



► SPAY AND STAY IS BRINGING ITS MESSAGE TO MORE COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT LAKE COUNTY ..... 1



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○ FALL 2007

○ SPAY AND STAY

○ Lake County, Illinois

# Feral cat focus

EVERY CAT — OWNED, FERAL, OR STRAY — DESERVES THE BEST MEDICAL CARE POSSIBLE. —SPAY AND STAY

## Spay and Stay steps up outreach efforts

*In spite of its success in reaching many Lake County feral cat colony caretakers, Spay and Stay is undertaking a campaign to reach even more county residents who may need help sterilizing their community's homeless cats. Spay and Stay is also reaching out to municipal officials to help create programs that are more community-based.*



*Spay and Stay volunteers, Cynthia Deen (left) and Lindsay Robertson (right) cheerfully welcomed visitors to Spay and Stay's information booth at Grayslake Feed. Helping more people understand the benefits of TNR was their goal for the day.*

**PetCo** Recently, Spay and Stay volunteers Pat Kazek and Catherine Boettcher, along with Board member Julie Wheeler, had the opportunity to spend a few hours at PetCo in Vernon Hills to talk with customers about TNR. With a table full of brochures and other printed materials, a trap for demonstration, and a photo montage explaining the TNR process, the group spoke with several people who were interested in gathering more information either for themselves or to pass

Julie Wheeler also went to the PetCo in Round Lake Beach to hand out information in an area known to have many feral cat colonies. She met many people that day who were interested in controlling the feral population either through TNR or by volunteering with Spay & Stay. The PetCo staff was very helpful in providing Julie with a good location at the store and ideas for reaching more caretakers and pet lovers in the future. This spring, Spay and Stay became an

on to others. A big hit with visitors to the Spay and Stay booth were the yellow bi-lingual door hangers. These can be placed on doorknobs or in mailboxes and a lot of the door hangers were handed out at the booth. Pat, who is a realtor by trade, was a real go-getter and asked every person who came in the door, "Do you know of anyone in your neighborhood who is feeding stray cats?"

On July 14,

official PetCo Partner and received a \$505 donation from the PetCo Corporation. Thank you to Pat, Catherine, Julie, and PetCo for helping Spay & Stay continue to educate Lake County residents about the benefits of TNR.

### Grayslake Feed

Weekends are generally packed with animal loving people who come to Grayslake Feed to stock up on pet food and supplies. What a great opportunity for Spay and Stay volunteers to set up a booth and educate more people about our program.

Many of the customers who come to Grayslake Feed are horse people who know about barn cats in the area. This is a special population of cats that also need low-cost spay/neuter services.

Spay and Stay also featured two special cats



*TOP: Monty tells his story to customers at Grayslake Feed. BOTTOM: Dominic, probably because of his youth, got easily distracted.*

*NOTE: As this issue of Feral Cat Focus goes to press, we are thrilled to report that both Monty and Dominic have been adopted.*

*Continued on page 4*



## ► SEND US YOUR STORIES

WE WANT TO SHARE YOUR SUCCESS STORIES WITH OUR READERS. TELL US ABOUT YOUR COLONY. HOW HAS STERILIZATION IMPACTED YOUR COLONY? HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO GET ANY OF YOUR CATS ADOPTED AFTER BEING STERILIZED AND RETURNED TO YOUR COLONY? E-MAIL YOUR STORY AND PHOTOS TO: [INFO@SPAYANDSTAY.ORG](mailto:INFO@SPAYANDSTAY.ORG).

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# President's "mewsings"

As our cover story details, Spay and Stay is doing its part to help educate Lake County residents about feral cats by reaching out to area businesses, government officials and our neighbors. In fact, one such neighbor recently called on us for some help. While Spay and Stay is not an animal rescue service or animal shelter, we were able to help our neighbor by tapping into our vast "cat people" network. *See Mario's heartwarming story on our back page.*

## National Feral Cat Day

Many people don't know what a feral cat is or that such an animal even exists within their own community. When a member of the public sees a cat sitting in a yard or hanging out in an alley, they often assume it's someone's pet cat that has been let outdoors. That cat may be a pet or it may very well be a feral. It's not until you pay closer attention to the cat, that you can determine if it's a pet or feral cat. Creating more awareness about feral cats is what National Feral Cat Day is all about and Ally Cat Allies has the resources to help all of us get the word out. *See page 3 for more details.*

**Don't give up!** Do you have a feral cat that manages to elude you every time you try to trap it? Even though "Patches" was one of these cats, her caretaker didn't give up and after FIVE YEARS, she finally got her! *Learn how she did it on page 3.*

**Autumn is here.** Do your feral cats have proper winter shelter? Now's the time to plan for this. Take a look at page 7 for some good ideas on how you can help keep your colony warm this winter.

