



Cat Tales

The Award Winning Newsletter of Homeless Cat Network

Homeless Cat Network

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Summer 2019



Photo credit: Carolyn Allmacher

It Takes Teamwork to Help Community Cats

Community cats are part of our environment, living in parks, vacant lots, and industrial and agricultural areas. Some may be unsocialized to people. Some may be tame cats who have been abandoned.

Homeless Cat Network's volunteers are out every day trying to help these kitties. We Trap-Neuter-Return unsocialized kitties. We foster kittens and sociable adults and find them homes. We feed colonies of spayed/neutered community cats. We talk to people about how spayed/neutered community cats can be good neighbors.

In this issue, you'll read stories written by our own volunteers about how they help homeless kitties.

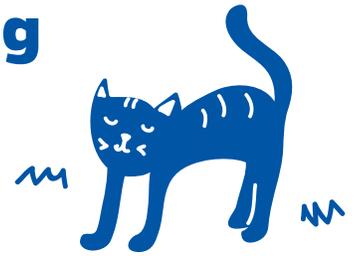
YOU CAN HELP TOO!

We're looking for people who can feed at a colony close to your home or office in San Mateo County, once a week. We're looking for people who can foster rescued kitties or help us promote them for adoption. And we're always looking for loving forever homes. It takes teamwork to help a community cat—please join us!



How We Started Feeding Community Cats

By Anita Lew



Homeless Cat Network is a great organization with many different volunteer opportunities. My family started off fostering with HCN, and our first kitty found a home. After that our schedules got a bit hectic, so we couldn't foster anymore. Instead, we volunteered to feed community cats.

We met Carole, an HCN volunteer who manages several colonies of kitties. They are fed and provided fresh water each day. She introduced us to the process of feeding, showed us where the colonies are, and taught us the names of the cats.



Before we head out to the colonies, my teenage kids and I fill jugs of water (we re-use gallon milk containers), canned wet food, dry food, and treats. At each of the colonies we visit, we clean their food and water bowls, then refill them.

Depending on our schedule, we sometimes stay and watch the colony cats eat and wander around. Some will even play if you bring toys!

It's great to feed the colony cats and know they are being watched over and taken care of each day by other volunteers who care.

HCN is looking for more people who can feed a colony once a week!

If you live or work in San Mateo County, please consider giving as little as a half-hour per week to help community cats and let us know what city you can help in.

For more information, email info@homelesscatnetwork.com

My First Fostering Experience, Coming From Singapore

By Rasyidah Abdul Razak



Let's begin with what spurred me to foster cats. I moved to San Mateo from Singapore in August, 2018, to accompany my husband here for work. Having put my career on hold, I was hoping to pursue some of my interests. With plenty of time in hand and room to spare in my home, I thought this would be a perfect time to delve into my long-time love: cats and kittens.

However, I had never owned a cat before and needed to do lots of research! An even bigger consideration was that I was uncertain on how long I would be here. With these in mind, the next best alternative to owning a cat was to foster.

Community animals (mainly cats) can be easily found in our Singapore neighborhoods at the playground, vacant lots, and on the streets. The SPCA Singapore and volunteer organizations ensure that the cats are sterilised in order to control their population.



In Singapore, community cats such as this one are spayed/neutered and fed through a shared effort between government and private organizations.



The community cats mostly live harmoniously with the residents and are fed by caregivers living in the area, as you may see containers of dry and wet food as well as water at some corners. On my daily walks to and from the train stations to work, I got to know the cats that I'd see in my journey and spent some minutes calling to them. On some lucky days, I got to pet them.

For my first fostering experience, I was given three adorable kittens who were initially timid. The hands-on experience made me learn the basics of their litter box and food, and the best ways to carry and pet them.

Soon after, one of them fell very sick. I learned how to administer medicines and monitor her weight and health. When we found out she was suffering from chronic kidney disease, which could not be treated, it was sad to witness her peaceful passing. She had already shown her affectionate and sweet personality.



