

Cat Tales



THE MEOW MISSION
PROACTIVE POPULATION CONTROL
THE HUMANE WAY

Newsletter Volume 7 Issue 2

Fall 2020

DID YOU FIND CATS OR KITTENS?



Birth to 6 Weeks

6-12 Weeks

12 Weeks to Adult

Sick or Injured

Leave them alone!
Mom will be back soon.

If kittens appear sick or injured, please take to a veterinarian.

If the kitten is friendly, find it a new home.

If the kitten is not friendly and appears healthy, leave it alone.

Leave these cats alone.

Healthy cats and kittens can live outdoors independently. If you think they have an owner, take a photo and make a found report with your city shelter. They most likely belong to your neighbor.

Take to a veterinarian.

The city shelter should be your last option.



Leaving outdoor cats alone can save their life!

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

COLD WEATHER AHEAD - Winter is right around the corner - are you prepared? Make sure to refresh shelters with clean straw. Our wonderful volunteers, Pete and Patty, have been working their tails off to make shelters for our community cats. We have a stockpile so be sure to reach out to us if you know of any cats in need. Don't forget water - cats need it year round, even more so in the winter. Heated water dishes are a great way to make sure cats stay hydrated. We have a limited supply of these for anyone in need.



Sunday Fundays

Sunday is the busiest day of the week for us. It's the day we dedicate to trapping Michiana's community cats. Typically, our goal is 20, sometimes we get 15, sometimes we get 25. Cats are unpredictable, so we



have to be flexible. Trapping takes time and lots of patience. Our trappers are out in all kinds of weather - it doesn't matter if it's raining, snowing, etc., the show must

go on. The only time we cancel trapping is when it's just too darn cold. Otherwise, we're busy year-round.

After the cats are trapped, we drop them off at the clinic where they're all fed and watered and given a soft puppy pad to rest on. They have surgeries Mondays and we pick them up so they can come home with us to Casa Meow to recover overnight. Cats cannot regulate their body temperatures after surgery so it's very important to keep them warm and dry. We crank up the heat and let them rest comfortably (after a nice big meal) for the night. We check on them late night on Mondays - dirty pads need changed and food/water needs refilled.



Tuesdays are pretty stinky at Casa Meow! Imagine 20+ cats after a big meal! Everyone gets cleaned up and fed again. We want them to have full tummies before heading home later that day. Yep, 24 hours is a good recovery hold time for healthy cats. The stress of being in a trap can be detrimental to their healing so the best thing is for them to go to their outdoor homes.



When we're trapping a colony, we always assess the situation - are the cats healthy? Do they have enough food? Do they have fresh water daily? Do they have shelters? Often the answer to some, or all of the questions is no.

-continued



Not only do we provide Trap/Neuter/Return, we also provide whatever is needed to ensure the cats' needs are all met. We distribute over 300# of cat food each month to colonies in need. We provide heated water dishes and shelters where needed. As most of you know, Indiana winters can be brutal!

Every cat needs a warm, safe place to rest with a full tummy.

After our kitties go home, we have a whole lotta laundry and a very messy Casa Meow! It takes several volunteers and a few days to get everything cleaned up - laundry, dishes, traps, floors, etc. And then it starts all over again!

