottery Painting
Pigeon & the Hen

Sunday, October 18th
Alleys for Alley Cats
Polish Dinner & Bowling Fundraiser
Bowlers' Country Club



LAWNS NEEDED!

We need to reach as many potential adopters as possible and we need lawns to do so! Might we place a sign in your yard?

Please contact us at
574-300-3353