## It takes a community

Solving the feral cat problem in Lake County is a monumental task. Spay and Stay and Lake County Animal Control can't do it alone, we need your help. One of our volunteers, Robin Vansickle from Lake County Animal Control shares her perspective on page 4. Spreading the word about responsible pet ownership and the importance of spaying and neutering all pets is at the heart of her goal.

*No matter how you're involved with Spay and Stay, know that you're making a difference in the lives of the feral and stray cats in our communities.*

**Julie Haas, President** 



*Julie Haas takes the opportunity to touch "Curly" while he sleeps prior to surgery. He is a beautiful big tomcat that has been living in her neighborhood. He is now living a healthier life after being neutered at Spay and Stay's high-volume clinic.*

# Purrs and headbutts

Spay and Stay gets so much help in so many ways from our dedicated volunteers and supporters. We are especially grateful to the following people whose generous financial support and in-kind donations help us serve these special cats. Please share a headbutt with the kind folks who have donated since our last newsletter.



## Special Thanks to our Grantors

The DAS Charitable Fund for the Preservation of Feline Animal Life  
The PetCo Foundation

### Furever Buddies: \$10-\$99

Cheryl Anderson  
Joan Arnette  
Richard Balz  
Billie Jean Brokamp  
Karen Bush  
Jane Dahmer  
Sharon Dittmer  
Patricia Gerner  
Marvin and Dorothy Haymes  
Trisha Hoglan  
Charles and Nancy Jennings  
Lucy and Darin Johnson

Jeff and Cindy Kukkola  
Diana Kula  
Jane McCreedy  
Denny Overbey  
Phyllis Pfund  
Daniel and Jo Marie Richman  
Tina Santopoalo  
Iris Sherman  
Juliane Sidor  
Gail Spencer  
John and Miriam Steinke  
Elaine Tighe  
Mike Weatherford

### Kneaded Friends: \$100-249

Sylvia Baum  
Dr. John Knaus

April Nemrava  
Stacey Spoerl

### Purrfect Partners: \$250-749

Bette Grayson

### Head-butting Allies: \$750-1200

Lynn Traff

### Kitty Kohorts: In Kind Donations

Abbott Animal Health  
Kathleen Abdo  
Nancy Coolley  
Kristina Eilers  
Molly Eisenberg  
Marvin and Dorothy Haymes  
Holly Hovanec

Sarah Jacobson  
Lara Kenik  
Tom and Debbie Krueger  
Emily Pagano  
Jennie Paxton  
Estelle Smolucha  
Laurie Swanson, DVM  
Marlee Wesselhoff

## A Place for Purring

**Celebrate a special friend or relative. Honor a wedding or birthday. Remember a four-legged friend.**

**Nancy Coolley—  
Happy Birthday!**

From Paul and Wendy Hessel  
From Lori Nerheim

**In honor of Domino**  
From Maureen Witkiewicz

**If you would like to highlight a special person or pet, just send us your donation, along with the name of the person or pet, then watch for their name in our next issue of "Feral Cat Focus".**



► "WE THINK THIS IS A VERY GOOD SERVICE. EVERYONE, INCLUDING NEIGHBORS, THINK THIS IS AN EXCELLENT IDEA."

-CARETAKER, HIGHLAND PARK

"I LOVE THIS PROGRAM AND TALK IT UP ALL OVER THE PLACE."

-CARETAKER, MUNDELEIN

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# Caretaker finally catches Patches Teaming up for TNR

By Sandra Kooper

Patches, a cagey and very fertile calico who has lived in her Round Lake Beach colony for the last five years has been able to elude every one of her caretaker's trapping attempts —until Spay and Stay's August spay day.