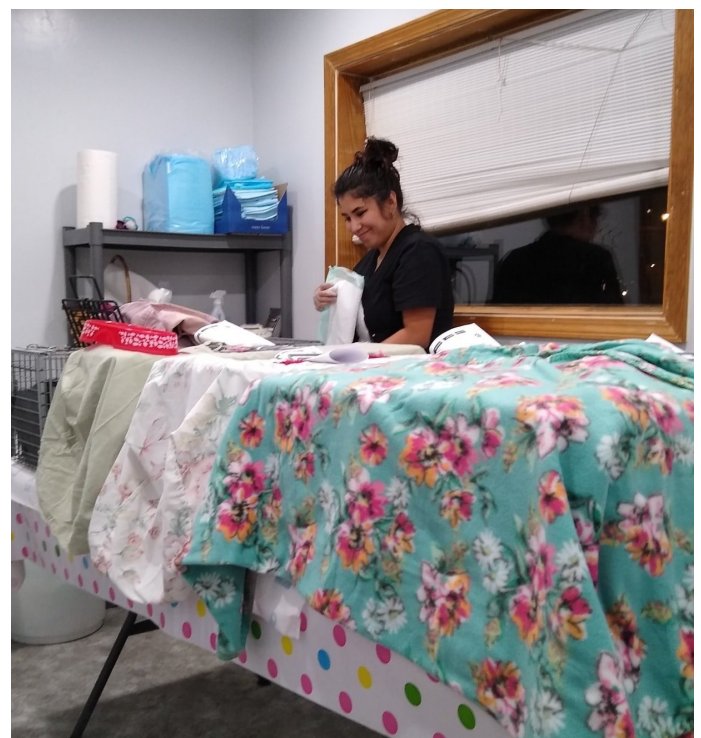


It takes a lot to TNR 15-20 cats a week and we

have the *best* volunteers ever! We can always use more help, so if you have a few hours a month, give us a call or email (info@themeowmission.org or 574-300-3353) and



we'll put your talents to work! You can volunteer as many or as few days a month as you'd like. We need cleaners, trappers, cat care helpers, trap drop off, and transporters.



CASA MEOW



We're bursting at the seams!

Our home base, Casa Meow, is set up to care for 15 cats post-op. A year ago, it was a purr-fect fit. We've grown so much that we're now trapping upwards of 20-25 cats a week. Our recovery room is packed and we're forced to put the over-flow in the infirmary. Normally that's not a problem, but if we have a cat that's contagious, we really can't have post-op cats nearby. We've gotten pretty good at coming up with creative solutions like converting the storage area to accommodate cat kennels, but getting around the Casa with so many cats is exceedingly difficult.

Our very cramped space limits the amount of care we can give. We are in dire need of a larger facility so we can care for more cats and that's where you come in! Help us purr-chase a building allowing us the space to provide top-notch post-operative care to our community cats. #MeowHousePurrChase

We have the volunteers!

We have the time and passion!

We need YOU to help us help more cats!

Meow House is a 4,000 SF building in the River Park district of South Bend, Indiana. The size of the building will afford us the room to house up to 40 cats comfortably - that's TWICE the capacity we have now - WOW! The space will allow us to have more volunteers to help more cats.

Many people work hard to buy that shiny red sports car, or take a lavish vacation. Not us. We wish for more space to help us help more cats. Our volunteers, most of whom work full-time, spend our most valuable resource - our time - to care for community cats. You can still take that vacation you deserve, but why not take a few less days and donate the rest of the cost to community cats? We need you to help us make this dream come true.

Your tax-deductible donation can be made on our website: www.themeowmission.org or mail a check to PO Box 192, Mishawaka, IN 46546.

#MeowHousePurrChase

We distribute over 300# of cat food for our community cats each month. It's stored in Tidy Cat litter buckets, filling up our entrance



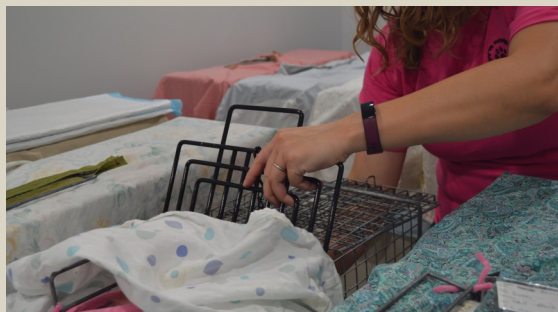
Volunteer Misty uses a rolling cart to stack the many dishes of cat food for our post op cats. She has to leave the cart in the hallway as there's not enough space in the recovery room



Our tiny kitchenette is stacked to the brim!



Volunteer Katie has to squeeze in between cats for feeding and watering, it's a super tight fit!



CHEETO'S JOURNEY

Cheeto was the head Tomcat of his neighborhood for years, but his caretaker noticed he had suddenly disappeared. His caretaker's kids found him under bushes, barely moving and very congested. Knowing we're a Trap/Neuter/Return group, they hoped we could help the stray kitty and rushed him to us. We gave him some fluids and got a little food in him, but he was incredibly weak and unable to stand or use his litterbox.

We aren't certain what had happened to Cheeto, but we believe he was hit by a car. At first we thought he was blind but later found out he could see, just not that well. His balance was very poor, he could hardly walk without falling over. Two of our wonderful volunteers, Jessica and Eric, took Cheeto home with them to give him more space to move around and recover.



