

# ALLEY CAT ACTION®

Alley Cat Allies Newsletter | [alleycat.org](https://alleycat.org) | Winter 2023

For Alley Cat Allies' Over 800,000 Supporters and Activists Across the Nation and Around the World

With notes  
from the  
Alley Cat Allies  
team!

## NOTES FROM THE FIELD: **Defending** **Alabama Caregivers**

*Alley Cat Allies provided expert testimony for the defense in the trials of Beverly Roberts and Mary Alston, who were arrested and convicted in Wetumpka, Alabama, on charges related to caring for community cats.*

*These are the notes from the field of our Director of Programs, Alice Burton.*

When body cam footage of Wetumpka, Alabama, police officers handcuffing Beverly Roberts, 85, and Mary Alston, 60, hit the internet, people were understandably outraged. Knowing the two women were arrested as they were caring for community cats made their story go viral.

Unfortunately, I've seen this kind of case far too often. Alley Cat Allies created our *Compassion is Not a Crime*

*A beautiful cat we met while exploring Wetumpka. We love the reminder of who we're fighting for!*



*Alice in front of the courthouse where she testified in defense of Mary and Beverly. They were so grateful for the support, but we're not done yet!*

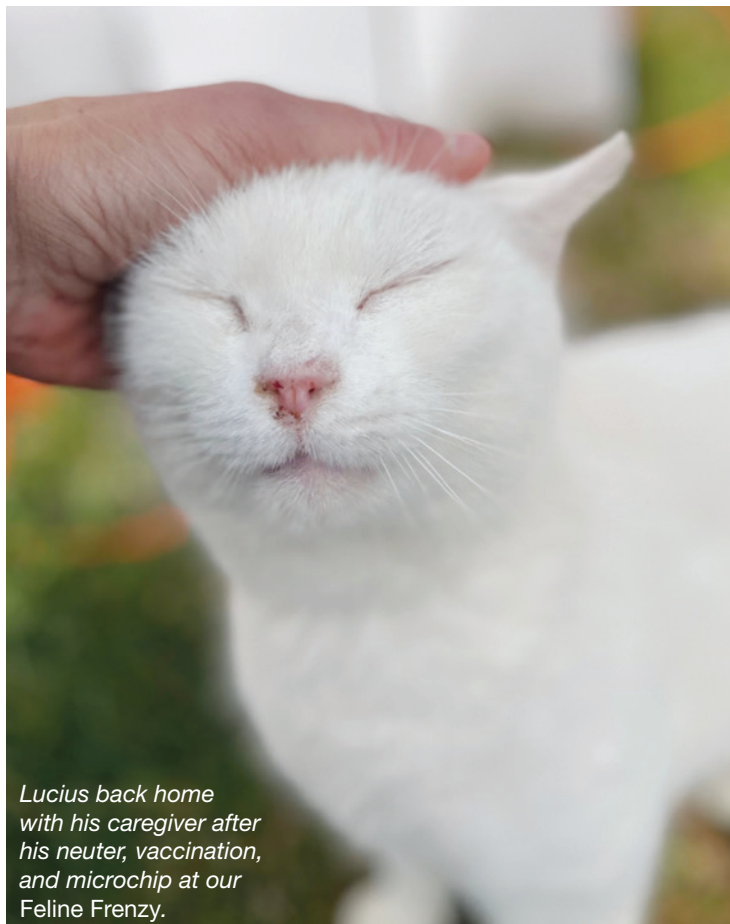
initiative because this criminalizing of compassion is very common. So when Beverly and Mary's attorney reached out and asked us to provide expert testimony for the defense, I headed out immediately to take part in the proceedings.

My goal was to show the judge, prosecutor, officials, and residents that community cat caregivers are good Samaritans providing a community service, and should be supported instead of dragged to court.

And in the end, it was a very long and dragging day in that court. The prosecution painted the two women as troublemakers enabling cats to destroy city property. When I took the podium, I explained the reality of the situation: cats have always lived outdoors in Wetumpka, and Beverly and Mary were humanely reducing their population through Trap, Neuter, Return (TNR), spay and neuter, and adoption.