It seems Patches had super sensitive trap radar. Whenever traps were put out before a spay day, this otherwise "regular," vanished into thin air and wouldn't return until the traps were gone. Even the tastiest bait couldn't bring her near the trap.

Because of Patches' intense trap aversion, it was suggested that the caretaker disguise the trap with branches, grass, and leaves so it would blend into the environment. Well, this sly calico was too smart for that trick, probably aware that in all her years on the street she had never seen any bush that looked like this new "trap-bush."

During all the years of trying to catch Patches, she gave birth to many, many kittens and was also very secretive about where they were hiding. The caretaker would follow her for blocks and blocks trying to get a clue about the whereabouts of the litters. Patches would play the game for a while, then simply vanish, once again getting the upper hand.

If there was ever a case for using a drop-trap, Patches was a prime candidate. After talking about this special trap with Spay and Stay, the caretaker's husband gathered all the materials and building instructions and, within an hour, had

a brand spanking new drop trap to try on Patches. First the trap was put outside at the feeding site. Patches and other members of her colony, most of which had not resisted being trapped, found

this new object in their environment very tantalizing. They played around and under it, even peacefully ate the food placed beneath it, never suspecting the object's real purpose. After a full week of letting the cats get comfortable with the drop-trap, the caretaker baited the trap and EASILY and FINALLY caught Patches, this most

prolific and elusive little calico. In fact, the caretaker said that it seemed Patches was actually relieved! 🐾



*Wondering why she had fought sterilization for so many years, here's Patches looking relaxed and happy on one of her nightly visits after her August spay surgery.*

I finally caught "Bob" an all black tomcat that had been visiting my backyard sporadically over the last three years. He was smart. He never went completely into the trap to eat and always marked it in his special "male" way before leaving.

I then heard about two neighbors who lived near me. They were also trying to catch some black cats and when I called them, they said they were trying to catch Bob, too.

So, we became a team. I caught "Bee," Bob's wife, and my neighbors caught "Charlotte," Bob's other-wife. When they were spayed, Bee was found to be nursing. Now we enlisted our entire neighborhood to help find the kittens. Within a few days, a young neighbor across the street spotted two black kittens sunning on the deck behind her house. There were five black kittens in all and I am now happily socializing them for adoption. 🐾



*What a team! Thanks neighbors! (See page 6 for kitten photo.)*

## National Feral Cat Day—Your day to act

Alley Cat Allies, the sponsor of National Feral Cat Day, says this year's campaign is a bit "edgier." They believe the time has come "to stir people up, to help public officials discover the facts about cats, and to begin changing animal control policies."

Even though National Feral Cat Day is officially celebrated on October 16, the outreach efforts behind the campaign are intended to be carried out all year long. With that in mind, Alley Cat Allies has produced a series of "Truth Cards," which can be handed out to neighbors, public officials, police and animal control officers.

Our cover story in this issue of *Feral Cat Focus* talks about Spay and Stay's expanding outreach efforts. We've talked with employees of a major business in the area. We've shared information at a local feed store. We've even presented facts and stats to one of Lake County's municipal safety committees.

Now we need your ACTION. We need you to join in and let your voice be heard. Whether you're chatting with someone over cat food at a local pet store, or having a conversation with the mayor of your town, talk about the plight of feral and stray cats in our communities. Ask questions. Engage public officials in a discussion about whether or not our animal control policies and practices are helping or hurting cats in your area.

If you need additional information or find you'd like to arrange for a speaker from Spay and Stay to talk with your community group, just send us an email at [info@spayandstay.org](mailto:info@spayandstay.org), or call us at 847-289-4557. We'd be glad to help. 🐾





► REGISTERED CARETAKERS DONATE THEIR TIME AND ENERGY TO INSURE THAT THE CATS THAT MUST REMAIN IN THEIR OUT-DOOR HOMES HAVE THE BEST OF CARE BY SUPPLYING FOOD, WATER, AND SHELTER ALL YEAR LONG.

