

GAT TALES



THE MEOW MISSION
PROACTIVE POPULATION CONTROL
THE HUMANE WAY

Newsletter Volume 9 Issue 1

Summer 2023

10,000 Cats! We recently hit two huge milestones - first, we topped our record of the number of cats we spay/neutered in one day (51), and second, we reached 10,000 total spay/neuters since our inception in 2011! Our normal weekly number of cats is 25-30, but, cats are unpredictable. We had several colonies that ended up with more cats than anticipated so that 25-30 quickly became 51! We're so thankful ABC and SNIP's awesome doctors were able to accommodate the extra cats. Our amazing volunteers took the extra cats in stride and worked their tails off caring for all 51 cats.

Total number of spay/neuters since 2011:

10,159

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

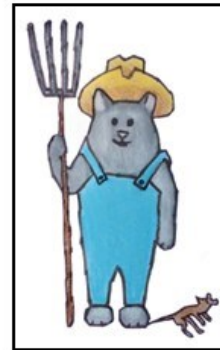


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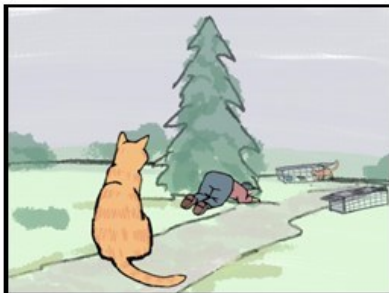
2022 NUMBERS



Kittens sent to rescue: **33**



Barn Home Placement: **83**



Trap-Neuter>Returns: **1,347**

2023 Goal: 1,500 cats!



ALLEYS for ALLEY CATS

Fundraiser

Polish Dinner ~

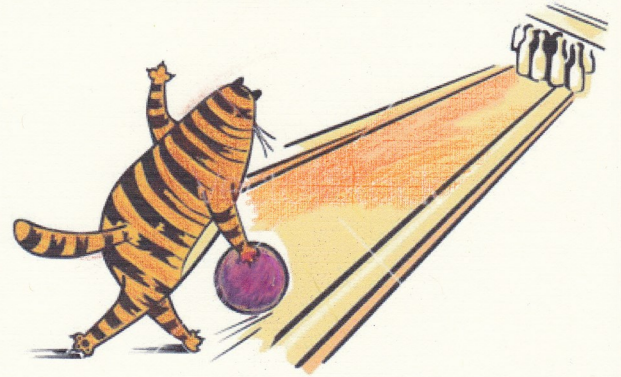
Silent Auction ~

Bowling ~

Raffles ~

50/50

*DINNERS MUST BE
PRE-ORDERED* ~



Oct 1

Bowlers Country Club

Tickets: themeowmission.org

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!

Gutter Kitty: Free at Last!



Cats living outside do face certain risks, especially injuries. We do see our fair share of this and do all we can to get the cats the medical attention they need, get them

altered and returned to their area. While we'd absolutely love it if all cats could have a home, we know that's unrealistic. For one, there are no where near enough homes. And, you may be surprised to hear, not all cats want to be inside—especially those that have lived their whole lives outside. Sometimes returning a cat to its outside home is the best thing to do. Gutter Kitty was one of those cats; completely unsocialized, there is no way he would be comfortable in a home. This boy was born free and needs to remain that way.

Residents of the Rose Park area of Mishawaka had been posting a picture for months of a grey kitty with what appeared to be part of a gutter downspout wrapped around his neck. We were tagged in posts from Facebook, Instagram, and Nextdoor apps, all asking for our help

trapping.



One of our volunteers lives in the area and had been trying to trap the cat for close to a year! No one seemed to be regularly feeding the cat; he went to multiple locations to eat. Each time we set a trap, he'd not come back and head to another feeding area. This went on for months.

As time went on, kitty got bigger; he must have been quite young when it happened. As he got bigger, the spout got tighter. That's when we really started to worry.

