

GAT TALES



THE MEOW MISSION
PROACTIVE POPULATION CONTROL
THE HUMANE WAY

Newsletter Volume 8 Issue 1

Spring 2022

Wow, what a year 2021 was. As the world continues to struggle redefining normal after the pandemic, Meow Mission is working harder than ever to help those left behind - community cats. We were forced to cancel dozens of trappings last year due to COVID-induced cessation of spay/neuter surgeries. While the world as we know it came to a halt, cats continued to breed, birthing thousands upon thousands of homeless kittens. Births we could have prevented.

Cats can begin breeding at 4 months old and can have three litters a year - they also are fertile their entire lives. Basically, cats are really good at having more cats.

Because we weren't able to trap for so long, each colony we had on our Trap/Neuter/Return schedule had a population explosion.

Once clinics opened back up, we were so far behind, two rounds of litters were born. Instead of an average size colony of 7-8 cats, we now face colonies of 15-20. It truly is a breeding pandemic and we continue to struggle to catch up.

The wonderful staff of ABC Clinic, our only local low cost spay/neuter resource, also felt the burden of the pandemic.

Staff shortages and an overwhelming need for spay/neuters meant less capacity for TNR groups like Meow Mission. Instead of 25 appointments every week, we were only able to secure eight.

Needless to say, between the massive population explosion, the huge backlog of colonies in need of trapping, and shortage of spay/neuter availability, we had to find another solution.

Our prayers were answered when we learned about a new, low cost spay/neuter clinic, SNIP, in Hobart Indiana. Hobart is an hour and 15 minutes away - much further than we'd like, but it was our only option if we wanted to continue helping community cats.

We reached out to Dr. Wascher and her staff who came highly recommended. This past May, they stepped up and helped us when we found ourselves with 17 trapped cats and no surgery spots. The SNIP Clinic was able to spay/neuter all 17 cats in one day; we were grateful to be so blessed.

Once our new friends at SNIP learned of our massive backlog of colonies to trap, they made room in their schedules to accommodate as many as 30 cats a week for us. We've been driving to Hobart weekly ever since and are scheduled through the rest of the year.

Well into 2022, we are finally making headway! We still haven't caught up to our extensive backlog, but each week brings us closer.

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

Trap/Neuter/Return

Trap

Colony cats are captured using humane traps.

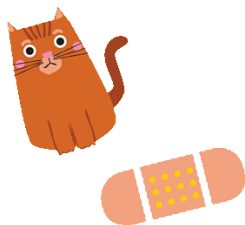
STEP 01



Neuter

Captured cats are brought to a provider to be spayed/neutered and (usually) vaccinated.

STEP 02



Return

The recovered cats are returned to their original territory and set free!

STEP 03



Volunteer Spotlight:

Misty Morris

What do you do for Meow Mission? I transport cats from ABC, help with cat care, and clean traps each week.

How long have you volunteered with Meow Mission? I've been donating to Meow Mission since 2016 and volunteering since 2017.

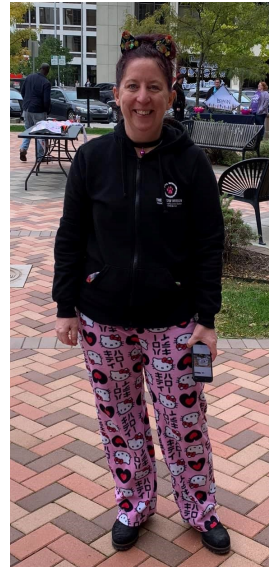
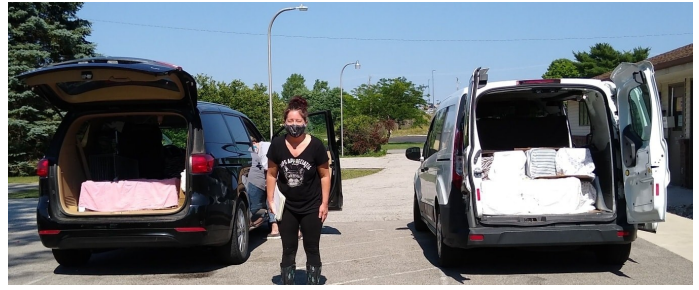
Why did you choose to volunteer for Meow Mission? I have always been a cat lover. I had previously been volunteering for my friend's dog rescue and had met Jodi at events. Being said cat lover, I took a chance and came to a volunteer day to learn more about the mission and I was hooked.