## Amazing volunteer brings special passion to her work

Just like many people who are going to read this newsletter, I would consider myself an animal lover. I did not come in to my position easily, and it is not something that I actually sought out to do, it literally, just happened.

Like most, I grew up loving all kinds of animals. I was the kid that came home with an orphaned squirrel that fell out of the tree and said "but mom, can't we help it?" I lived in the house that seemed to have this magnetic pull to strays. I grew up just knowing I wanted to work with animals and thought it was my place in this world to be a veterinarian. While in college I worked at a local animal clinic as a vet assistant and made a startling realization: maybe this wasn't for me?! It wasn't the blood and body fluids that made my stomach queasy as animals lay on the surgery table and it wasn't the sudden release of anal glands that turned up my nose. And it certainly wasn't a fear of aggressive dogs and feisty cats lunging or swatting at me while being restrained that made me question my quest to be a veterinarian. It was witnessing pain and suffering in those innocent

animals that made my heart wrench. Whether it was a cat with severe ear mites left untreated so the cat was scratching its ears raw; a dog whose owners couldn't afford to fix a broken leg; or an elderly animal whose quality of life was gone, but the owners just couldn't bear to set their own selfish needs aside to let the animal go. I knew I had a better calling.




*Robin checks the medical sheet on a cat at one of Spay and Stay's high-volume spay days.*

My name is Robin Van Sickle and I am one of six Animal Warden's for the Lake County Health Department. I now know that my life's calling is to speak for the animals that do not have a voice or the ability to choose their own life sentence. For the past 8 years, I have been advocating for better and more humane care and treatment for both owned and stray animals. And although I may not always agree with

the laws and local ordinances that I am required to enforce, I do believe that the safety of the animals' and their best intentions are in mind.

Through my position, I came to know Spay and Stay. Considering the ongoing population growth of stray cats, this program seemed like a better alternative to euthanasia. I have been a

Spay Day volunteer for the last year or so and some may question my involvement with a program where it seems the two agencies should be ultimate enemies. This is most certainly not the case, and let me take this opportunity to explain. Cats come in to the clinic by the truck loads. And although the history of each individual cat may not be known, this may be the one day in these cats' lives that they will feel the warmth and compassion of a caring volunteer, not the neglect or disregard of the person that put them out there in the first place. They will get what might be their first cuddle-up against a shoulder, treatment for an abscessed wound, or an application of medication for pesky fleas. And hopefully, one or two just may get placed into a permanent home.

Just like the cats that come across the threshold of the clinic, the volunteers come from varying backgrounds as well, yet all with the same purpose: to provide humane care and treatment for the so-called un-wanted cats. As an Animal Warden, it is my job to enforce the county ordinances to protect animals and promote public safety as mandated under Illinois State law. As a human being, it is unfathomable for me to set my emotions aside and not feel the heartache that goes along with my job. On the other hand, there is nothing more rewarding than reuniting a lost pet with its owner, providing care to the injured, seeking justice for the abused, or giving an otherwise tossed-aside pet a fresh start on a new life. 

### Outreach efforts expand

*Continued from page 1*

that had come through its spay/neuter program.

The first cat was *Monty*, a beautiful white male gently spotted with orange tabby markings. He was in search of a home where he could be safe and allowed to really, really play. That may sound like the hope of every other friendly cat, but Monty is a young three-legged cat that needs to stay off the streets permanently. (See *Monty's full story on page 5*.) The second cat showcased was *Dominic*. He was too young and small to be neutered when he came into Spay and Stay's June spay day. Because he was only about 6-7 weeks old at the time, he was a good candidate for socialization and adoption. (As we reported on page 1, both *Monty* and *Dominic* have found new homes.)

*Special thanks to the management and staff of Grayslake Feed. They are really great people to work with.*

### Allstate Helping Hands Pet Adoption and Supplies Drive

Spay and Stay was one of four humane organizations receiving donations through Allstate Insurance Company's Helping Hands Pet Adoption and Supplies Drive. The drive was held from September 4 through 14,

with an onsite event held on September 6 at Allstate's Vernon Hills facility. Executive Director Sandra Kooper, and volunteers Ardith Pucin and Lindsay Robertson, had an opportunity to meet many of Allstate's great and generous employees at Spay and Stay's information booth. *Many thanks to Michele Delaney and Pam Mulcahy from Allstate's Helping Hands committee. Not only did they make Spay and Stay feel welcome during the September 6 event, they also worked very hard to make sure the Pet Adoption and Supplies Drive was a great success.*

### Holistic Animal Fair

From Reiki to Rottweilers, the Holistic Animal Health Fair, held at the Lake County Fairgrounds on September 15, brought together animal enthusiast for a great day of information, entertainment, and holistic health products for animals as well as their owners.

