

ALLEY CAT ACTION®

Alley Cat Allies Newsletter | alleycat.org | WINTER 2020

For Alley Cat Allies' More Than Half a Million Supporters and Activists



AMAZING NETWORK OF CAT HEROES COMES TO THE RESCUE!



The Alley Cat Allies Cat Help Desk, which answers calls for help like with these Alabama cats Red (left) and Big Ears (right), is only possible because of your support. Thank you!

Every year, the Alley Cat Allies Cat Help Desk receives thousands of calls on a wide variety of questions related to cats and how best to protect them. In addition, we receive a large number of urgent calls from people worried about a newly discovered litter of kittens, an injured cat, community cats in danger of being removed from their outdoor homes, and many other scenarios in which cats are facing risk.

They call us because we are the experts. They call us because they trust us.

This amazing resource, powered by your generosity, helps these advocates save cats, pass laws protecting cats, and shift hearts and minds in their communities. We've saved millions of cats with initiatives like our Cat Help Desk. Each life we save helps build a world where all cats are valued and protected.

In this issue is the story of Junior, a few dozen of her feline friends, and the compassionate people we brought together to help them.

When we began 30 years ago, most people's first instinct when they spotted an outdoor cat was to either bring the cat to their local shelter or call animal control to have the cat picked up. The outcome for these cats was almost always death. Shelters knew that most community cats were unadoptable, but they did not offer nonlethal control such as Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR).

Too many shelters still kill community cats today, but immense progress has been made. More than 700 communities in the United States have embraced TNR, the method of returning cats who have been spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and eartipped to their outdoor homes. Alley Cat Allies is working to bring about a time when local animal control and shelters in all communities are committed to positive outcomes for all cats—including feral cats.

Until then, it remains critical to proceed with caution before bringing a cat to a local shelter. Confirm that
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This year is a milestone for Alley Cat Allies—our 30th anniversary!

Three decades ago, when I decided to save the lives of a group of cats in an alley in Washington, D.C., Alley Cat Allies was born. It has since grown into the global engine of change for cats.

Today, society no longer accepts that killing outdoor cats is in the “best interest of the cats,” or anyone else. More and more communities, including some of our nation’s largest cities, have

embraced Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR). In fact, 84% of Americans would prefer their tax dollars be spent on nonlethal cat population management.

Together, we have built a global movement dedicated to protecting and saving the lives of cats. Thanks to you, it grows stronger every day.



For the cats,



Becky Robinson
President and Founder




Randy, Blackie, and Daddy Penguin from the alley in Washington, D.C., that inspired the creation of Alley Cat Allies in 1990.

Connect with me online

 facebook.com/ACAPresident

 instagram.com/FeralBecky

 twitter.com/FeralBecky

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It is Alley Cat Allies' practice to exchange the names of our donors with other charities that share our values. We do this in order to both expand our donor base and spread our mission, and to support those charities that we feel are working toward the good of animals and our community. Please notify us if you would prefer that we not share your name. We would be happy to remove your information from our exchange list.



OUR MISSION: To transform and develop communities to protect and improve the lives of cats.

OUR GOALS: 1) Reform public policies and institutions to serve the best interests of cats; 2) Expand and promote cat care; 3) Increase understanding of cats to change attitudes and eliminate misconceptions.

CAT BEHAVIOR: LEARN THE LANGUAGE OF CATS

If you were to believe internet videos like “Henri, le Chat Noir,” the mind of a cat is full of deep philosophical thoughts, soul-crushing ennui, and occasional plans for world domination. But, as we all know, just because the internet says so doesn’t make it true.



As we care for community cats through our Boardwalk Cats Project® in Atlantic City, New Jersey, we watch their body language to know how best to interact with them.

Everything is a matter of perception, and often it has little to do with what the cat is actually trying to communicate. Personifying her, while fine for some light fun, can be problematic when more serious situations arise. Failing to understand cats on their terms can create or escalate a stressful situation. The result? Perhaps you simply fail to provide the cat what she wants or needs from

you. Or, at worst, you force her to react out of fear or uncertainty and hurt herself or others.

At Alley Cat Allies, our mission is to protect and improve the lives of cats. That includes ensuring everyone has a basic education in “cat.” Cat communication is a complex combination of scent, vocalization, and body language used by cats to express themselves. To keep things simple, let’s focus on cat body language, including tail movements, and

behavior. These are among the most universal and visible ways a cat communicates.