What do you like about volunteering for Meow Mission? We make a difference. We give cats a voice. Yes, it can be emotionally difficult, but the big picture and giving cats a chance at life without constant fighting and breeding make it worth it. Plus, I get to spend some time with our amazing boys that we were fortunate to make space for.

What do you do when you're not volunteering? I have a full-time job, who are supportive of my volunteer time. In my off time, I love spending time with my three girls (yes, cats); reading Nora Roberts, and binging tv.

What has been the most rewarding, touching, or memorable experience for you? We have done so much amazing acts for the community cats in our area. The most memorable for me, as I was there to watch his progression is LB. He was a community cat who was trapped and brought to us for treatment. He's a senior with mobility issues and at the time, skin issues. The mobility issues turned out to be bb's being imbedded in his body, along with arthritis. His skin issues cleared up over a few months, and shockingly with help from some volunteers, LB turned into a love bug. I'm extremely thankful Jodi allowed us to keep and care for him. I've also met some amazing caretakers who would give up their last dollar to make sure their cats are taken care of. Why would you encourage others to volunteer with us? Volunteering is ESSENTIAL! It sort of completes me to know that I'm making a difference. It doesn't have to take a ton of time, you literally can do 1-2 hours weekly-monthly. We have a great group of people, we have several annual events and a volunteer cook out. Don't like people? come in and care for the cats.

Do you have any pets? I have three girls, Samantha (Stinker), Maggie May, and Cali Rose. I consider these my kids, as I have no human kind. My photos consist of my girls and the Meow Mission boys, with a bit of life in between.



What to do if you find kittens



Are the kittens visibly sick or injured?

YES: Contact an animal welfare organization or shelter that can help you assess whether the kittens need intervention. If that isn't possible, take the kittens to a veterinarian immediately.

NO: Estimate the kittens' ages by how they look.



Avoid handling the kittens and watch them from a distance for 10-12 hours. If the kittens seem healthy and content, mom will usually return when she feels it's safe. If the kittens are exposed, attempt to find a safe hiding spot nearby, move them and monitor them from a safe distance for 10-12 hours.

Great! Kittens this age usually don't need much from people or their mom. As long as they are not in immediate danger, you can contact a local provider to schedule spay/neuter surgery.

Did mom return?

YES

Great! Leave kittens alone for now. When the kittens are eight or more weeks old they can be scheduled for spay/neuter surgery along with mom.

NO

These kittens may need your help and you'd make a great rescuer. If you can't foster them yourself, contact a local animal welfare group for guidance.

Taking newborn kittens to your local shelter should be a last resort.

Many animal shelters can't provide the kind of around-the-clock care that kittens need. In fact, within a few hours of arriving at many shelters, young kittens are at risk of being killed.

The best way to help most kittens is to leave them with their mother, and then when they are more than eight weeks old, contact your local shelter for spay/neuter resources.

bestfriendsatl.org



SAVE THEM ALL

54 cats in one weekend what were we thinking?

... we were thinking we LOVE cats! But, we don't love them outdoors, and we sure don't want more of them born outdoors!

As previously mentioned, we struggled all last year to try and catch up from the massive backlog of cats we weren't able to get to the previous year. Even using both ABC and SNIP Clinics each week, we still weren't going to come close to catching up. Our friends at the SNIP Clinic knew we were still struggling and offered a spay/neuter day for just our cats and fixed a whopping 42 —that's on top of the 12 we also had at ABC Clinic.

"Normal" weekend trapping involves 1-3 colonies of cats, 3-4 trappers/transporters, and 5-6 cat care volunteers. When we decided to take on 50 cats in one weekend, we knew we'd need more help - a lot more! Our volunteers were super excited to take on the challenge and it was all hands on deck. We had teams of two all over South Bend and Mishawaka, trapping and transporting cats.