Many people visited Spay and Stay's booth to find out about Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) and the work being done for feral and stray cats in the county. In addition to a slide show on Spay and Stay's work, there were brochures, videos and books full of information on humane alternatives for feral cat population control.

Monty and Dominic (see cover page) were also at the Fair. They were

*Continued on page 6*



► "KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK. IT'S GRAT TO KNOW THERE ARE PEOPLE TRYING TO PRESERVE ANIMALS INSTEAD OF DESTROYING THEM."

-CARETAKER, BARRINGTON

"MY NEIGHBOR WAS VERY IMPRESSED WITH THE WORK YOU DO FOR SO MANY ANIMALS."

-CARETAKER, HIGHLAND PARK

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## There's no stopping Monty now

*After extensive surgery to repair a birth defect, Monty, a stray cat brought to Spay and Stay by a generous and caring woman from the Round Lake area, enjoys life more fully than he ever could, even though he only has three legs.*

In early summer, Spay and Stay received a call from a local humane organization alerting us to a disturbing situation in the Round Lake area. A woman by the name of Sue had contacted them looking for help for an injured cat she had

been seeing in her neighborhood. Her description of a cat that was limping badly, with a dangling back leg, seemed to fit with a broken limb.

We immediately loaned Sue a trap and got the

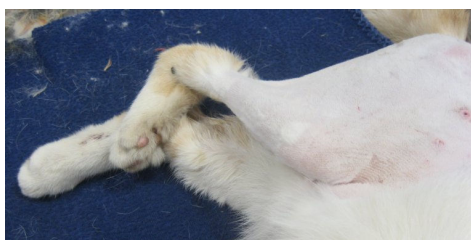
cat scheduled to see Dr. Deni Ianakov at Green Tree Animal Hospital in Libertyville.

When a badly injured cat comes into Spay and Stay, we have to weigh several factors in order to determine how to treat the cat. If the cat is extremely feral and has a bad injury, it may not be possible to safely hold the cat post-operatively and treat it with antibiotics. We also

have to balance the cost of repairing one cat when those funds might be able to sterilize many more cats.

Luckily, Monty proved to be quite the gentleman and it was agreed that he deserved a shot at having his leg repaired.

Monty's deformity was quite severe. Dr. Ianakov's physical exam revealed that Monty's right rear paw below the hock (ankle) was inverted 180 degrees (*see photo below*). In other words, when Monty tried to walk, his paw pads were facing the ceiling rather than the floor. The hock was also frozen at a 90 degree angle, so the leg just dangled from that point down and Monty did not put weight on that leg.



Dr. Ianakov's radiographs showed no obvious sign of fractures, soft tissue trauma, or dis-


location. This was a most probably a birth defect that, somehow, Monty had been living with for 1 1/2 years.

Although Monty has been found outside, everyone who encountered him agreed that he was very personable with a sweet nature. It was decided that Monty could make a good indoor pet and so the decision was made to repair his leg.

After examining Monty's leg more completely under anesthesia, Dr. Ianakov determined that a complete amputation at the hip joint would give Monty the best result. The surgery was completed only three days after Spay and Stay received its first call from Sue.

During the evening after surgery, Monty rested comfortably. The next day, after just a few wobbly attempts, Monty learned to rebalance his weight on his one remaining back leg and was walking . . . and running! . . . as if he had been reborn into a strong new body. He was ecstatic and hasn't slowed down since.