Cheeto's 1st day with us

While in his foster home, Cheeto improved greatly (and gained a lot of weight!) He is even able to chase around wand toys and was making great strides with his litter box use. His foster pawrents called him their "shadow kitty" because he loves to follow humans around and sit on their feet.

Once he was well enough, we had him neutered. We normally Trap/Neuter/Return but Cheeto was in no shape to be an outside kitty. He can't do stairs and although his mobility is much better, he still had vision challenges. Cheeto needed an indoor, fur-ever home. Because he has balance / mobility /

incontinence issues, he's not a candidate for a rescue to take. While Cheeto's foster pawrents were visiting a cat café out of town, they met someone who was interested in being Cheeto's furever mom. After speaking with his prospective pawrents, the adoption was planned! Cheeto was so excited. Unfortunately, the day before his trip to his new home, the adopter backed out. Cheeto was heartbroken but determined to keep trying!



Cheeto's new Pawrents

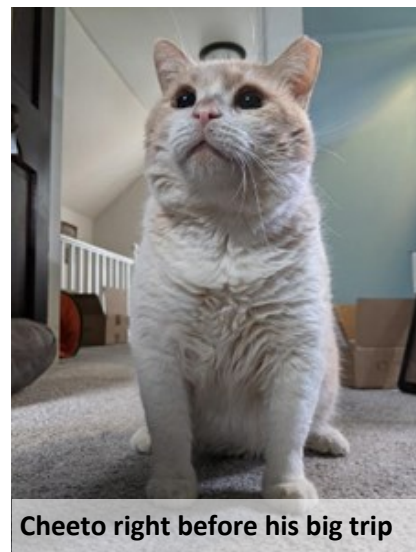
Cheeto's foster pawrents posted his story on special needs cat pages on Facebook. A very nice woman commented saying that Cheeto touched her heart, and that she was looking to adopt a special needs kitty to join her band of special cats! Cheeto had a video call with his prospective pawrents and his new kitty siblings. After that, the rest is history!

Cheeto took a very long trip to NC to go to his new home, in a big flying machine! He was an absolute angel on the flight and took a very long nap. When he arrived in NC, Cheeto was greeted with welcome home signs at his new house. One even had his face on it! Cheeto was

welcomed by his mother Bonnie and his father TJ, as well as his 5 cat siblings. All of his siblings have special needs, just like him! He is excited to be a part of a colony again. Cheeto is settling in well to his new home and loves his catio where he can take in the fresh air. His cat siblings are skeptical but making an effort to bond with Cheeto!

If you'd like to follow Cheeto's journey in his new home, his new pawrents have made him his own page for updates! Follow Cheeto's life at his page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Cheeto-from-IN-to-NC-105490481380845/>



Cheeto right before his big trip



Cheeto's new Colony



Cheeto's new Pawrents had welcome signs for his arrival!