We reached out to our colony caretakers in the area and asked all of them to help. Most had only

seen him fleetingly and were never prepared when he'd show up out of nowhere. That's until Gutter Kitty met DS, one of our long-term caretakers.

DS had trapped so many cats in the area he actually had his own drop trap!

One chilly evening, DS caught a glimpse of Gutter Kitty; now was his opportunity! DS quickly set up his drop trap and hid in his shed waiting for the purr-fect moment.

When Gutter Kitty made his way to the food bowl, DS patiently waited until kitty was clear of the trap. That moment came, DS pulled the cord and bam! Gutter Kitty was trapped! Hallelujah! Finally, after nearly a year, this very elusive tomcat was caught.

Once our doctor anesthetized kitty, she was able to cut the tight spout off. Surprisingly, other than some worn off hair, there really wasn't damage to his neck. While we recovered kitty, we learned he really was feral; completely unsocialized. This is a cat who's lived outside his whole life without human interaction.

Gutter Kitty, now known as Gus, was neutered, vaccinated, eartipped and set free in his outdoor home.

DS still sees him at the food bowl now and then, he's gained even more weight which makes us even more grateful the gutter was cut off before it did some major damage.



CRAM THE VAN!



While our main focus is spay/neuter, we also want to make sure all of the cats' needs are met. Not every caretaker can afford to provide enough food to meet the cats' nutritional needs. Our "Meow Munchies" cat food program is designed to help those taking care of cats who are financially unable to provide enough food needed. Each month, we distribute over 500 pounds of food. As we all know, cat food prices have just skyrocketed over the past year. The \$19 bag of Purina cat chow we bought last year is now \$26! These escalating costs were about to force us to cut

back on the food given to each colony. We sure didn't want to do that so we held our first "Cram the Van" food drive at Petsmart SB. So many came out to support us, thank you Michiana! Your support is very much appreciated!



Teen Mom

This little black beauty, Baby Jane, was spayed by our friends at SNIP Spay & Neuter.

Guess what? She's only 5 1/2 months old!

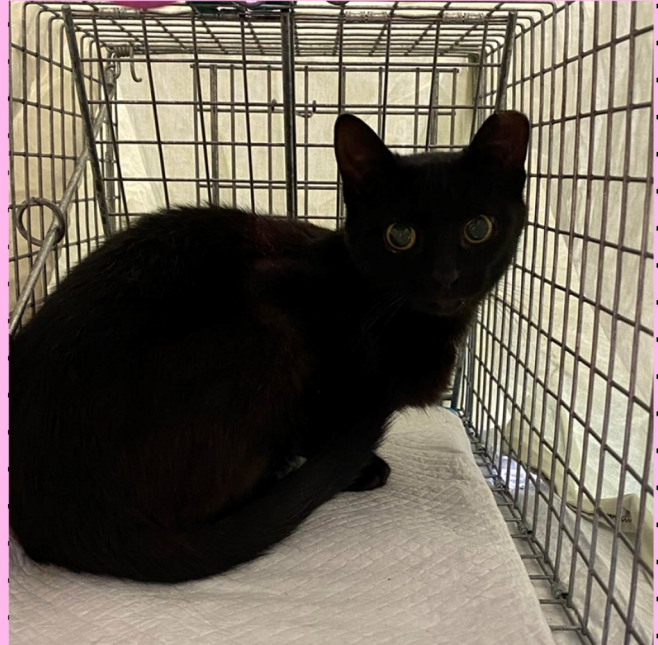
Guess what else? She was pregnant. Babies having babies. Kittens having kittens. Repeat. Stop the cycle now.