*Special thanks to Dr. Ianakov, a remarkably gifted surgeon, and the staff of Green Tree Animal Hospital for their loving care of Monty.*

*A big thanks, also, to our volunteer, Cynthia Deen. She very generously and graciously opened her home to Monty for his recovery from surgery and subsequent fostering. She helped him learn to walk and run and climb so he can have a normal and happy life. Even though Monty is in his new home, we all know he will never forget Cynthia.* 

## HELP US HELP THE HOMELESS

With your support, Spay and Stay can reduce the overpopulation of homeless community cats in Lake County through sterilization and humane management. Your donation will make a difference in the lives of these special cats.



### PLEASE ACCEPT MY GIFT OF:

- |                               |                                |                                  |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$_____ |

### REMEMBER HOMELESS COMMUNITY CATS IN YOUR WILL:

- ☐ I am interested in receiving information about including Spay and Stay in my estate planning.

*Spay and Stay is a 501c3 organization and your contributions are fully tax deductible. For more information contact us at 847-289-4557.*

### Here's my information:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail address \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make your check out to **Spay and Stay** and send to:  
P.O. Box 484, Gurnee, Illinois 60031.*

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# ► Support Spay and Stay

There are many ways to give.

## Ensure the future

We would be honored to work with you and your financial advisor to explore ways to include Spay and Stay's feral cats in your charitable giving plans.

### Outright Gifts


Use the form on Page 5 to make a direct donation to Spay and Stay.

### Bequests

Ask your attorney to include a charitable bequest to Spay and Stay in your will.

### Retirement Plan Beneficiary

You can ensure the continued success of TNR by naming Spay and Stay as a beneficiary of your retirement plan(s).

Please contact Spay and Stay at 847-289-4557 if you have any questions regarding planned giving. 

## Outreach efforts expand

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both great spokes-cats for the benefits of sterilization and TNR and attracted many admirers.

Thanks to The Ryan Group for putting on a great event.

### Round Lake Beach

On August 6, Spay and Stay's Executive Director, Sandra Kooper, was thrilled to be able to share information on the benefits of TNR with the Public Safety Committee of Round Lake Beach. In addition to Mayor Rich Hill and Police Chief Doug Larsson, the meeting was attended by Trustees Gina Miosi, Susan Butler, Judy Armstrong, and Nemesio Villa.

After a short video presentation, Sandra talked about TNR as a community-based solution, outlining how collaborative efforts between various components of a community bring greater success. She also talked about Spay and Stay's efforts throughout the county, including the 19 registered colonies in Round Lake Beach and the 123 cats in those colonies that have been sterilized through Spay and Stay. The committee was receptive to the information and Sandra will follow up with an article for the Village's newsletter.

Special thanks to Village Administrator David Kilbane for his logistical expertise prior to the meeting, and to Chief Larsson for his excellent PowerPoint tips. 

## It just makes ¢ents to use GoodSearch

What if every time you searched the internet a penny went to Spay and Stay? Well, that's exactly what can happen when you use **GoodSearch.com**, a search engine powered by Yahoo. And the best part—it won't cost you a penny!

GoodSearch donates about half of its advertising revenue to charity. That comes out to be about a penny per search. In 2005, search engines generated about \$6 billion in advertising revenue. The founders of GoodSearch, a brother and sister team, wanted to divert some of these dollars to charity.

Since June, Spay and Stay has earned \$32.66. That's approximately 3,266 searches in our name. If 1,000 people did just 2 searches per day for a year, Spay and Stay could earn \$7,300. Imagine if five times that many people signed on to use GoodSearch.

You can also shop through GoodSearch and Spay and Stay will get a percentage of your order.

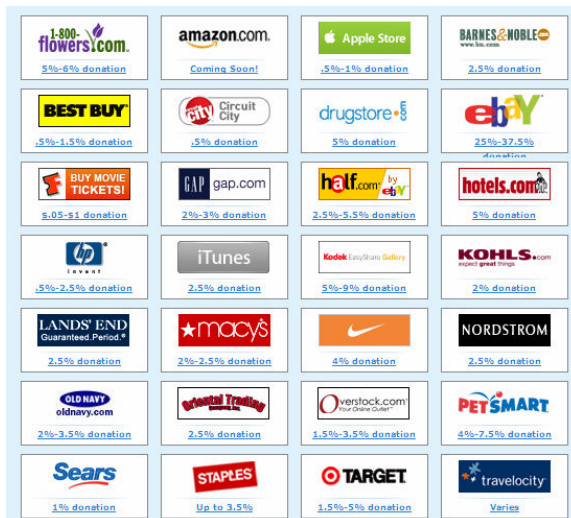
All you have to do is designate Spay and Stay as your charity, link through to your favorite store through the GoodSearch site, and start shopping! It's that easy. The retailer will donate a percentage of your sale directly to Spay and Stay.