Our dedicated volunteers started early Sunday morning and worked until early evening. Luckily we have a nice, big recovery room where we are able to get the cats all ready for their trip to the clinic the next day.

As the cats came in, we gave each one a soft bed (wrapped in a puppy pad to catch any messes) and a nice meal to tide them over for the night. We check them frequently to make sure everyone is comfy and clean up any messes. We use special handling equipment to keep the cats (and us) safe.

We tucked in our 12 cats at ABC and our 42 at Casa Meow. Needless to say, that's a whole lotta puppy pads and food! Not to mention all the cleaning supplies needed to clean and sanitize the space.

Volunteers come in late night to clean up any messes and make sure everyone's ok.

The morning crew came in early the next day to clean up all the kitties and get them ready for their long trip to Hobart. We hate having to put them through the 1 -1/4 hour

You did
WHAT in 3
days??





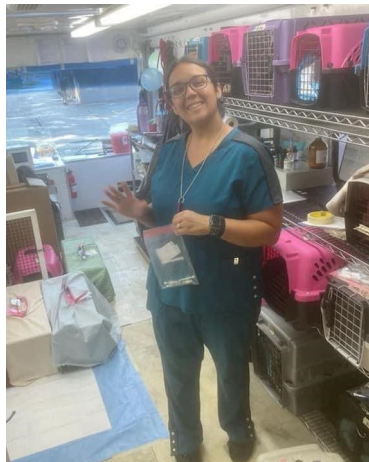
drive but it's a necessity to meet our spay/neuter needs.

The Meow Mobile holds 26 traps which has always been enough space for us. Up until now, that is! Thankfully we have volunteers with large vehicles so we loaded up two vans and away we went! It was a cat-caravan! Two volunteers drove our cats to Hobart and two more volunteers went to pick them up. That was a lot of miles and gas to use but it helped us get caught up and that's the important part!

Each one of our kitties was spayed or neutered, vaccinated for rabies and distemper, treated for parasites and eartipped.



Arriving at the SNIP Clinic ...

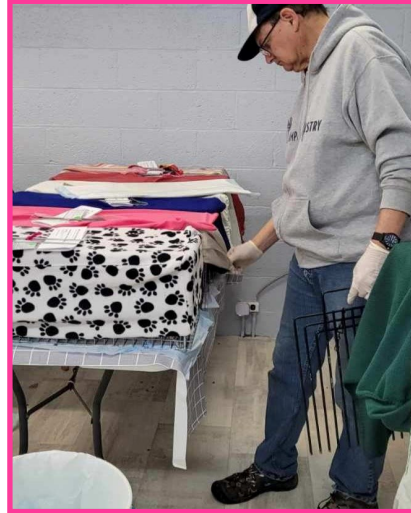




One big, stinky mess to clean up!

While a set of volunteers worked their tails off cleaning up Casa Meow to ready the recovery room for the post-op cats, our drivers make the trip back to Hobart .

Once back from SNIP, a new set of cat caregivers are armed and ready to feed, water, clean and pad our post-op kitties.



Volunteers use a "divider" - a special piece of equipment that keeps the cat contained while we safely care for it in the trap.



Full tummies and all tucked in for the night!



Every now and then we're lucky and get a friendly kitty to cuddle. This lucky boy was adopted by his caretaker and gets to live indoors.



After the kitties have stayed overnight and eaten and eliminated, it's time to go back to their outdoor homes. This is an incredibly satisfying part of what we do. The caretakers are so happy to see their kitties. The cats can't wait to get out of the traps and enjoy being home, free from the burdens of mating, and able to live long, happy lives.



THE MEOW MISSION
PROACTIVE POPULATION CONTROL
THE HUMANE WAY

Gently Used

DESIGNER PURSE AUCTION

Thursday, April 28th, 6pm

Monterrey Mexican Bar & Grill
507 E McKinley Ave, Mishawaka

This event begins on Facebook and concludes in purr-son at
Monterrey Mexican Bar & Grill, 507 E McKinley Ave, Mishawaka, IN 46545

 www.facebook.com/TheMeowMission

Facebook bidding begins at 8am EST on Monday, April 25th and ends Thursday, April 28th at 6:30pm EST.

