

# GAT TALES



**THE MEOW MISSION**  
PROACTIVE POPULATION CONTROL  
THE HUMANE WAY

Newsletter Volume 8 Issue 2

Winter 2022

## Elmo the Fence Kitty

Early this May, residents in a neighborhood west of downtown South Bend were posting pictures of a cat who had a piece of plastic fence stuck around its head. No one posting was also feeding the cat, and the sightings were random, so catching him was not going to be easy. Another challenge was the size of the fence around his neck - it was wider than our largest trap.

After several days and many postings later, someone in the neighborhood stepped up and said we could put traps in her yard in hopes of catching fence kitty. Our friends at South Bend Lost & Found Pets loaned us a dog trap and helped us set it up. Because the cat wasn't regularly fed at the home, it was a crap shoot if he'd come back and find our trap. We're not afraid of a challenge, and this poor kitty needed us.

Working with Tina, a South Bend Lost & Found Pets' volunteer, we began our trapping endeavor. She placed their trail camera in our trapping site and it was just 24 hours later that we had our first sighting of fence kitty. We decided Fence Kitty needed a real name and that name should be Elmo.

The first night, we thought we'd been successful. As it turns out, it wasn't "our" cat we trapped but a random black and white cat instead. We never let a trapped cat go, so off he went to ABC Clinic to be neutered. We reset the dog trap and continued to monitor it.



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



It wasn't until nearly 9pm the next night that the trap went off again ... and there he was! We were so excited to have him!





Elmo in the big dog trap

It took three of us to carry Elmo in that big trap back to Casa Meow. It looked like the fence just needed a tug to come off—unfortunately, that was not the case. Try as we might, it would not budge and Elmo got more and more upset. We decided to settle him in for the night and get him to our vet the next day.

Even under anesthesia, the fence still wouldn't budge. Elmo'd really gotten himself in a jam. Once the fence was cut away, he was neutered, vaccinated, and eartipped. He was a little dehydrated, but otherwise in good health and body condition.



Look how tight the fence was on his neck

After surgery, Elmo chowed down on a can of yummy pate, and gave us lots of dirty looks and hisses. We knew he must have felt so much better.

Even with the fence gone, it was pretty clear Elmo was not a friendly cat; he was feral. Once he'd recovered from his surgery, we took him back to his outdoor home and released him. He was so happy to be free—from us and the fence—that he took off like a bolt of lightning. We cheered him on, knowing how much better his life was without the fence and now free from the burdens of mating.



The fence finally cut off!

Unaltered cats typically live just a few years but a neutered cat can live as long as pet. We hope Elmo has a long, healthy, happy life. A very special thanks to our friend Tina with South Bend Lost and Found Pets and Dr. Kari at Humane Society of Elkhart County.

We love working with other groups; this endeavor was proof positive that together we can help so many more animals.



Elmo so happy to be free from the fence and us!



A year ago, we were trapping and neutering about 15 cats a week. Today, we are at 34-40 every week! Additionally, we have a six- to eight-week waiting list. Needless to say, we are working our tails off.

We've used ABC Clinic since our inception 11 years ago, however, as the demand for our help continues to grow, so does the need for spay/neuter resources and ABC hasn't been able to meet our needs.

A friend introduced us to Dr. Wascher and her staff at the SNIP Clinic in Hobart, Indiana. While Hobart is nearly an hour and a half away, it was our best option for high volume, low cost spay/neuter.

We were so happy to begin this new relationship and be able to fix as many cats as possible so we began making weekly trips to Hobart.

We were so excited this spring when SNIP purchased a mobile spay/neuter clinic. Instead of making the weekly drive, SNIP drove their mobile unit to us each week; no more hour + long drive, all we had to do was step out our back door to get to the clinic. This was and is a huge resource saver for us.

It's been an exciting endeavor for us and our friends at SNIP and we look forward to a long, fruitful relationship.

[sniplowcost.com](http://sniplowcost.com)



The mobile spay/neuter clinic at our back door!