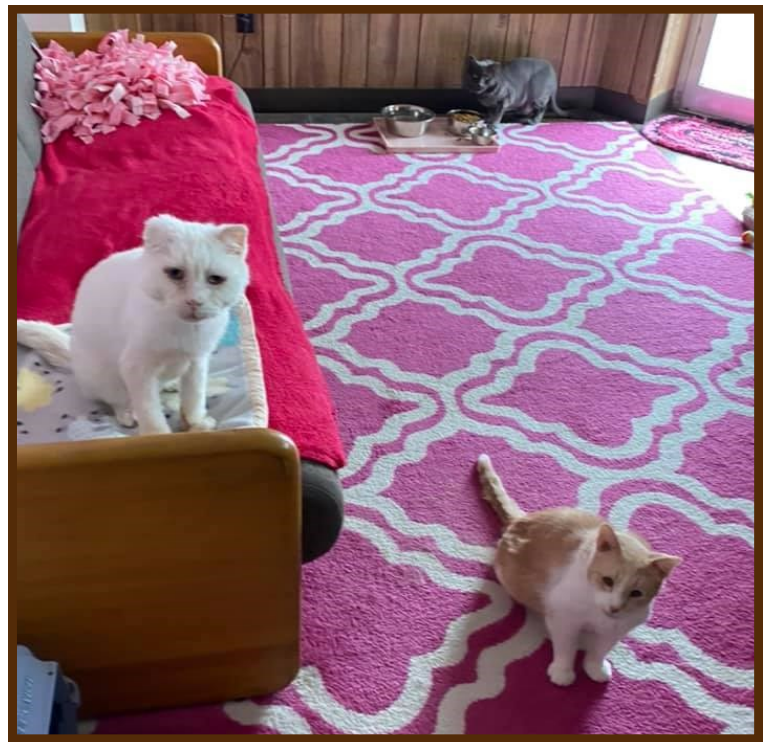
Kings of the Casa

Our home base, Casa Meow, is where we provide post-op care to the cats we've trapped. Over the years, we've trapped cats that aren't able to go back outside for various reasons. Ideally, their caretakers bring them inside—this has happened many times. Other times, we ask the rescues if they can take the cats into their adoption programs.

Twilight had been wandering a neighborhood for several months with an injury preventing him from walking on his front leg. Several people were feeding him intermittently but not regularly. It took us several attempts, but we finally got him with our drop trap. We took him to have his paw evaluated and to be neutered and vaccinated. The paw wasn't broken thankfully, it was a soft tissue injury. We learned he was a senior, was painfully thin and FIV+. We weren't able to find an owner and the caretakers weren't willing to take him in. Due to his advanced age and poor health, he wasn't a candidate for adoption with a rescue. We kept Twilight to nurse him back to health. We got some weight on him and his paw finally healed. By that time, we'd fallen in love with Twilight and figured Casa Meow needed a resident cat.

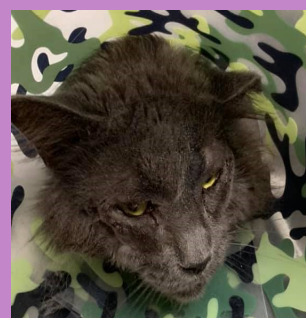
Some time went by and then LB, short for Lonesome Boy, came into our lives. Just like Twilight, LB had been wandering, injured and in bad shape. We weren't able to trap him, but a caretaker was. LB was in bad shape - geriatric, his joints were riddled with arthritis, exasperated by metal from BBs he'd been shot with. LB presented feral - we couldn't touch him for months. We were able to heal his wounds but it took us months and months to heal his emotional wounds. Humans had not been good to LB. We finally won him over and by that time, Twilight had taken quite a liking to him so LB became Casa Meow resident #2.

A year ago, we were contacted about a cat hit by a car. We rushed him to our vet only to find out he wasn't hit by a car at all, he was just in very poor condition. Painfully thin, and very, very old, he was so filthy that his tail looked like it had been run over by a car. His teeth were all broken or missing and his gums had pockets of pus. Even though he was in horrendous shape, he purred and just loved attention. We named Murray and began getting him healthy. Thanks to social media, we learned Murray's owners had moved away years ago and he'd been the neighborhood tomcat fed by multiple people.

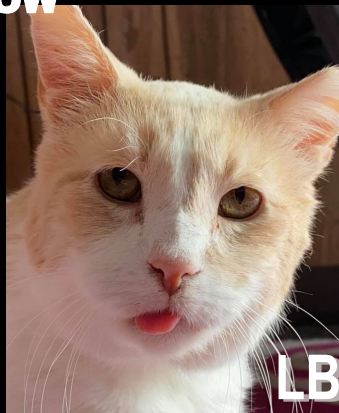


Just like Twilight and LB, Murray had no business being outside ever again and so he became Casa Meow's third resident cat.

LB absolutely loves other cats so he accepted Murray right away. Twilight wasn't so keen on sharing his space; he'd been king of the Casa for some time. Nobody's pushing Murray around so occasionally he has a smack down with Twilight, but most of the time, every-



NOW



BABY IT'S COLD OUTSIDE!

We wash and sanitize 15-25 traps each week. When the weather is nice, we wash them in the yard but when cold temps hit, the only option is a car wash. NW Indiana winters can be bitterly cold - sometimes the water actually freezes on the traps before we can get them clean! Our dream is to have an indoor, heated trap washing station and that dream can be realized with the purr-chase of Meow House. The new facility will have a heated, indoor room just for washing traps! No more freezing our tails off cleaning traps!