Live in purr-son bidding begins at 6pm EST on Thursday, April 28th and ends at 6:45pm EST. This means that in purr-son guests will have priority in last chance bidding.

We have MANY gorgeous bags up for bid.

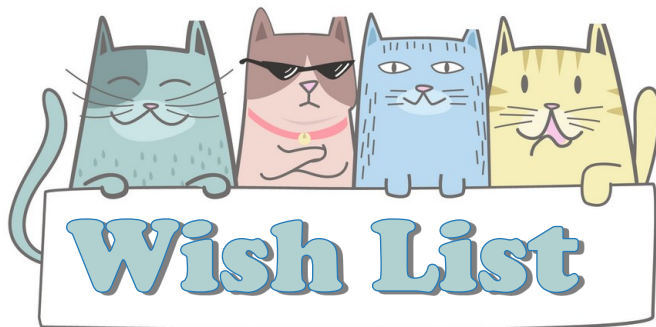
All proceeds go towards spay/neutering of Michiana's Community Cats.

Meow Mission is a 501c3 registered nonprofit. Your donations are tax deductible.

www.themeowmission.org | PO Box 192, Mishawaka, IN 46546 | 574.300.3353



Sponsored by:



- * Paper Towels
- * Tuna
- * Bleach
- * Laundry Detergent
- * Kitty Litter (clumping)
- * Puppy Pads
- * Gas Gift Cards
- * Postage Stamps

Drop off locations: ABC Clinic, 4525 S Burnett Drive, South Bend

or 211 W 16th Street, Mishawaka, **Back Porch**

- * Hard Cat Food (any brand)
- * Chewy Gift Card
- * Royal Canin Renal Wet Cat Food
- * Purina Kitten Chow
- * Anti-bacterial Wipes

11th Annual

Alleys for Alley Cats FUNDRAISER

Bowling • Silent Auction • Raffles Polish Dinner Take Out

Sunday, October 17th, Bowlers Country Club

Last month we celebrated Global Cat Day with our annual Alleys for Alley Cats Bowling, Polish Dinner, and Silent Auction Fundraiser. Sponsored by Del Meyer of Weichert Realtors (Jim Dunfee & Associates), Drive & Shine and Notre Dame Federal Credit Union, this was our most successful event to date. We raised enough to **spay/neuter over 200 cats!** Thank you to all our wonderful supporters, friends, and amazing volunteers!



Sherry and Terri selling hand-made cat toys

Thank You to Our Sponsors!

Weichert
REALTORS®

Jim Dunfee & Associates
Del Meyer, ABR
Broker Associate

www.ask4del.net
574-274-4875



Joyce, Anne and Kylie check-in bowlers



Misty at dinner check-in



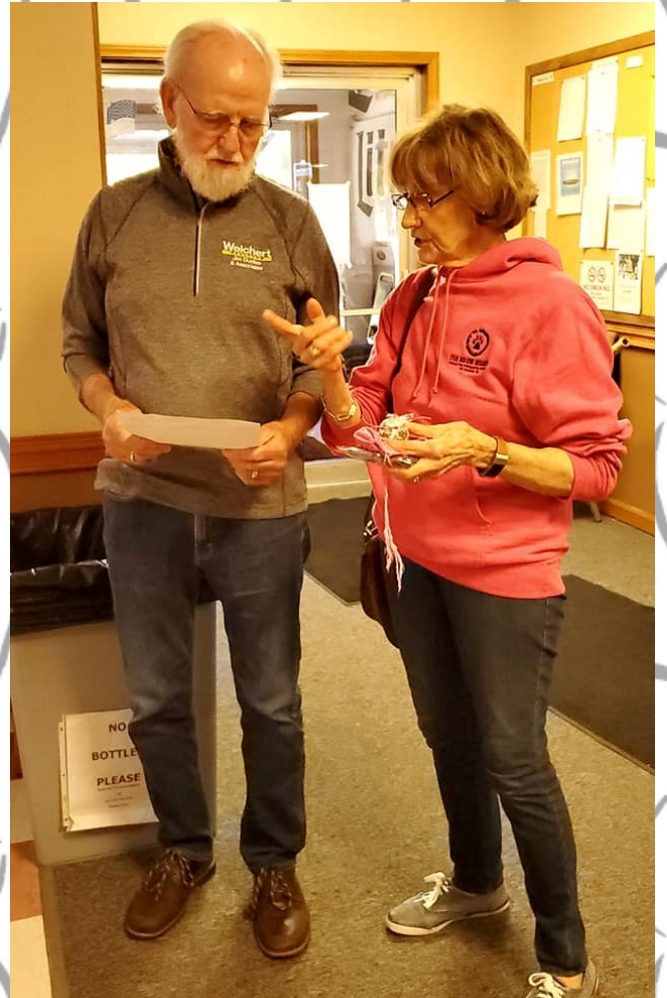
Jennifer and Becky manning the raffle table