Understanding how a cat is feeling and what she is trying to communicate to you can lead to a better relationship that is built on respect, and a more confident cat, no matter where you find her: at home, in a shelter or veterinary clinic, or outdoors. In fact, many veterinary practices have begun using Fear Free techniques to create a calming environment, including replacing hectic waiting rooms with quiet exam rooms and implementing slip-free surfaces, calming pheromone sprays (such as *Feliway*®), and other tactics to put cats at ease.

So remember, the next time your cat begins to lash her tail, it doesn’t mean she is plotting to take over the world. It just means she is uneasy, and perhaps you can do something to help make her more comfortable. Then, you can both go back to happily watching the latest introspective art house film about a certain mustachioed cat.

Learn even more:

Get our brand-new Cat Socialization Spectrum Guide at alleycat.org/SocializationSpectrum.

Watch our Cat Behavior Webinar Series at alleycat.org/CatBehaviorSeries.

Learn cat body language and behavior at alleycat.org/SpeakCat.

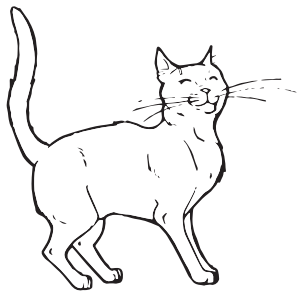
KITTEN SEASON IS COMING

Remember Brioche, Ciabatta, Pumpernickel, and Rye who came to us last year from Prince George’s County, Maryland? They were so cute we could just eat them up! We’re happy to say all were spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and found forever homes of their own.

In another world, they could be going into heat right now—and having kittens in the spring.

The Loaf Kittens were born at the height of last year’s kitten season, which lasts from spring through summer and in some regions practically all year long. We’re fast approaching that time again. That’s why we need to Beat the Heat® and spay and neuter cats now so their breeding cycle ends before it begins!

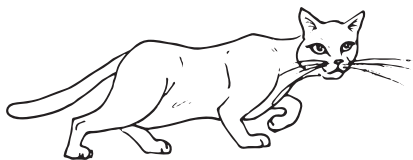
Please encourage everyone you know to spay and neuter their cats and carry out Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) in their community. They can learn how at alleycat.org/TNR.



Body Language: Tail is held high and is not bristled. Her head is held high and her ears are pointed in the direction of whatever she is looking at.

Translation: I'm happy and feeling good!

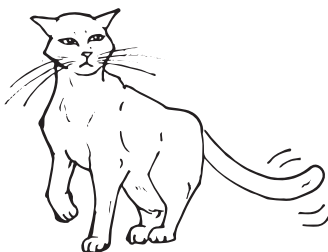
How to Help: To see this positive behavior more often, help make cats feel more confident in their environments. Keep a regular routine, limit the unexpected, and provide enrichment like plenty of playtime and some high perches.



Body Language: Tail is curved down slightly and the cat is swiveling to point in different directions. She's also crouching a bit lower to the ground as well.

Translation: What's going on here?

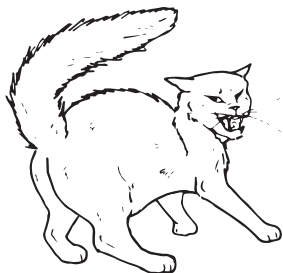
How to Help: These are the hallmarks of a cat who is still investigating the situation and the environment. To ease her anxiety, try moving slowly and speaking in a soft voice while she gets used to what is happening around her.



Body Language: Tail is lashing back and forth. Her ears are flattened and aimed backwards, sometimes referred to as "airplane ears."

Translation: I don't like this, please give me space!

How to Help: Whatever the cat is experiencing in the moment, she doesn't like it. Try to give her some space or provide her an escape route so she can get away from whatever is causing her distress.



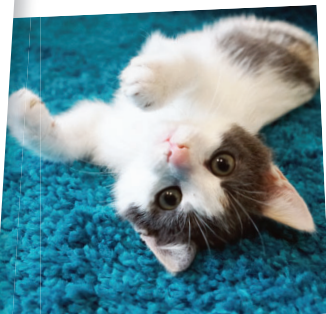
Body Language: Tail is full and bristled. The cat is crouched low with her ears flattened and she's hissing at times.

Translation: I'm terrified!

How to Help: This cat isn't angry, she's extremely frightened. A cat in this situation will enter fight or flight mode. She will try to escape, or lash out. Do not try to grab the cat as any unexpected movement will feel like an attack to her. Instead, allow her to hide and calm down.