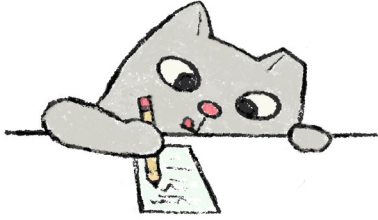
Dr. Wascher, Matt Wascher, Dr. McCaslin and one lucky kitty in our recovery room



Our LB receives his annual vaccines while Twilight patiently waits for his turn

# Volunteer Spotlight:

## Tina & Cindy



One of Tina's original illustrations

he brought his girlfriend with him. The next thing you know we had kittens living under our shed. We knew they would all have to be spayed/neutered but since we only had experience with tame house cats we had no idea how to go about taking care of "feral" cats. After some internet research and a few more kittens we found Meow Mission.

It was spring and as we now know that is the busy season for TNR groups. So we borrowed some traps from MM, got a quick crash course from Jodi and we trapped our own cats. We must have done a decent job because Jodi asked us if we wanted to volunteer.

Cindy and I have been volunteering with Meow Mission for about four years. Our involvement began with pretty much the same story as a lot of colony caretakers. A stray cat showed up in our yard so we started feeding him. After a while



Cindy with a bundle of kittens

We started as trappers and did that every Sunday for a while. It was a very eye opening experience, we had no idea how many cat colonies there are. They are in every type of neighborhood and situation you can think of, from pampered barn cats to cats trying to survive in dilapidated buildings. I can't imagine how much worse it would be if there weren't organizations like Meow Mission helping and supporting the caretakers of these colonies in so many different ways.

Even though we don't trap on a regular basis anymore there are so many other ways we can help. Cindy has been on the post surgery cat care team every Monday since we started. I've done some illustrations for various meow mission event promotions. We've built some very nice wooden cat shelters and given them to colonies in need.

Tina holding a kitten after bath time



Occasionally there are special trapping situations that we like to help with like larger neighborhoods. Last year we spent some of our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day sitting behind a gas station after hours trying to drop trap the last couple of hold outs in a colony.



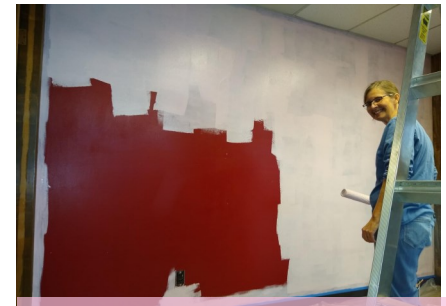
Custom made shelters for Subway cats

Cindy's parents have also offered up their talents and skills. Cindy's dad did some construction work in the last building we were in and he's currently working on an indoor enclosure for one of our permanent resident cats.

Cindy's mom has created some lap quilts for fundraising that are extremely popular auction items. She's also made most of the trap covers and soft pads that are used to make the cats as comfortable as they can be while resting in their traps.

Last but not least we foster kittens. Meow Mission is not a rescue, but sometimes special circumstances arise. With the help of rescues like Pet Refuge, Cindy and I are able to foster and socialize kittens until they are big enough to be neutered and then find forever homes. Some of these kittens have been found in such poor conditions they wouldn't have survived without our help.

Volunteering for Meow Mission is rewarding, we've had a lot fun and we've made some good friends. Sometimes it's also heartbreaking but being able to make a difference in the lives of these animals, no matter how small, has been an amazing experience.



Tina painting our wall (pink, of course!)



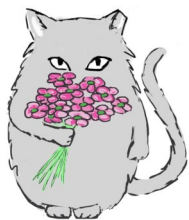
Cindy putting the drop trap together for the gas station kitties

## Other Ways to Give:

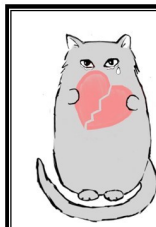
*Include the recipient's name and address and we'll send them a personalized card*

- ◆ Give a Memorial Gift
- ◆ Give a Holiday Gift
- ◆ Give a Birthday Gift

*Happy Birthday!*



For your special day,  
 \_\_\_\_\_ has made a donation in your name. This gift will help us protect and save Michiana's community cats. Happy Birthday from your friends at Meow Mission.