Thanks so much to all our wonderful friends for sending much needed supplies from our Amazon wish list. We couldn't do it without your support!

Donate items
from our
amazonwishlist



Are you using **AMAZON SMILE**? It's the same Amazon except a portion of your sale goes to the charity of your choice! Go to smile.amazon.com and select Meow Mission. You shop like normal and we receive a donation!

AmazonSmile in the Amazon Shopping app

You can now support your favorite charity on iPhone & Android phones



Shop [smile.amazon](https://smile.amazon.com) — it's the same amazon except a portion of your sale gets donated to Meow Mission.

Go to [smile.amazon](https://smile.amazon.com) and select Meow Mission as your charity of choice.

amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.



10th Annual

Alleys for Alley Cats

FUNDRAISER

Bowling • Silent Auction • Raffles
Polish Dinner Take Out

Sunday, October 18th, Bowlers Country Club

Last month we celebrated our 10th annual Alley for Alley Cats Fundraiser. Normally we have a packed bowling alley and lots of people enjoying Polish Dinners. Like everything this year, things were very different from the past - Polish dinners were carry out due to social distancing and bowling attendance was limited to every other lane. We also decided to scrap the raffles and instead offer a silent auction - in person and online (via Facebook).

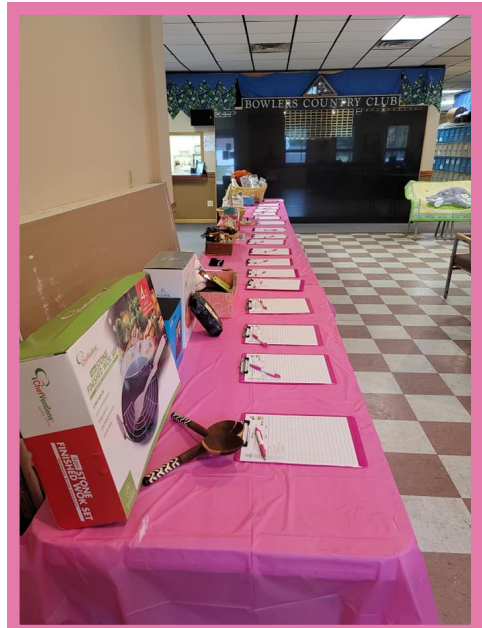
We were so pleased that we were able to sell 85 dinners and filled our 7 bowling lanes. Everyone had a wonderful time and the auction was amazing! There were several highly coveted items, and the bidding got intense! Our auction alone raised \$2,000, a huge success! At the end of the day, we'd raised enough to neuter 120 cats!

Thank you to our sponsors, donors, volunteers and our participants. We had a great time for a great cause.



Our top auction item - this adorable cat quilt handcrafted by volunteer Mary Ann Miller. It was quite a nail-biter down to the last minute!

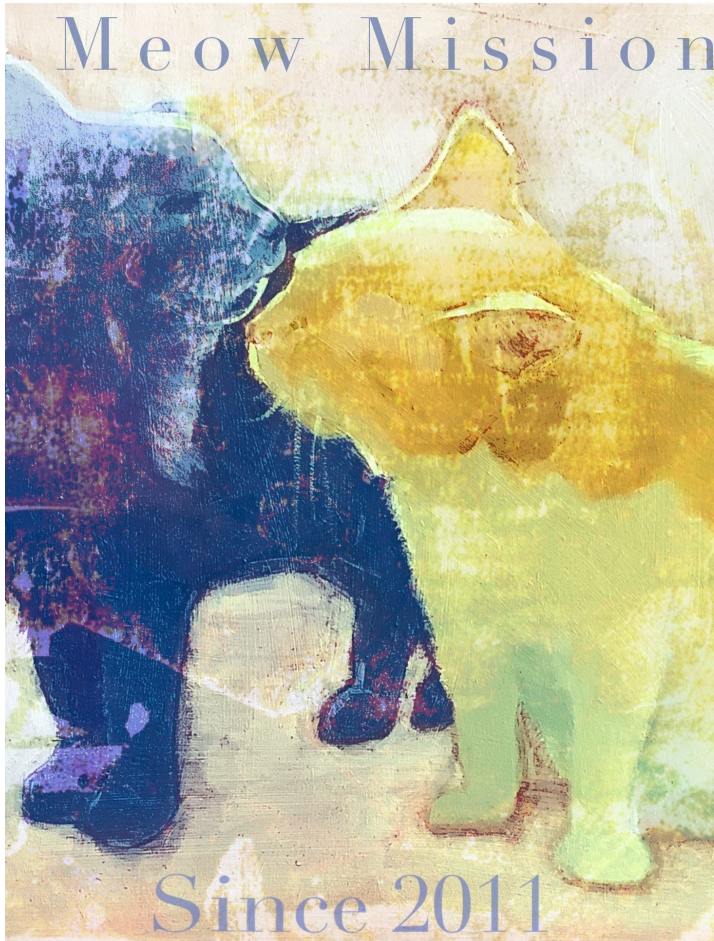
Sponsored by:



Jim Dunfee & Associates
Del Meyer, ABR
Broker Associate



Holiday Gifts Made Easy



MEOW MISSION ANNIVERSARY TOTE BAG

We're celebrating our 10 year anniversary with this awesome tote bag fundraiser through Custom Ink. It's adorned with this gorgeous image of our cats Twilight and LB. Hand drawn by our volunteer, artist Tina Brink, this is a one-of-a-kind bag. Our goal is to sell 100 bags.

These make for great holiday gifts! Buy one for yourself and those on your shopping list.

Please get yours today - the promotion **ends November 30th** so time is limited.



AVAILABLE FOR A LIMITED TIME!
Get yours before **November 30th**

www.customink.com/fundraising/thecatsoutofthebag

Have a hard-to-shop-for person? Want to do good AND give a great gift? Make a donation in your loved one's name and we'll send them a special holiday card recognizing your gift.

Go to: www.themeowmission.org and order yours today.

FRONT OF CARD:

a special gift for you



INSIDE OF CARD:

(Insert Name) made a donation of \$ (insert amount) in your name to the Meow Mission.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS & A BLESSED
NEW YEAR



Kitten Mittens!

Meet Polydactyl Paulie! This adorable little guy was born with extra toes, look at his feet, they look like he has mittens! Cats born with extra toes are known as "Polydactyl" (A gene mutation causes the extra digits). Sailors considered Polydactyl cats extra good luck—their big paws made for great mousing and, they helped keep the cat balanced while the ship was in rocky seas. We don't know for sure where Polycactyls originated, but it is believed they came from England and made their way over to the states on ships. Some people know Polydactyls as "Hemingway Cats". Earnest Hemingway was gifted a polydactyl by a ship's captain and he fell in love. Spay/neuter wasn't considered in the 1930s so one cat became dozens and dozens over the years. Today, there are approximately 40-50 cats, half of which tend to be Polydactyl. They're all born on the property and to control the population, each female is allowed one litter; and then they're fixed. We of course don't advocate for any purposeful breeding, but the Hemingway cats are well cared for and are enclosed on the property. Paulie's caretaker decided to make him an inside kitty.



Team Leader Needed!



Make a difference with your free time and help us help community cats. **MUST LOVE CATS!** You also need to be organized, have good interpersonal skills and be able to use a smartphone and google drive (we'll teach you). Contact us:

574-300-3353 or

info@themeowmission.org

Cleaning volunteers needed!

Do you have a few extra hours a month?
We'd love your help!

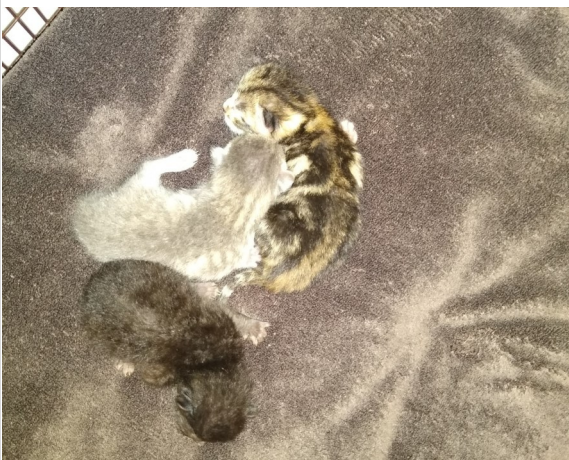


Email us at info@themeowmission.org

Kittens, kittens, kittens everywhere!