Pumpernickel



Brioche



Rye



Ciabatta



CHANGE FOR EVERY KITTY IN EVERY CITY STARTS WITH YOU

(continued from page 1)

they do not impound and euthanize cats. If you are unsure who to turn to in your community to get help for a cat about whom you are worried, contact our Cat Help Desk.

It was through one such call that we came to know Junior, a sweet black and white tuxedo cat.

Junior was one of about 30 cats being cared for by James, a military veteran. While Junior may be an unusual name for a female cat, it does not seem to bother her one bit. What was bothering Junior



Junior sporting an eartip. She was spayed, vaccinated, and eartipped; and is now in her forever home after receiving lifesaving surgery.

greatly was her severely injured leg. Desperately worried about Junior, James called the Alley Cat Allies Cat Help Desk.

We tapped into our Feral Friends Network®, a roster of amazing people who lend a hand to others working to save and improve cats' lives. To help Junior, we called on Tom Conerly, a former

animal control officer in a neighboring community. A few years ago, we helped Tom establish a TNR group, the Orange Beach Animal Care & Control Program. This TNR program has saved hundreds of cats.

Tom was happy to hear from us and happy to help. He



James plays with Big Ears, one of his community cats, after Alley Cat Allies worked hard to give them the help they needed. With your support, we're making lifesaving change like this all around the world!

connected us with a veterinarian, who recommended removing Junior's injured leg so she could live her best life. Today, Junior, now named Ethel, is fully recovered in her forever home—with Tom!

We reached out to another local Feral Friends Network member, the Azalea City Cat Coalition, to implement a TNR program for the 30 community cats in Junior's former colony. We set up feeding stations and comfortable outdoor shelters, which they very much enjoy. James does, too!

As wonderful as this turned out for Junior, her colony, James, and Tom, what is truly spectacular is that their story is one of thousands of lifesaving outcomes we are able to bring about every year, all around the world, because supporters like you make our programs possible. Thank you for standing with us, this year and every year. 🐾



Every Kitty, Every City®

NORTH CAROLINA

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APRIL 2020 | RALEIGH, NC

LEARN MORE: alleycat.org/Events

PROFILE IN GENEROSITY: LINDSAY DONZANTI



Lindsay Donzanti, a dedicated long-term donor to Alley Cat Allies, is determined to protect cats far into the future.

Saving cats' lives is Lindsay Donzanti's passion. The 72-year-old, London-born resident of the United States has been carrying out Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) for more than 20 years, and in that time has helped more than 2,000 cats. She relates closely to the people who are out on the front lines helping

cats—she's done it her whole life.

"They say everyone needs their one 'thing.' TNR is my thing, and it's very close to my heart," says Donzanti. "It's doing an enormous service for cats."

Donzanti knows it's equally important to share her knowledge. She mentors members of her community, educating them about cats and the importance of spay and neuter.

Education is also why she became a long-term donor to Alley Cat Allies, and why she chose to include us in her will. She wants to ensure we will continue sharing our expertise with cat advocates far into the future.

"I admire Alley Cat Allies and all the work you do worldwide so much," Donzanti told us. "Because you're spreading enlightenment; you educate so many people."

When she isn't tirelessly advocating on behalf of cats, Donzanti enjoys spending time with her own two feline friends at home, Rambo and Raja. 🐾

Visit alleycat.org/PlannedGiving (CFC #10964) (EIN #52-1742079) or for more information, call **866-309-6207**.

HISSES AND PURRS The stories of those who deserve to be celebrated...or scorned.



PURRS to **Animal Services in Calvert County, Maryland**, for moving toward adopting lifesaving initiatives including a Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program and amending ordinances to make them more cat friendly with support from Alley Cat Allies.



HISSES to the **City Council of Westwego, Louisiana**, for unanimously passing a law that requires people to get a burdensome permit before they can care for community cats. This will make it nearly impossible to carry out TNR.



PURRS to **Rochelle, Illinois**, for canceling a program to trap and kill community cats, changing its law to prevent the killing of healthy stray cats, and working with Alley Cat Allies to implement TNR.



HISSES to **Port Orange, Florida**, for officially and abruptly eliminating funding for its long-standing and effective TNR program.

SAVE A CAT WITH A MOUSE

With just a few clicks, you can make a difference in cats' lives and help transform communities. Here are some online resources to help you on your way:



QUESTIONS?—Looking for assistance with cats? Get the help you need!
alleycat.org/GetHelp



LEARN—Advocate for cats in your community.
alleycat.org/CommunityChange



DONATE—Support cats nationwide.
alleycat.org/Donate



TAKE ACTION—Receive our action alerts and other emails.
alleycat.org/SignUp