I continued to care for the other kittens. One of them was never happy around people and was returned to the colony where she had appeared. The other kitten grew more and more affectionate each day and loved being on my lap and getting her tummy rubs. On the day she was adopted, I helped bring her to her new home. It was sad to see her go, but I was happy for her too.

Subsequently, I was given two adult cats to foster. They had very long, thick fur, which was badly matted. The fact that they let us brush them out so soon showed how sweet they were.

Both turned out to be very loving. They purred loudly while I rubbed them and loved cuddles, too. They needed daily brushing to avoid further mats. I hope they will be able to shower their future owners with this much love!

I'm leaving San Mateo for the next country where my husband will be working. Looking back at the last few months, this fostering program has enabled people like me to learn so much about proper care for cats and understand that responsibilities vary each time you foster. It was a great opportunity to be able help these cats find their forever home and I hope many more people will try fostering too.



She's once just a roadside garage cat. I'm gonna miss you kitty girl!



Farewell to a Longtime Fosterer

When Tom was diagnosed with a terminal degenerative illness, he wanted something to do that fit with his increasingly housebound lifestyle. He decided to foster kittens for Homeless Cat Network.

Over 13 years, Tom fostered about 350 kittens and cats. He had lots of time to socialize, and his family helped him with physical tasks he couldn't do for himself. Tom especially loved taking care of moms with kittens, preparing special meals throughout the day. He continued to foster until he died in late 2018. HCN is grateful for Tom's tireless devotion to the kitties whose lives he changed for the better.

HCN always needs more families to foster, especially in the summer.

Please consider opening your home to a litter of kittens this year!

Email info@homelesscatnetwork.com for more information.

Your Kindness Helps!

At Homeless Cat Network, our lifesaving initiatives help cats while solving the root problems of feline homelessness. Our programs include:

- Rescue, fostering and adoption efforts for socializable kittens and tame adults
- Trap-Neuter-Return program for community cats
- Guidance & support for people who wish to help cats in need
- Responsible colony management

As an all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) non-profit, no-kill rescue organization, our work is supported entirely by donations from caring people like you.

- \$25 Helping Hand** buys food and litter to help supply a foster home
- \$50 Supporting Friend** pays for vaccinations and basic medications
- \$100 Lifeline Support** subsidizes the spay/neuter of community cats
- \$250 Sustaining Supporter** helps us provide veterinary care for rescued kittens and cats
- \$500 Guardian Angel** helps us sustain managed colonies and support the cats and kittens in our fostering program, Kitten Kamp, and the Socialization Center
- Other amount:** \$ _____

How to Donate

HCN's Tax ID: #94-3177950

Online: Go to www.homelesscatnetwork.com/donations.html to pay via PayPal or Network for Good

Amazon Wish List: On Amazon.com, go to Account & Lists > Find a List or Registry, and search for Homeless Cat Network.

VOLUNTEER & SUPPORT

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email address: _____

*Please make checks payable to: **Homeless Cat Network***

To donate by credit card: Donation amount: _____

Name on card: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Card number: _____ Exp. date: _____