*Many people will walk in and out of your life, but only true friends leave footprints in your heart*

*-Eleanor Roosevelt*

Meow Mission Loving Memorial Fund

A memorial gift to the Meow Mission is a personal remembrance to honor the life of a pet, friend or relative by helping a cat or kitten. A Meow-full Memories gift helps you celebrate those whose memories fill your heart. This gift is of special meaning and is a lasting tribute to protect and save stray cats and kittens.

*From all of us at Meow Mission, we're very sorry for your loss.*

*a special gift for you*



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

HAPPY HOLIDAYS & A BLESSED  
 NEW YEAR



# HELP WANTED

## No Experience Necessary!

*We will provide all the training you need. Volunteer as few or as many hours as you'd like. We schedule per month so you select your days/times each month. Must be at least 18 years old and must love cats! Fill out an application at [themeowmission.org](http://themeowmission.org) or call/text 574-300-3353*



### Sunday Cat Wranglers Needed

Have a few hours to spare Sunday mornings or afternoons? Help us herd cats! Transporters (we have a van) and trappers needed. Volunteer as few or as many Sundays as you want. Typical shift is 3 hours. Could be fewer or more, depending on number of cats. Must be at least 18 years old and lift and carry 15lbs.



### Cat Trapping Instructors Needed

Every week we deliver traps to caretakers and instruct them how to trap. This is a completely flexible position; you can work it into your schedule. Must be at least 18 years old, be able to lift and carry 10lbs and have a valid driver's license.

### Cat Caregivers Needed

We have three resident cats and random injured/ill cats we care for. Volunteers come in every day between 9 and 10 am to feed/water/clean as well as some light housekeeping. If you're more of a night purr-son, we'd also love your help checking on cats and giving medicine (usually in food). Cat cuddling encouraged! Our current needs are Saturdays and the occasional weekdays.



# How We Do What We Do: ... the secret is YOU!

Meow Mission is an all-volunteer, 501c3 registered nonprofit. We have no paid staff. We receive no funds from the city. We rely on donations and grants to provide Trap/Neuter/Return help to our community cats. Since our inception in 2011, we have spay/neutered more than 9,500 cats, thereby preventing tens of thousands of births of homeless kittens.

Caretakers—those compassionate families that feed cats—contact us for help with spay/neuter. We always ask them for a donation to go towards the cost of fixing their colony cats. Less than 40% donate to the cause. That means we need to fund over 500 surgeries annually - that's over \$40,000 alone that we must fundraise. And that's just the spay/neuter cost. That doesn't include the countless injuries we come upon.

We also help our local animal shelter - the Humane Society - with spay/neutering colonies. When they receive complaints about community

cats, they advise the caretakers to contact Meow Mission so we can get the cats trapped and neutered to control the population. Meow Mission covers all the costs of those colonies. This helps the shelter focus on more important things like animal abuse cases. It also helps make the cats better neighbors by removing the propensity of spraying, yowling, and fighting.

We never ask for donations to cover our operating costs—or mortgage, utilities, auto expense, insurance, cleaning supplies (the dirty laundry alone is enormous!), etc. We even cover the cost of feeding and caring for the cats in the traps. We hold events - auctions, bowling, Polish dinners, trivia night, bazaars - to cover those expenses.

We couldn't help any cats without donations from our wonderful supporters. Thank you for all you do to help us help those who can't help themselves - Michiana's community cats.



Thanks for  
the help

## WISH LIST

- \* Paper Towels
- \* Laundry Detergent
- \* Bleach
- \* Clumping Kitty Litter
- \* Hard Cat Food
- \* Trash Bags
- \* Tuna
- \* Puppy Pads

To donate with your credit card: [paypal.me/MeowMission](https://paypal.me/MeowMission)

To donate with a check : PO Box 192, Mishawaka, IN 46546

To donate supplies: donation barrel at ABC Clinic or leave on the back porch anytime at 211 W 16th Street, Mishawaka 46544

To donate items from our **Amazon Wish List**:

[www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/PWME7F3H16LM?ref\\_=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/PWME7F3H16LM?ref_=wl_share)

To donate items from our **Chewy Wish List**:

[www.chewy.com/g/the-meow-mission-inc\\_b77905490](https://www.chewy.com/g/the-meow-mission-inc_b77905490)