You think your kittens aren't old enough to reproduce yet? Wrong. **Females can get pregnant as young as 4 months!**

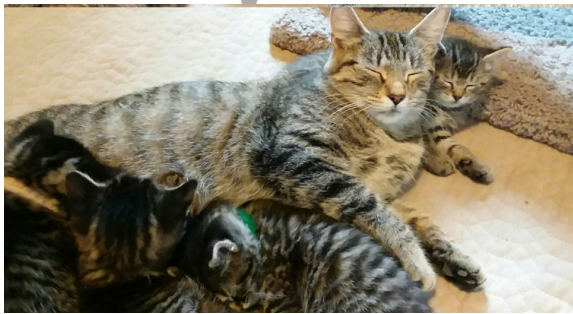
Got a kitten problem in your colony? Feeding an outdoor cat that showed up recently? Have a cat you are feeding that's looking a little thick around the middle? PLEASE reach out to us NOW! Let's get your community cats on the schedule!

Do you have a pet cat who isn't spayed? A cute kitten you've just brought home?

ABC Clinic of Pet Refuge is a great low cost spay/neuter resource locally. Sign up now!!! Get it done, get on the schedule! Financial assistance is often available. Ask. Don't wait until it's too late!



Surprise!



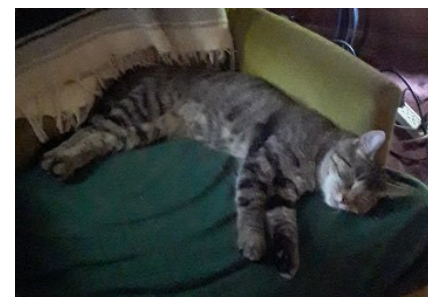
We had quite a surprise a few weeks ago - Lillian, a very sweet and gentle tabby, was at Meow Mission awaiting her spay. As it turns out, Lillian had other ideas and decided to give birth to four precious mini-me's. Needless to say, Lillian's spay was put on hold until her little nuggets didn't need her.

As you all know, Meow Mission is a trap/neuter/return group; not a rescue that adopts out animals - our focus is on preventing this type of thing. But things don't always go as planned! Luckily, our friends at Pet Refuge stepped up and took mom and babies into their adoption program.

Lillian and the little outlaws, Calamity Jane, John Wayne, Jesse James, and Josey Wales, took over their foster moms' house and were bouncing off the walls in no time. According to the fosters, Lillian taught the babies to use the litter box. She stepped in the small box and called to them. Then, she

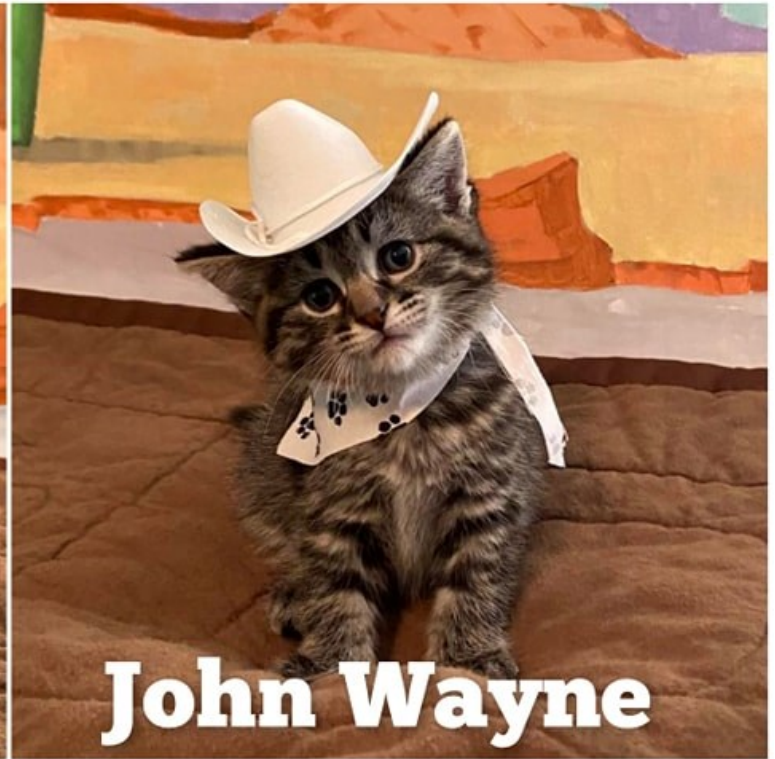
gently dug in the litter and then stepped out. One kitten got in and actually peed! We've never seen a mama cat actually "teach" her baby how to use the box....We've decided Lillian is a helicopter mom. Boy, does she hover. If one cried just a little, she is right there to see what is wrong. She always checks litter boxes after they are done, to make sure all poops and pees are covered. And calls to them when she can't see them.