Three digit code on the back of credit card: _____

Signature: _____

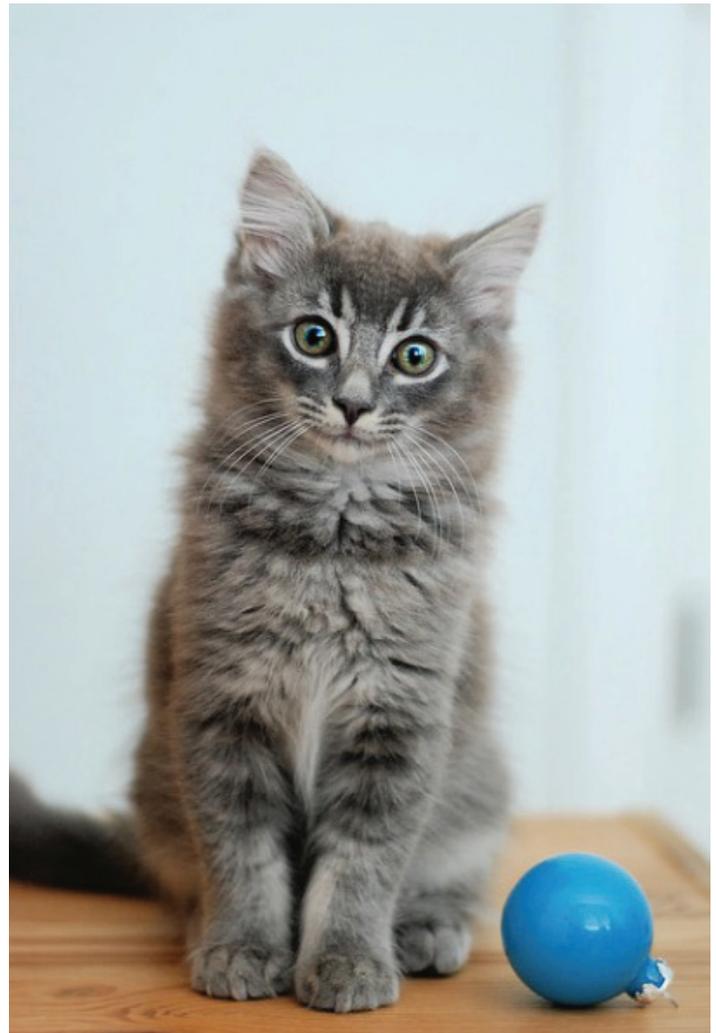


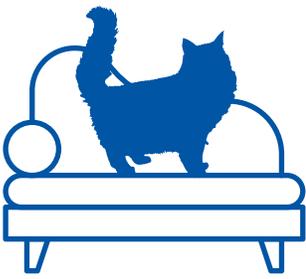
Photo credit: Carolyn Allmacher

You Can Volunteer!

WE CAN USE YOUR ENERGY AND ENTHUSIASM!

Email us at volunteer@homelesscatnetwork.com for more information about:

- Foster**—Please open your home to a cat or litter of kittens. Training and supplies are provided, and authorized veterinary expenses are covered.
- Professional help**—We'd love the help of veterinarians, vet techs, builders, public relations and marketing experts, and anyone with special talents!
- Cat rescuer**—We'll teach you how to humanely trap community cats. We'll provide all supplies, and pay for spay/neuter surgery and vaccinations.
- Colony feeder**—Bring food and water to a colony of fixed homeless kitties who need your help to survive.
- Cat socializer**—Help care for and socialize rescued cats at our Socialization Center for adult cats, or Kitten Kamp for fostered kittens ready to find a home.
- Events helper**—If you love talking to people, help us communicate HCN's mission and show kitties at public events throughout the year.



A Word from ‘The Mayor:’ How a Community Cat Found His Forever Home

By The Mayor, with a little help from humans



Greetings, friends. I, your exalted Mayor, stand before you today—

(ok, so I’m actually reclining on my cushy new cat bed)

—to meow the praises of the Homeless Cat Network (HCN) and how it changed my life for the better!

As you may know I spent many years living outdoors as part of a community cat colony. Living outside wasn’t easy, although it was made infinitely better by the kind HCN volunteers who came and visited us every single day, rain or shine. They made sure we had food and received medical care if needed *(including something called spay/neuter, but I seem to have blocked out the details of that particular memory)*.

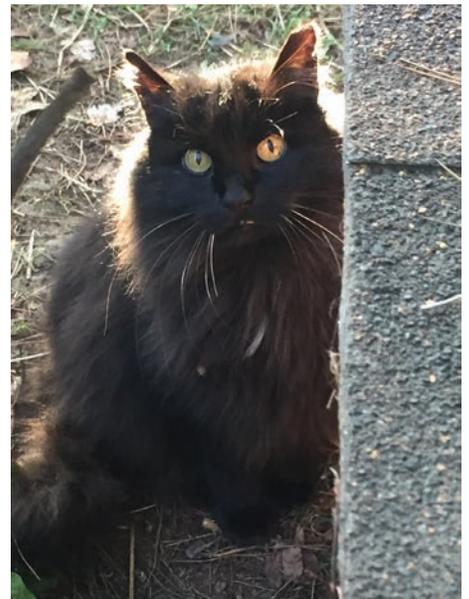
I grew fond of my HCN friends and always made a point of being the first member of the colony to greet them when they visited. I was named ‘The Mayor’ in recognition of my debonair charm. Usually my sister—the Vice Mayor—and I would come to the edge of the road and escort our friends up to our feeding site *(lest they forget where it was!)*