Help us spread the word. Tell your friends about GoodSearch and how to designate Spay and Stay as their charity. Then ask those friends to tell their friends. More searches mean more and more ¢ents for the cats!

Just log into **www.goodsearch.com** and designate Spay and Stay as your charity of choice.

**Every penny helps!**

Here's just a few favorite stores listed on the GoodSearch site.



## Teaming up for TNR

Continued from page 3

It took a team to find Luna and her four siblings: ReBob, Bella, Crinkles, and Bentley. Five black kittens who would have grown up on the streets, if neighbors hadn't worked together to rescue these babies.

How about more teamwork to help find them good homes! Call us for more details: 847-289-4557.





▶ "[YOUR] TNR PROGRAM IS GREAT! WE ARE SO HAPPY IT IS AVAILABLE TO US."

-CARETAKER, LAKE VILLA

"I THINK TNR IS GREAT. IT HELPS REDUCE THE NUMBER OF NEW UNWANTED KITTENS WITHOUT HOMES."

-CARETAKER, ZION

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## A healthy cat is a warm cat—winterize your colony

Anyone who lives in our area is well aware of the extreme nature of our winter weather. Lake-effect snow storms, blustery winds, frigid temperatures, and ice storms are just a few of Mother Nature's reminders that she can really dish it out.

Feral cats, just like the wildlife that live in this climate, grow thick coats to help withstand the extreme weather of our winter months. We see this in the thickening coats of cats that come in to our November and December spay days. During our early spring spay days in March and April, we also find cats with fur still thick with heavy winter undercoats.

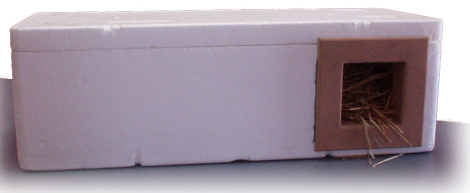
In spite of their thick coats, freezing winds can cause frostbite of ears or paws if colony cats can't find a dry wind-proof shelter.

Even if your colony cats seem to have a pile of wood to burrow into when the temperatures drop, try making an even more air-tight and warm alternative. Here are some ideas for easy-to-build winter shelters.

### Cold fish, warm cats

Thanks to last year's fifth-grade class at Red Oak School in Highland Park, we found out about an easy and inexpensive way to keep cats cozy and warm in the winter.

This really thick Styrofoam shelter was made by cutting a door opening in the side of a container used to transport frozen fish to a local



grocery store. More often than not, the store is very happy to give you these containers for free. You get to recycle the container for a good cause while you keep the Styrofoam out of our local landfills.

Just open the lid and stuff the container with fresh straw so the cats can burrow into the material. We added the wooden frame around the door opening so the Styrofoam wouldn't shred as the cats go in and out. You can even put a good coat or two of outdoor paint on the container so it can blend nicely with the environment. Or, if

your cat is all artistic, you can even paint some flowers on the container to remind you that spring will eventually return.

### More cats, more room

The fish container is probably good for a 1-2 cat colony. If you have a larger colony, you may be interested in a larger Styrofoam shelter like the one described on

*Neighborhood Cat's* website. It's easy to make and can fit up to 4-5 cats for some up-close snuggling. For building instructions, visit:

[www.neighborhoodcats.org/info/wintershelter.htm](http://www.neighborhoodcats.org/info/wintershelter.htm).



### Irresistibly warm and snug

Another easy-to-make warm shelter is the storage-container-inside-another-storage-container style. With thick pieces of insulation and straw between each container and an opening just big enough for a cat, the shelter provides a wind-proof and dry shelter for the coldest blasts of frigid air Mother Nature can provide. Add a microwaveable heating disc and you've got a toasty little room for your cats. Visit [www.spayandstay.org/wintershelter.htm](http://www.spayandstay.org/wintershelter.htm) for photos and complete building instructions.