Lillian's done such a great job, these little darlings are ready for their furr-ever homes! Oh, and Lillian won over the heart of one of her foster mom's friends and has settled in as a pampered house kitty. Way to go Lillian!





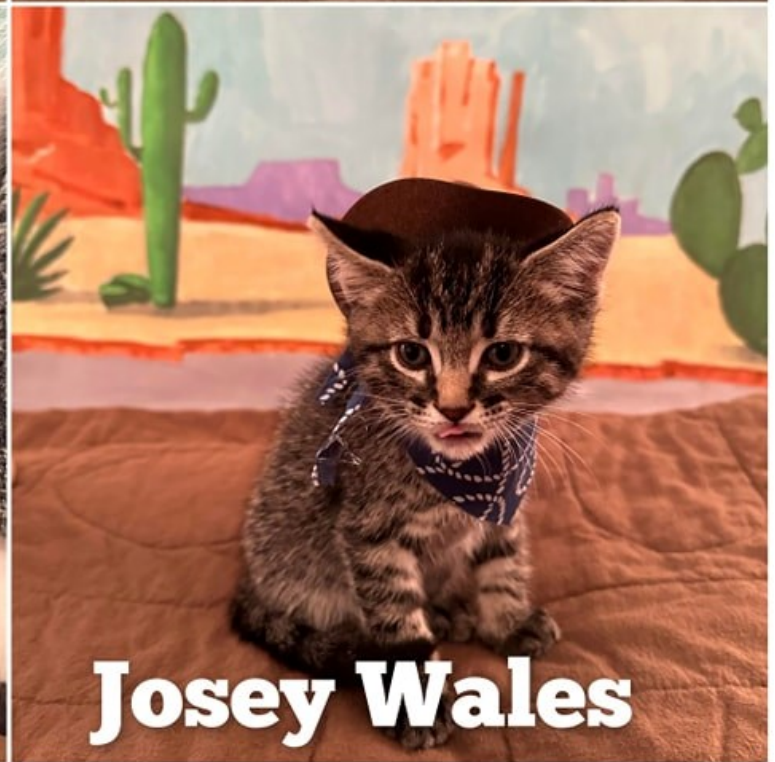
Calamity Jane



John Wayne



Jesse James



Josey Wales

Contact Pet Refuge to bring home your own little outlaw. <https://www.petrefuge.com/cat-adoption>

Calamity Jane is a little tomboy sweetheart who loves to wrestle with her brothers. She's more interested in playing than cuddling. Would be great with kids.

Josey Wales is a silent outlaw who loves to curl up in a basket alone when it's time for lights out in the bunkhouse. If you want someone to talk to, Josey is your guy. Talks back to you. Loves wet food and Churus. Also loves other cats.

John Wayne is outgoing and likes a good tummy tickle. If you want a lap cat, John Wayne is your guy. He is a love bug.

Jesse James is first in line when it's chow time at the chuck wagon. He's well rounded & loves his play time and cuddle time.



Donnie who chased and attacked him. We did everything right but Donnie just wouldn't settle down, and Twilight hid in fear. This was no good. We couldn't let Twilight live like this, but what to do?

Some amazing volunteers spent Thanksgiving at Meow Mission building Donnie his new home - a very large enclosure in our boys' room.