12th Annual

# Alleys for Alley Cats

## FUNDRAISER

Bowling • Silent Auction • Raffles

Polish Dinner Take Out

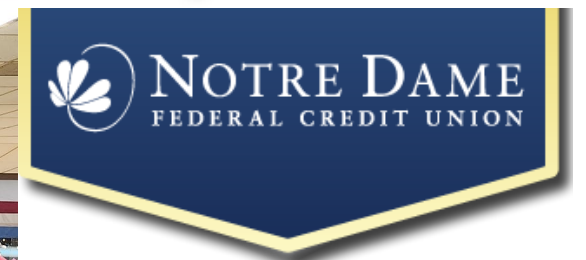
Sunday, October 17th, Bowlers Country Club

**THANK YOU**  
to all of our sponsors!

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!

Thank you to all that supported Alleys for Alley Cats!

**Weichert**  
REALTORS®  
Jim Dunfee  
& Associates  
Del Meyer, ABR  
Broker Associate





# WINNERS!



## CHRISTMAS ONLINE AUCTION!

Wednesday, Dec 7 - Monday, Dec 13

BID HERE:

<https://meowmission.betterworld.org/auctions/meow-mission-christmas-auction>

*We have some amazing items including this gorgeous hand-made cat quilt up for auction. Do your Christmas shopping with us!*

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# Mend-a-Cat

Although our mission is proactive population control through Trap/Neuter/Return, we unfortunately run into our share of injured cats. We do the best we can for them to get them on the road to recovery and back home.

**Cookie** came to us by way of a caretaker in South Bend who noticed a new cat that wasn't using its front leg. He called us, worried the cat had been abandoned and was injured. Since kitty was friendly, he was pretty easy to trap. Cookie

was pretty thin, dehydrated and suffering from broken leg. Our vet confirmed the leg was indeed broken and unrepairable. Cookie's leg had to be amputated. After surgery, Cookie did great. We think he was relieved to have an unusable, painful limb gone.

We don't like to use cones to keep cats from chewing at their incisions.

Instead, we use t-shirts. The cuteness factor is a plus. Cookie wasn't a big fan of his shirt, though, and managed to get it off within minutes. Luckily he wasn't a chewer so he did just fine without.

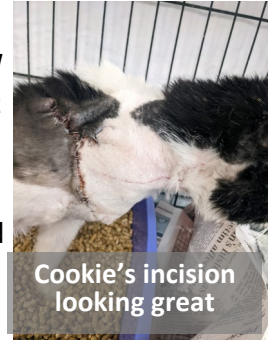


Whitey looking great after her surgery

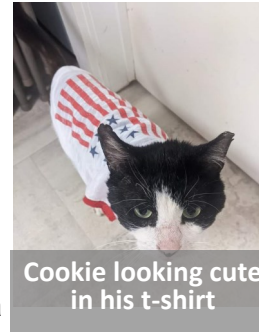
We had hoped Cookie was a lost pet and tried to find his owner. He had no microchip and we'd filled out a found report and posted his pictures on all the lost and found pages. No one claimed Cookie. Since he was such a friendly cat, we really didn't want to put him back outside. Luckily, our friends at Pet Refuge took Cookie and were able to adopt him into his forever home.

Whitey is a feral cat who lives in a small neighborhood in southeastern South Bend. She was a regular at dinner time so her caretaker was very concerned one night when she didn't come for dinner. That night turned into two and then three. On the fourth day, Whitey showed up dragging her right leg. We don't know what happened, but whatever did, broke Whitey's leg. Her loving caretaker, the only purr-son who could ever touch Whitey, rushed her to an emergency clinic. It was there that she learned Whitey's leg was broken and the only option was amputation or euthanasia. The clinic quoted the average cost of an amputation - \$2,000. Her caretaker is not a wealthy woman and wasn't able to afford the amputation but also couldn't bear the idea of losing Whitey who was barely a year old. The clinic contacted us and advised of the situation, hoping we could help. As it turns out, we'd actually been the ones who'd trapped and spayed Whitey!