*(See Notes From The Field: Defending Alabama Caregivers on page 4)*

# In a **FELINE FRENZY®** to **Save Cats' Lives**



Lucius back home with his caregiver after his neuter, vaccination, and microchip at our Feline Frenzy.

When white tom cat Lucius became the victim of a house fire in Galax, Virginia, he was left without a home and without the care he needed. Thankfully Lucius was unharmed other than ash residue on his stunning coat, but now he was living outdoors unneutered and unvaccinated. And though a kind local community cat caregiver stepped up to provide him food, she simply didn't have the money to take him to a veterinarian.

Lucius is like many cats in Southwestern Virginia who have dedicated caregivers who pay out of pocket to care for them but struggle to afford spay and neuter services. That's why Alley Cat Allies teamed up with our friends at Homeward Trails—and with our supporters like you—to launch our latest *Feline Frenzy®* in the area.



## Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)

The only humane, effective approach to community cats. Cats are humanely trapped, spayed/neutered, vaccinated, eartipped, and returned to their outdoor homes.

In the span of a few days we spayed and neutered, vaccinated, microchipped, and treated more than 100 cats—and that was just our first planned event!

“Homeward Trails is excited and grateful to be collaborating with Alley Cat



## Community Cat

An unowned cat who lives outdoors.

Allies for the *Feline Frenzy* in Galax,” said Sue Bell, executive director of Homeward Trails. “The support of Alley Cat Allies will help so many cats and bring peace of mind to many cat caretakers.”

Alley Cat Allies' *Feline Frenzy* brings together communities to help their feline members. By building upon—or creating new—connections between caregivers, advocates, animal protection groups, veterinarians, and policymakers, these events help cats in the short term and long term. The short-

VELVET



term effects include spay and neuter, vaccination, and microchipping. The long-term effects include humane education and policies, plus networking and collaboration opportunities for caregivers to protect cats into the future.

Powered by our supporters and donors, we're hitting the ground running in the Galax area, and we already have more planned for local communities and their cats. In our first *Feline Frenzy* with Homeward Trails,

*(Continued on next page)*

Our goal is to bring our  
*Feline Frenzy* to even more  
communities in 2023.  
We can do it with your support!



JAX



we reached our 100-cat goal, and had time to create outdoor cat shelters, which we provided along with cat food to caregivers across the area. We look forward to setting new goals in 2023.

Most of the cats, including Lucius, were spayed or neutered, vaccinated, eartipped to indicate they were part of a TNR program, then returned to their outdoor home. Some cats needed extra TLC. A kitten needed his face cleaned and eye medication? Done, no questions asked.

MERCURY



SARI



These are all Galax, Virginia, cats and kittens we helped with our Feline Frenzy. YOU made it possible!



### Eartip

The painless removal of the tip of a cat's left ear under anesthesia. Identifies cats who were spayed/neutered through a TNR program.

And with each cat returned, health and wellbeing improved, the community improves too, including in peace of mind.

"We really appreciate Alley Cat Allies for helping us get our cats spayed and neutered and everything they're doing," said Cathy M., a Galax resident and caregiver. "We really, sincerely, deeply appreciate it."

When she thanks us, she's also thanking you! Your generosity empowers us to bring high-quality, high-volume spay and neuter and *Feline Frenzy* to the most in-need areas. We spayed and neutered 450+ cats in Atlantic County, New Jersey, and 500+ cats in Mayfield, Kentucky—and that's just in the past year!

This year, our goal is to bring *Feline Frenzy* to even more communities across the country. With you by our side fueling our mission the only question is: when and where?