Donnie still had supervised visits outside of the enclosure to interact with LB and Twilight. Twilight was initially still suspicious, and a little leery. Slowly, Twilight figured out Donnie just wanted to play and his time out with them became event free.

All three Boys -- LB, Twilight AND Donnie -- started to live in complete harmony. And not just that, they all flourished together.



LB and Donnie would be spooning in the corner of the couch and soon rumors started swirling that Donatello and Twilight were caught snuggling too!

But at night. Oh, at night, the "kittens" started coming out; those child-like, kitten

qualities inside of LB and Twilight. We'd spy it in the evenings. Donnie, this little spitfire of an 8-year-old senior cat, just brought out this youthfulness in LB and Twilight like we had never seen. We watched in awe.

LB, who had been shot with a bb gun so many times he'd developed horrible arthritis, was playing, rolling on the floor, either with a sparring partner or by himself. He was digging in the toy box, pushing a roller ball around the track,



the Boys were acting like...boys again.

As volunteers, it lifted us up. It made us giggle, made us smile, and marvel. We see a lot of hard, sad things each week when we TNR community cats. We care for a lot of very sick and badly injured cats. It takes a toll. But, there,

just a room a way, through the window, there were our Boys. Always there for us to admire, to pet, and love. And watching the three of them really loving and enjoying each other each day was an inspiring and beautiful thing to watch and experience.



Our boys are actually super senior cats. All who were injured and/or very sick when we met them at different points in time. All who were abandoned and

left outside where they were not able to fend for themselves. Had these old tomcats met on the street, they'd have rumbled. But now neutered and in their retirement home with us, they are best buds for life, living their best lives at The Meow Mission together.

Volunteer Spotlight:

Kaitlyn

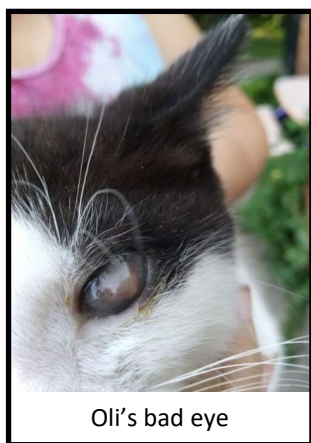
One of our caretakers contacted us about a kitten with an injured eye; it was cloudy and he couldn't see out of it. Once we saw this little guy, we knew his eye needed removed. Dr. Wascher of SNIP removed his eye as well as neutered him. He stayed with us a few days before he went to our friends at Pet Refuge who would find him a forever home.

Kaitlyn was one of our volunteers who cared for kitty while he was recovering. She fell in love with "Oli" and adopted him from Pet Refuge.

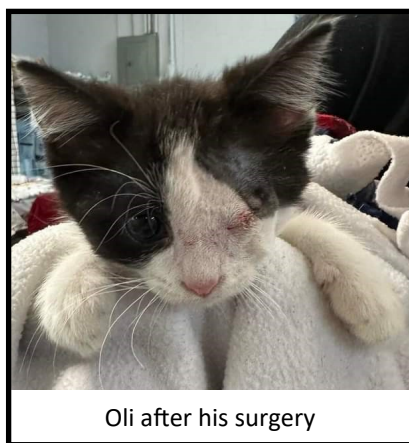
What do you do for Meow Mission: I volunteer on Wednesdays for cleaning and on Saturdays for cat care.

How long have you volunteered with Meow Mission: I've volunteered since March of this year, 2023.

Do you have any pets: I have 3 cats: Two orange sisters named Sookie and Quinn who just turned one in July and now Oli who is a little over 2 months old and came from Meow Mission.