### Winter bungalow warms feral felines

And now for the "Mother" of all shelters, the deluxe wooden "bungalow" with a slanted shingled roof, linoleum floor, and a second story ledge so cats can catch the rising heat waves from their colony mates on the first level.

Just like the Styrofoam models, you can paint this shelter to blend in with the environment, or decorate it with wonderfully painted mice so the cats have something to dream about.

One of Spay and Stay's volunteers, Zach

Wheeler, a high-school senior at Vernon Hills High School, decided that he wanted to do something meaningful during his summer vacation. He decided to build four sturdy and heavily insulated cat shelters, which he would donate to Spay and Stay. Zach really

put his heart and soul into the project, adding industrial strength hinges to the roof and handles on the side of the shelter for easy moving.

(NOTE: when placed outside, the shelter should sit on four bricks to keep it off the cold ground.)

For detailed instructions on building your own wooden shelter, visit Alley Cat Allies at: [www.alleycat.org/pdf/feral\\_cat\\_shelter.pdf](http://www.alleycat.org/pdf/feral_cat_shelter.pdf).

If you don't have adequate shelter for your colony and you are one of Spay and Stay's registered caretakers, just give us a call. These four shelters, thanks to Zach, will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

*Here's an idea, if you're building one of these shelters for your colony, how about making two and donating one to Spay and Stay for a caretaker who may not be able to make one. How cool would that be!*



*Here's an inside view of one of the shelters made by Zach. Note the thick insulation between the walls and the heat-reflecting material on the inside of the roof. Just pack this shelter with fresh straw and watch how fast your cats put out the "Occupied" sign!*

*Here's Zach Wheeler posing on one of his sturdy shelters.*

*Thanks Zach! The cats really appreciate all your hard work.*





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Keep your cats safe at home.  
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○ FALL 2007 | ○ SPAY AND STAY

## Amazing angel saves three kittens

How do you know when you've *really* met an angel? Well, they generally have any number of squirmy little kittens in their gentle protective hands.

In early September, Spay and Stay had the pleasure of meeting one of these angels when we got a call from a Waukegan resident looking for help with some abandoned kittens.

Mario had found one solid gray, one solid black, and one orange tabby kitten under a bush near his

front door. Someone had left them there with an open can of cat food. Mario took the kittens into his home and quickly found that they were a handful, especially since they seemed hungry but weren't too interested in the

canned food or water he gave them.

After two days, Mario knew he needed help and called Spay and Stay. We suggested he immediately contact Waukegan Animal Control, which he did.

Animal Control was very happy to help, but it was only ten minutes before closing and Mario could not get the kittens there in time.

When Spay and Stay found out that the kittens still needed some serious kitten-savvy fostering, we tapped into our resources and were able to get these three hungry youngsters into the capable hands of master kitten "mom" Chris Hagelund, who welcomed them with open arms and warm bottles of kitten milk replacer. What a rewarding sight to watch those hungry babies fill their tummies after getting a taste of the milk.

Through the cooperative efforts of a caring citizen, a TNR organization, and a volunteer foster mom, these three kittens are now happy and growing, and will soon be available for adoption.

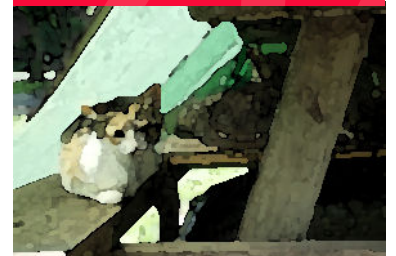
Like most angels, Mario may not think he did much for these kittens. The truth is, he is directly responsible for saving their lives. *You're the best, Mario, and a real hero! And special thanks to Chris.*



Chris holds bottle for kitten.



## THE HUMANE SOLUTION: Living better without litters



Spay and Stay is a non-profit organization dedicated to working with compassionate individuals and local governments to humanely control the growth of the feral cat population in Lake County, IL.

Through humane education and outreach programs, Spay and Stay also works to ensure long-term solutions to the source of feral cats: unaltered, free-roaming and/or abandoned domestic cats.