**Learn more about Feline Frenzy at [www.alleycat.org/FelineFrenzy](http://www.alleycat.org/FelineFrenzy).**



## 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 online resources to help:



### QUESTIONS?

Looking for assistance with cats? Get the help you need! [alleycat.org/GetHelp](http://alleycat.org/GetHelp)



### DONATE

Support our work with cats and kittens. [alleycat.org/Donate](http://alleycat.org/Donate)



### LEARN

Advocate for cats in your community. [alleycat.org/CommunityChange](http://alleycat.org/CommunityChange)



### TAKE ACTION

Receive our action alerts and other emails. [alleycat.org/SignUp](http://alleycat.org/SignUp)



NOTES FROM THE FIELD:

## Defending Alabama Caregivers

(continued  
from page 1)

Despite a strong defense, Beverly and Mary were found guilty on multiple counts. But believe me, this fight is not over. Alley Cat Allies will work in Wetumpka until the town embraces rather than punishes TNR.

The center of Wetumpka is a cheery slice of city lined with charming local shops. I got the sense everybody knows everybody. Yet local cat advocates told me they feel they have to operate in secret so they won't be

arrested. I let them know they deserve a medal, not handcuffs. We're going to let all of Wetumpka know.

Beverly and Mary are appealing their case, and Alley Cat Allies has much more planned to transform Wetumpka into a safe community for cats that reflects citizens' humane values. With our supporters like you, we know we can achieve it.



From,

Alice

STRIPEY



*Community cats like this one will be at risk if TNR is wrongfully considered abandonment. Alley Cat Allies is taking action so that won't happen.*

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton is writing an opinion that could threaten TNR if he determines it is abandonment under Texas statute. Alley Cat Allies, acting in defense of TNR, submitted a legal brief and a petition signed by more than 1,000 Texas advocates in less than 48 hours with the answer: TNR is not abandonment, and it's what Texans want.

## Defending TNR in Texas

With your help, Alley Cat Allies is staying engaged in the process with lifesaving efforts for cats throughout Texas.

*We've worked in Texas for decades and seen incredible success from TNR. We won't let anything threaten that progress or the cats.*

## Adopt a CAT— Change a Life!

There's nothing better than a "happily ever after!" In 2022, Alley Cat Allies ensured 300 cats, kittens, and other animals could be fostered and adopted! Though we're not a shelter, we act when cats need us, and we have the right network—and your incredible support!—to help.

We still have cats looking for their new starts.

Meet them all  
at [www.alleycat.org/Adopt](http://www.alleycat.org/Adopt).



# We're **ENDING DECLAWING** One State at a Time

Throughout 2022, Alley Cat Allies worked with our friends at the Paw Project to provide treatment to cats suffering from declaw surgery—like Cubby, who lost her home when the pain in her paws caused her to avoid the litter box.

Cubby and many other cats now have a new lease on life thanks to surgery and pain management. But here's the truth: the only way to truly protect cats from declawing is to make it illegal—everywhere.



Cubby relaxing in her adoptive home after recovering from surgery to salvage her paws after declawing. Alley Cat Allies covered those costs.

Supporting declawing bans, treating cats who have been declawed, and educating veterinarians to refuse to declaw—we're doing it all.

Alley Cat Allies rallies people nationwide to raise their voice for declawing bans. Landmark bans in New York in 2019 and Maryland in 2022 are two of the highest achievements, and there are a lot more to come!



## Declawing

Surgical amputation of the last joints of a cat's toes, like cutting a finger off at the last knuckle. Can cause cats lifelong pain.

The future is a world where declawing is just a relic of the past—and you're helping us get there, city by city, state by state. We'll be sharing more ways you can act against declawing, so watch your email or connect with us.



**Take Action**  
at [www.alleycat.org/TakeAction](http://www.alleycat.org/TakeAction).

**Share the Truth**  
**About Declawing**

at [www.alleycat.org/Declaw](http://www.alleycat.org/Declaw).



## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

# Jeff Butchyk

We deeply thank Jeff for being a strong ally in Alley Cat Allies' mission to create a world where all cats and kittens are valued and protected. Recently, he chose Alley Cat Allies as the recipient of the largest donation he's ever given, and his gift will immediately go to work to save cats' lives.