Oli's bad eye



Oli after his surgery

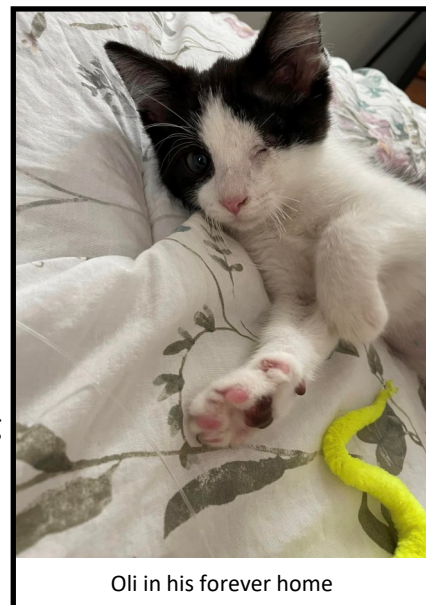


Oli recovering with us

One thing that would surprise someone to learn about me is... I'm a nerd. I love all things Star Wars, I love videogames (so much that I built my own gaming computer), and I've read over 100 books this year. I was also once bitten by a squirrel when I tried feeding it chips out of the kindness of my heart. Luckily I didn't get rabies and the squirrel and I both made it out of the situation mostly

okay...I am now cautious around squirrels.

Why did you choose to volunteer for Meow Mission: My decision to volunteer at Meow Mission stems from a lifelong passion for animals. During my school years, I actively engaged in volunteering with the Humane Society and other organizations, and now, having established myself in a career, I've found an opportunity to rekindle that spirit. Having a history of assisting various animal rescues and a genuine affection for cats nurtured by years having them in my family, I sought a way to contribute meaningfully and found Meow Mission was a great fit! Meow Mission's proactive approach to curbing the cat population resonated with me and aligns seamlessly with my values. Through this commitment, I'm able to help our community's felines, making a tangible impact (without having to adopt them all)!



Oli in his forever home



Mend-a-Cat

Even though our main focus is Trap/Neuter/Return, we do run into cats who have been injured; some, severely. We can't ignore their injuries and only neuter; thankfully, we have the space and volunteers to provide extra care when needed. Meet a few of our extended-stay guests.

MISSY

This beautiful, little toots, 7 month old Missy, was found to have a polyp in her left ear upon examination for her spay. Dr. Heather from SNIP removed it for her, thank you Dr. Heather!!!

Interestingly, ear polyp removal surgery can result in a condition called Horner's Syndrome. Symptoms can include constricted pupils, elevated third eyelids, and other issues related to disruption of the sympathetic nervous system. In cases like Missy, where it is a result of ear surgery, it usually resolves itself within a month or less. We wanted to keep her a little longer to make sure she's doing ok.

Miss Missy is doing really well. You can see she's got a couple of the symptoms, but overall enjoying her short term stay! She's still got that playful kitten energy and is super soft and sweet!



BLACKIE



Blackie's caretaker contacted us on Facebook; she was worried when he showed up with a nasty neck wound. The skin was gone and he was left with an oozy, infected wound.

Thankfully, Blackie is a friendly boy so she was able to grab him quickly and bring to us. We got him set up in a comfy kennel and gave him a good meal. Our SNIP vets were on vacation so thankfully Kryder-Harr fit him in the next day. Thanks to Dr. Robert; she clipped and cleaned his wound and, of course, neutered Blackie. He's been recovering with us while his neck heals and will head home in the next few days.



Blackie getting some R&R while his neck heals



Blackie enjoys cuddles with volunteer Sarah

COLLIN

Collin came to us with one of the worst wounds we've ever seen. We're not sure what got ahold of him but it was definitely something significantly larger than this big tomcat. The skin around his neck was literally ripped off and left hanging. A gnarly, oozy, red wound laid under. We're not sure how long ago it happened, but long enough that maggots had settled in, eating the dead skin. The smell from this wound was beyond words; it stunk up our entire recovery room.



Collin isn't friendly so we had to be very careful in how we handled him. Normally, we'd get to work and clean out that wound, give him an antibiotic shot and some pain meds. Collin was having none of that so the best we could do is give him some pain relief in food. The following morning, our volunteers were greeted with the horrific smell, and maggots on the kennel floor. Thankfully, SNIP would be in shortly and could address his wound.