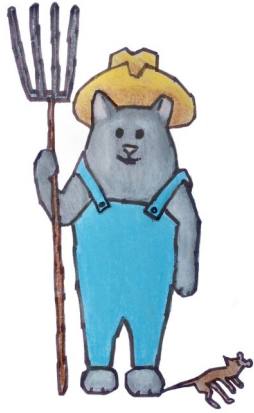


winners



FAMILY FUN



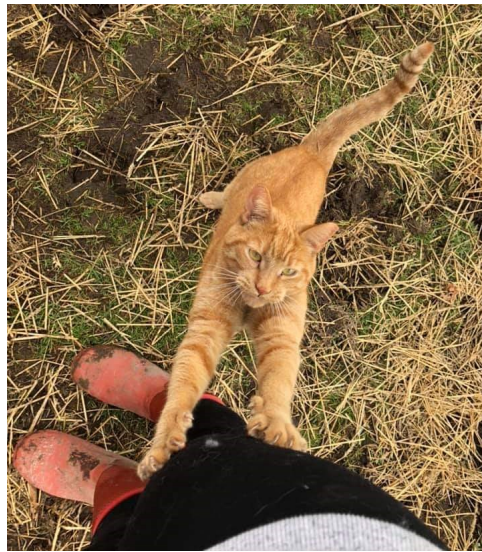


BARN CATS

Meow Mission's Barn Cat Program is a life-saving initiative designed to place unfriendly cats in barn homes where they earn their keep by providing all natural rodent control. Because the cats aren't friendly, they can't be adopted into a traditional home. Our friends at the Humane Society and SB Animal Resource Center agree with us—these cats deserve the right to life. Instead of euthanizing them, they allow us to pull them out of the shelter and place them with families who have acreage and outbuildings.

We use the term "barn" loosely—the truth is that we've placed cats in all kinds of interesting, non traditional homes:

- Warehouses
- Hardware Stores
- Man Caves & She Sheds
- Grain Mills
- Wineries
- Garden Centers
- Industrial locations



Know anyone who'd like to give a working cat a home? There's no adoption fee and all introductory supplies are included. Contact our Barn Cat Program Manager, Courtney Hopkins: 574-220-6438 or courtney@southbendweddingcakes.com

**NEUTERED
BARN CATS
574-300-3353**



Want to save a life and give a purr-manent home to a cat in risk? Contact us today.

NO ADOPTION FEE!



**We need
your bags!**

Purses for Purrs is an auction of gently used designer bags and accessories. This fundraiser helps fund spay/neuter surgeries for Michiana's community cats. Please donate your gently used designer bag or accessory today. Donations accepted at ABC Clinic, 4525 S Burnett Drive, South Bend and Resale to the Rescue, 905 W McKinley, Mishawaka.

Mend-a-Cat



As most of you know, our main focus is lowering the free-roaming cat population through Trap/Neuter/Return. Sadly, we occasionally come across cats that are ill or injured and need further medical care. We do what we can, within reason, to heal them and send them on their way.

That's where our Mend-a-Cat fund comes in. We work with several veterinarians who provide discounted medical care. We have an infirmary

dedicated to caring for these poor kitties and wonderful volunteers to provide tender loving care.