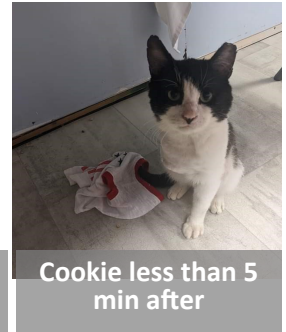
Because we're a nonprofit, we have several very generous veterinarians who donate their time to us and are able to provide services like the amputation at a fraction of the cost, so we were able to help. Whitey had her amputation and stayed with us to recover. We weren't able to touch her, or, even get close to her. She was quite depressed and wouldn't eat so we called her caretaker who came to feed Whitey her meds every day during recovery. She and Whitey had quite the bond; she could even pet Whitey.



Cookie's incision looking great



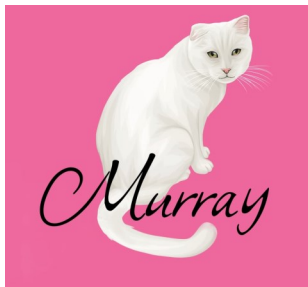
Cookie looking cute in his t-shirt



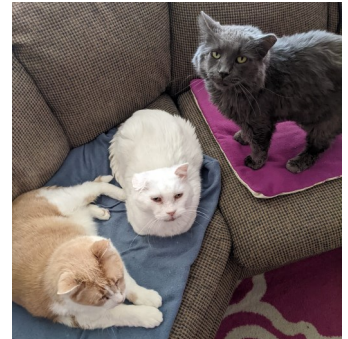
Cookie less than 5 min after

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





We recently had to say goodbye to our beloved Murray. He'd had a very hard life and his advanced years caught up to him. His kidneys were failing and he was suffering. As much as it absolutely tore us up, we knew the most loving thing we could do was to end his suffering. We held him, telling him how much he was loved, while Dr. Lauren gently sent him over the rainbow bridge.

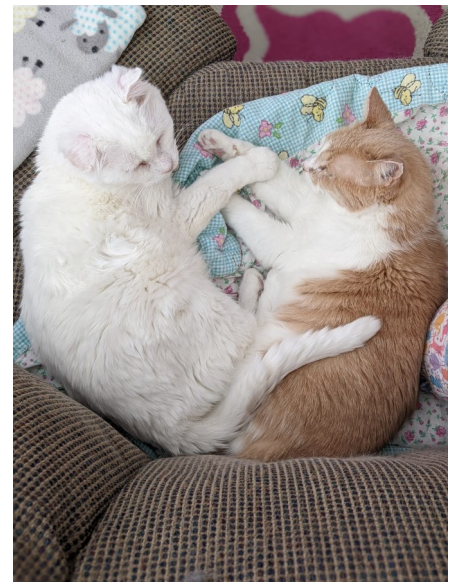


When Murray first came to us two years ago, we were told he didn't have long to live. His mouth was full of infection, broken teeth and swollen gums. He was a mere 7# and absolutely filthy. As bad of shape as he was in, Murray was a giant love bug from the moment we met him. He loved people, even though he'd been abandoned by some years ago. Our volunteers nursed our old man back to health and he blossomed.

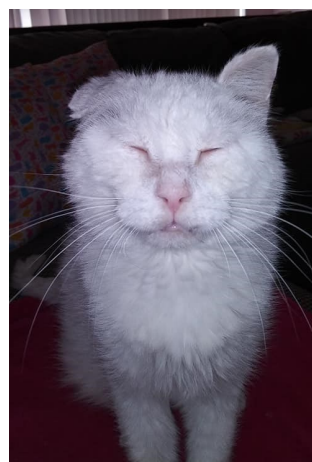
Old, frail and with no caretaker, Murray couldn't go back outside. Plus, we'd fallen in love with him so he joined our two other cats, Twilight and LB and moved in full time at Casa Meow. He and LB formed a very loving relationship and were often found cuddling. Twilight, ever so aloof, pretty much tolerated Murray, but once he became ill, our Twilight hovered over Murray, we think to make sure he was ok.



What a difference a year makes



Murray was loved by all our volunteers and everyone that met him. He was an amazing kitty and left massive paw prints on our hearts and will forever be missed.



Thank you to all of Murray's fans who donated to his care. The last part of his life was spent embraced in love, warmth, safety and plenty to eat. He was a happy, happy dude.