(Later my sister relocated herself elsewhere in the park and began seeking attention from strangers, which can be dangerous. Luckily for her, she was adopted by a wonderful lady named Annette a few years ago.)

I especially enjoyed the days when my HCN friend Brett visited, us as he always brought Temptations, my favorite treat *(catnip flavor only, if you please)!*

As the years passed, my HCN friends became concerned that living outdoors had become dangerous for an old guy like me. I had also begun approaching strangers for attention like my sister had.

Given how friendly I’d grown, they decided I might be a good candidate for adoption into someone’s home. In order to give me a chance they had to (1) trap me, which I did not enjoy; (2) take me to a veterinarian for a checkup— which I also did not enjoy; and...



(3) deliver me to a strange place called HCN's Socialization Center, which I did not enjoy at first—but eventually came to like. This new place was full of strange smells, populated with a strange group of other cats along with a strange new group of friendly humans whose job I was told was to 'socialize' me so I would be ready for adoption into my 'forever' home by a kind human.

Personally, I knew I was already sufficiently social (*I wasn't christened 'The Mayor' for nothing you know!*). However I decided to give the Socialization Center the benefit of the doubt. After all the food was good; the other cats were tolerable (*if not always duly respectful of my mayoral status*); and the beds were soft, warm and dry. They also had these fascinating things called "toys," which while strange at first, eventually grew on me.

All of the volunteers I met at the Center were as nice as my old HCN friends from the colony days (*several of whom came by to visit me, which I greatly appreciated*). I spent most of my time sitting on the windowsill enjoying the sunshine, sometimes wondering what my old feline friends who still lived outside were doing...and sometimes wondering if any human would ever be interested in adopting an older gentleman such as myself.

After giving it some serious thought, I decided to take control of my destiny. Rather than wait around for someone else to notice me and realize what a great

candidate I was, I decided to choose one of the Socialization Center's volunteers whom I had grown to know and like, and let her be the lucky one to adopt me. (*She seemed pretty manageable, based on how well I had maneuvered her into giving me whatever I wanted, whenever I wanted it.*)

After I 'informed' this volunteer of her good fortune (*i.e., I would be going home with her soon*), it wasn't long before the wheels of adoption were put in motion.

And so finally, I found myself delivered one last time by HCN volunteers to another strange new place with strange smells and strange cats; but this time was different. I already knew my human guardian from the Socialization Center.

I found she'd made a special place just for me. I had my own special bed, food bowls, treats, and some of the same favorite toys I enjoyed at the Socialization Center.

She slowly introduced me to her three other cats. Of course as the newcomer to an established political party, I had to start at the lowest spot on the cat tree. However, with time I feel confident that I can develop my network and start fundraising for my next campaign.

(*After all, I will always be 'The Mayor!'*)

In sum, thanks to Homeless Cat Network, after years of living outside and depending on the kindness of their volunteers to stay alive, I had found my own 'forever' home.

Illustrations credit: www.Vecteezy.com



Please donate to help us continue our lifesaving work—
or if you enjoy being outdoors, consider helping feed at one of
our colonies once a week. The kitties will be glad you did!
Please email info@homelesscatnetwork.com for more information.



Help Feed Community Cats!

HCN volunteers feed over 1,000 cats a day in responsibly managed colonies all over San Mateo County. Regular food and clean water help them live healthier, happier lives (and keeps them out of dumpsters and other dangerous places).

Please help by making a tax-deductible cash donation to support our food costs, or check out our Amazon Wish List for specific foods you could buy: On Amazon.com, go to Account & Lists > Find a List or Registry, and search for Homeless Cat Network.