If you'd like to make a donation to help with emergency medical care, please send your check to PO Box 192, Mishawaka, IN 46546 or donate online at

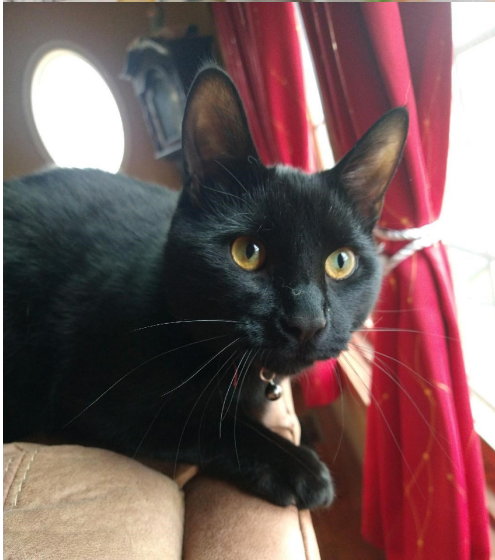
themeowmission.org. Your donation is 100% tax deductible.



Often kittens are born with Upper Respiratory Infections; many times the infection spreads to their eyes and can lead to permanent damage. This poor kitty didn't receive the treatment needed and his eye had to be removed. Luckily he has a great caretaker who decided he could become a full-time barn resident.



Trike, a little black kitten, was found by a kind lady at a campground. He'd gotten tangled up in a lawn chair and couldn't escape. She freed him but he'd been there long enough that his poor little arm was damaged beyond repair. She rushed him to us so we could get him the care he needed. His arm couldn't be saved and was amputated. While recovering with us, our volunteer Brandon fell in love and decided Trike needed to come home with him. Trike is king of the castle in his furrever home. Trike doesn't miss his arm one bit!



Norman had what looked like a bite wound on his hind end. Turns out it was actually a tumor. Our wonderful veterinarian removed it and gave Norman a great prognosis. We kept him while he recovered and then he went home to his loving caretaker.

chewy

Wish List

www.chewy.com/g/the-meow-mission-inc_b77905490

The next time you're shopping at Chewy, check out our wish list. Every item you donate is money we don't have to spend on supplies and that means more money for spay/neuter! As an all volunteer, non-funded charity, we rely on your donations to operate. We greatly appreciate the help!



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

*Our shipping address: 211 W 16th Street,
Mishawaka, IN 46544*

Donate items
from our
amazon wishlist

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

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

amazon smile
You shop. Amazon gives.



LB and Murray: *a Love Story*

We have three resident cats at Casa Meow: Twilight, LB and Murray. All super seniors, we refer to them as “our boys” but the truth is they’re way past retirement age! All three cats came to us via the Facebook page South Bend Lost and Found Pets. Kind South Bend residents posted pictures of each cat, all in horrible physical condition. Twilight, our first resident, wasn’t walking on his right front foot. It took us over a week, but we finally were able to trap him with our special drop trap. We rushed him to our vet where he was neutered and his injury treated. While he recovered with us, we posted his picture on all social media and registered him as a found pet with SB Animal Resource Center. After the mandatory holding time, no one claimed him. A senior cat, and quite thin, we couldn’t return him to an area not knowing if he had someone to care for him. What were we to do? We kept him!

Next came LB, short for Lonesome Boy, a name his caretaker dubbed him. He was terribly fearful of people and very frail. Riddled with arthritis, we learned through x-rays that his legs had metal shards from a BB-gun. No wonder this boy was fearful of humans!

Once trapped and vetted, LB recovered with us. He was feral acting but as our volunteers cared for him, we learned he was just fearful, not feral. We also learned he loved other cats, especially kittens! Thanks to the many cats in



and out of Casa Meow, LB came around and decided he’d trust us. Armed with the loudest purr you’ll ever hear, LB absolutely loves attention - be it cat or human. Just like Twilight, we did our due diligence to find his owner, yet no one claimed him. With his advanced age, and terrible arthritis, LB just couldn’t go back outside. Since LB loved other cats, we decided Twilight needed a friend and he became Casa Meow resident #2.