Collin was knocked out so his wound could be clipped and cleaned. An antibiotic shot was given, and he was neutered while under anesthesia. Because the infection was so severe, a drain had to be placed in the wound; a cone was applied and Collin was put in a specially set up XXXL kennel.

That cone didn't last the night, he'd managed to rip it off within an hour! Luckily, he left the wound alone so the cone wasn't needed.



That was four weeks ago. Collin is healing and getting better every day. It was a very large wound and will take time to get it healed enough for him to go back outside. He's being cared for every day by our



volunteers and is eating very well. We hope he can go home shortly. Collin is one lucky guy that his caretaker cared enough to trap him and bring to us. Odds are he would not have survived this infection.



Joann Downer

Our very dear friend and fellow volunteer, Joann Downer, unexpectedly passed away on August 4th. At the young age of 71, she was taken from this earth way too soon.

Joann was an amazing woman; full of energy and so much younger than her years. She had a huge heart and unlimited love and compassion for animals; especially cats and horses. She single-handedly trapped 166 cats in her neighborhood over the course of six years. That's right, 166 cats! She trapped, transported and cared for them after their surgeries. Imagine the thousands of homeless kittens that were not born because this one incredible woman, our Joann, was so selfless and dedicated to making a difference.

We first met Joann when she told us she was trapping cats in Village Green (Mishawaka). We immediately knew she was our kind of gal; someone who dedicated her free time to help animals. As passionate as she was about spay/neuter, Joann also went above and beyond to assure the cats - even the feral - were well-fed and cared for. One particular cat she called Buddy, was a long-haired unfriendly boy. She wasn't able to touch him and he had mats of fur all over his body. She knew she had to do something and promptly trapped him so she could have him knocked out and shaved. Buddy was one lucky cat. Eventually, Buddy learned to love Joann and made his way into her home.

Once we found out Joann was retired (from AM General), we quickly roped her in to volunteering; we were so grateful for her help! Joann had boundless energy and such a drive to help animals; she was amazing. She became our "regular" Tuesday morning cat care purr-son. She came in before daylight every Tuesday; regardless of the weather, it didn't matter - she was dedicated. Tuesday mornings are usually a two purr-son job but when our other volunteer left, Joann stepped right in and did the work of two for several months before we found a replacement. She never complained; she was happy to help. Joann always reassured us she'd be there on Tuesdays to "do her job." That's how serious she was about caring for our cats.

Our morning cat caregivers like Joann often have a stinky, poopy mess to clean up. We provide lots of rubber gloves and paper towels but sometimes that doesn't help. You can't have a weak stomach for cat care and you definitely can't wear anything nice. We highly recommend our volunteers don't wear sandals - We don't want to tell you what can happen to them when a cat misses the puppy pad, but surely you can imagine. No mess was too much for Joann! She was fearless and could take on any task, all with a smile.

Joann also loved horses, possibly more than cats. Every day she went to a friend's barn where she fed, watered, and cared for horses. Joann had a life long passion for horses and could spend every day with them—and she did! She of course also had barn cats—all fully vetted. What a remarkable, strong, amazing woman Joann was. We are so deeply sorry to her family and will miss her more than words can say.

Rest in Peace, Joann, we hope you're up there with the many animals you cared for and lost over the years. There will never be another like you; we are all the better from knowing you.

With deepest sympathy, your friends at Meow Mission.

The Joann Downer Memorial Fund

We want to honor Joann and her hard work to TNR cats in her neighborhood. We couldn't think of a better way than continuing her work in Village Green; a mobile home community with endless amounts of cats. The Joann Downer Memorial Fund will cover the spay/neuter fees for Village Green cats. Our volunteers will provide the trapping, transport and post-op care. If you'd like to send a donation in Joann's honor, please be sure to mark it "for Joann".

Checks: PO Box 192, Mishawaka, IN 46546

Credit/Debit Cards: paypal.me/MeowMission