"I decided to give to Alley Cat Allies because they align with my strong feelings about TNR, rescue, and saving cats from kill shelters. All of this is very important to me, and the organization does a superb job fulfilling the need," said Jeff.

One of his biggest inspirations is his late companion of 17 and a half years: Mandrake. Dignified, handsome, and extremely intelligent, Mandrake was a steadfast friend and, in Jeff's words, "something very, very special."

Learn how you can invest in a brighter future for cats with a donation at [www.alleycat.org/Donate](http://www.alleycat.org/Donate).

Or, consider a planned gift at [alleycat.org/PlannedGiving](http://alleycat.org/PlannedGiving) (CFC#10964) (EIN #52-1742079). Or, for more information, call 866-309-6207.



Mandrake, Jeff's steadfast companion of over 17 years. He is greatly missed.



## Alley Cat Allies

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## OUR MISSION:

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





Alice Burton with Mary, Mayor Fitzgerald, and park staff members Jason and Ed at the cat colony site.

## PROFILE IN COMPASSION: **Mary H. Champions TNR in Buena Vista**

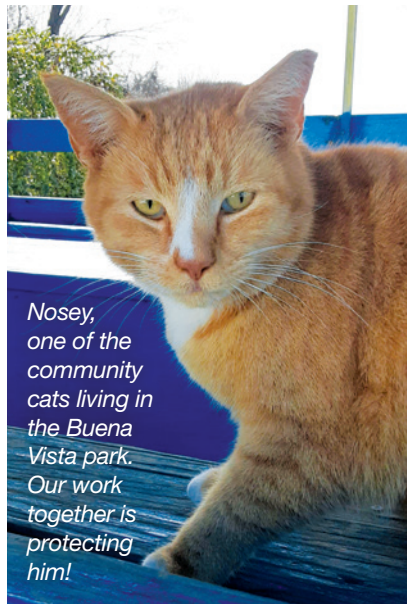
Sometimes the smallest sparks can inspire the biggest changes in our lives. For Mary H., a powerhouse TNR advocate in Buena Vista, Virginia, it was a single tiny kitten she met while working on a project in a local park.

“Right away I knew something had to be done for this kitten, and all the cats in the park,” said Mary. “And I knew I had to be the one to do it.”

Mary hadn’t even heard of TNR when she first rolled up her sleeves to take action. But within a year and a half, she’d led efforts to trap, spay and neuter, and vaccinate an incredible 178 park cats. Almost 10 years later in 2023, only 12 community cats still call the park home.

Mary, her husband, Phil, and their nonprofit Furever Friends Lodge has successfully managed the park’s cat population entirely out of pocket. So when Mary received a letter from the city telling her to remove all remaining cats at the end of 2022, she didn’t take it lying down.

She reached out to Alley Cat Allies, and our Director of Programs, Alice Burton, headed to Buena Vista to attend a city council meeting and defend the cats, TNR, and people like Mary who provide an important community service. With all she’s done for the community, Mary had her own supporters filling seats as well.



Nosey, one of the community cats living in the Buena Vista park. Our work together is protecting him!

*We’ll keep working in Buena Vista to make sure the community cats in the park are never ripped from their outdoor home.*

Buena Vista Mayor William Fitzgerald heard us loud and clear. Upon touring the colony site with Alice and Mary, he agreed the cats should stay in their outdoor homes and their removal taken off the table.

“Buena Vista and the park are going to try to be good stewards for the colony and the TNR program here,” Mayor Fitzgerald said.

Alley Cat Allies continues to provide expertise and support to the city to ensure the cats and the efforts of advocates like Mary are respected and protected.

“These cats may be feral, but they are not homeless. They have a beautiful 300-acre park to enjoy,” said Mary. “I’m relieved the city plans to embrace them for the future of this colony.”

As for the kitten who inspired Mary to become the cat champion she is today? Her name is Miley Paxton, and she is still Mary’s constant companion.



Miley Paxton, the kitten that inspired the highly successful TNR efforts in the Buena Vista park!