Last came our super old man, Murray. He was picked up at a pizza place by a kind lady who thought he’d been hit by a car. As it turns out, he wasn’t - he was simply very old, malnourished, and frail. This once-white cat was so covered in filth, his tail was actually flat from lack of grooming. His mouth was full of sores, broken teeth and tons of infection. Yet Murray purred and head butted for pets from the moment we saw him.

It took months and months to get him well and nourished, all the time he showed an incredible spirit and love for affection.

We learned from our social media posts that Murray had been abandoned, his people moved away and left him. The entire neighborhood fed him, and a kind lady let him in her enclosed porch during the polar vortex.

Once again, we were faced with a “what do we do” situation with an elderly cat that couldn’t go back outside. He is such an incredible lover that all the volunteers fell in love and of course we made room for him! LB accepted him right away, but it took Twilight quite a while to warm up to him. They’ll never be good friends but they have accepted each other. And, thanks to Feliway diffusers, they’ll even share a couch in harmony.

Last year, we were able to move into our own building and the boys’ now have an enormous room - more than 4x the size of their previous home. A wonderful donor gave us a huge sectional sofa and LB’s previous caretaker bought him some pet steps so he could enjoy sofa life along with Murray and Twilight.

Once LB was able to get up on the sofa with the other boys, he and Murray seemed to gravitate towards each other. We started finding them next to each other, even though there’s plenty of room on the sofa to spread out.

As time has moved on, they’ve become inseparable. We constantly find them cuddled up, often using each other as pillows. They like to share the heated beds, even though we have one for each cat. LB has taken it upon himself to become Murray’s personal groomer - often we find him with his paws wrapped around Murray, holding him still while he grooms him head to toe! Murray’s fur is the softest it’s ever been.

Every now and then Twilight picks a fight with LB - and Murray is quick to jump in and give him the smack down - LB’s his buddy!

We find it so remarkable that these old men have formed such a bond. As tomcats (unaltered males), had they met on the street, they would have viciously fought over females and territory. Once neutered, not only are they able to live in harmony, they have actually developed a loving relationship. Neutering not only safeguards their health—it also improves their emotional health.

Murray has developed the very beginning of kidney disease and now needs prescription food. Unfortunately, it’s very expensive but is essential for his well being. Kidney disease, especially in males, isn’t uncommon for cats at advanced age so it wasn’t a shocker. In order to give him the needed nutrients, he is on prescription Royal Canin renal and is doing great. **We could use help with his food and any donations are appreciated. You can purchase at Family Pet Health Center: 574-282-2303, let them know you’d like to donate food for Meow Mission’s Murray and they’ll set you up.** Or, you can always donate a Chewy gift card so we can purchase it. Murray appreciates the help!



HELP WANTED

Do you have a few Sunday hours to spare? Do you want to be proactive in making a significant impact on lowering the population of homeless cats? Do you have patience? Do you like a challenge? Do you love to "win"?! If you said yes to any of these questions, then we have an amazing volunteer opportunity for you!



Every Sunday our volunteers are out trapping cats for spay neuter. You'll be partnered with a trainer who will show you the tricks for catching cats. Plan on spending several hours - usually morning / early afternoon. You need to be able to pick up and carry a cat in a trap (about 15#).

Spaying just ONE cat prevents the births of THOUSANDS of homeless kittens - imagine what a huge impact your time spent will make!



Trapping not for you? We also need cleaners! Cleaners pick their shifts and can work at their leisure.

Join our wonderful volunteers and make a huge difference in community cats' lives! Call/text/email: 574-

300-3353 or Info@themeowmission.org



Multiplication Chart For Cats

Two unaltered breeding cats create 2 litters a year at a survival rate of 2.8 kittens per litter. With continued breeding:

- Year 1 = 12 cats
- Year 2 = 66 cats
- Year 3 = 2,201 cats
- Year 4 = 3,822 cats
- Year 5 = 12,680 cats and so on, multiplying to a staggering
- Year 10 = 80,399,780 cats!



www.instagram.com/themeowmission/
www.facebook.com/TheMeowMission



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!



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!!