2020 has been a challenging year for everyone, including community cats. Due to the state mandate of closing veterinary practices to "non-essential" surgeries, we were unable to trap for close to 8 weeks. As gestation is just 60 days, and cats can have 3 litters a year, the female cats we were unable to alter had litters of kittens. Every colony we've trapped at since the reopening has had at least one, if not multiple litters of kittens. Our wonderful friends at Pet Refuge take as many kittens as they can, but there is a limit on space. It breaks our hearts to return kittens to the outside, but this year it's been necessary. We keep track, though, and go back to alter them when they're big enough so at least they don't have to worry about the burdens of mating.

This little bundle of joy, just a few days old, was found under an elderly caretaker's dining room table! We scooped them up, along with mom, and thankfully found a foster to keep them until space opened up in rescue. All three boys have since been adopted in fur-ever homes through Pet Refuge's adoption program.



Follow us on Facebook! www.facebook.com/TheMeowMission

Volunteer Spotlight: JESSICA AND ERIC



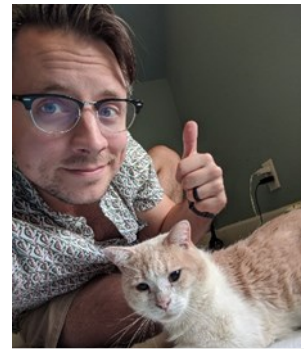
Jessica with Cheeto heading to his forever home

Jessica and Eric are two of our volunteers at the Meow Mission. They both attended Notre Dame for their PhDs in chemistry. Eric graduated in 2017, and Jessica will finish up her degree this summer. Jessica became involved in the Meow Mission in March of 2020, after the Covid-19 pandemic caused her research lab at Notre Dame to shut down for a few months. With the extra

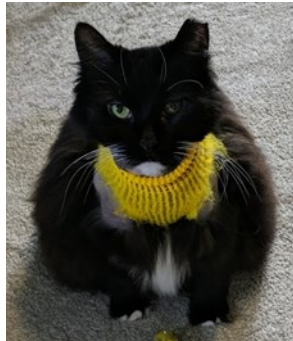
free time, she decided to put it to use helping cats! Jessica started as a Saturday cat caregiver and trapped on some weekends. With the pandemic going on, Jessica started to help with online events such as the trivia event and the online silent auction (with Eric functioning as technical support).

When returning from trapping one Sunday, Jessica met Cheeto. After falling in love with him, Jessica

conscripted Eric into taking him home so they could serve as his foster parents for several months while he recovered. Because Eric is a technology consultant, he works at home which allowed him to bond with Cheeto and give him all the attention he needed! Jessica and Eric have just returned from a trip to North Carolina to deliver Cheeto to his new forever home.



Eric & his best bud, Cheeto



Pretty Lucy

At home in Indiana, Cheeto's foster sister Lucy is enjoying the extra space and attention she's getting now that he has a forever home (she's a diva)! Lucy is currently recovering from surgery to remove a hemangiosarcoma tumor in her neck and asks for your thoughts and prayers as she continues her chemotherapy treatment. Jessica and Eric are excited to continue work with the Meow Mission, and hope to be able to continue to help out even after they move next year.

Shop at
Kroger
& Help
Meow
Mission



www.kroger.com/communityrewards



and enroll in community rewards - Select Meow Mission (#RG798) as your charity of choice. Kroger will donate a portion of each sale to us. It's that simple!

DONATE YOUR PAW POINTS



DONATE YOUR PAW POINTS to MEOW MISSION

Every box of Fresh Step litter has a special code - use that code on the Fresh Step website and donate those points to Meow Mission where we can redeem them for cleaning supplies and litter. Don't want to set up an account? Cut off the code and mail it to us at PO Box 192, Mishawaka, IN 46546



INDIANA

FIX EM

PET FRIENDLY

Choose the Pet Friendly License Plate and the extra funds will go to nonprofit groups like Meow Mission for spay/neuter surgeries!!

Wish List

- Hard Cat Food
- XL Puppy Pads
- Tuna
- Trash Bags
- Paper Towels
- Clumping Kitty Litter
- Purina Kitten Chow
- Hand Soap