



CAT ANGEL NETWORK

Together, we CAN make a difference!



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MISSION STATEMENT

- ☛ *To prevent the suffering of abandoned cats through rescue, spay/neuter, medical care, shelter, and adoption to approved homes.*
- ☛ *To educate the public about the proper care of cats, the importance of spaying and neutering, and the benefits of adopting shelter cats.*
- ☛ *To operate as a no-kill, all volunteer, non-profit organization.*

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2020 Cat Angel Network Auction Canceled

After careful consideration of the risks involved to the health of our volunteers and patrons, the Cat Angel Network Board of Directors decided to cancel the 2020 auction. It was a hard choice, not only because of the lost income, but also because of the amount of fun we will all miss this year. Please save the date for our 2021 Cat Angel Auction, slated for Sunday, October 24th, 2021. The support we receive from our auction will be greatly missed this year, but we look forward to seeing all of you in 2021!

Meanwhile, we look forward to the possibility of your helping us through this difficult time with your usual generous support. We have taken the liberty of enclosing a self-addressed envelope for your convenience in assisting us with our ongoing veterinary needs. The kitties say "The show must go on". See you next October 2021. ☛

ADOPTION CENTER NEWS

With the COVID-19 virus hitting the area full force in mid-March, for the safety of volunteers and potential adopters, we made the difficult decision to temporarily close the adoption centers in both the Pottstown and Downingtown Petsmart stores. We watched the news daily to ensure we had the most up to date information in order to develop our plan for the eventual return to the stores.

Similar to the state's plan, we too developed a phased approach to returning to the stores. Once Pennsylvania moved to the "yellow" phase in early June, we felt more confident that we could successfully return the cats and kittens to the adoption centers ensuring the safety of our volunteers and potential adopters. We did have to modify how we showed the cats and kittens to potential adopters to ensure adequate space for social distancing. We're pleased that the modified procedures are working well and we were blessed with successful opportunities to adopt out cats and kittens even during this difficult time.

At the time of this article, we have begun phasing back in our weekend adoptathons on a limited basis. If you are looking for your new furry friend, please visit us at the Petsmart adoption centers in Pottstown or Downingtown! ☛

LOOKING FOR KIND HEARTS AND LOVING SPIRITS! Could You Be A CAN Foster Care Provider?

Perhaps you've considered fostering but worried about the commitment of time and energy. Fostering can be tailor-made to suit your capabilities, interests and time commitment. There are so many different types of situations which require the touch of a loving home and some individual attention.

For example, we are often looking for a short term foster home for an adult cat who simply needs the extra reassurance that they are loved, or newborn orphans who need to be bottle-fed, and of course the energetic, active teenagers who will provide constant entertainment. Many people think that fostering is just for kittens who are

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LOOKING FOR KIND HEARTS AND LOVING SPIRITS! *continued from page 1*

definitely fun and entertaining but perhaps require more energy than an adult. However, as you can see our foster needs are much more widely varied than just kittens.

And, of course there is always the problem of not enough space which means we have to turn away some sweet angels who are less fortunate and desperately in need of help. The more foster homes we have, the more kitties we can accept into CAN and ultimately, place in forever homes which results in saving lives.

No need to worry – we've got you covered!! Fostering is a team effort because our foster coordinators support you throughout the process. As a

foster parent you have the joy of knowing you have helped change or even saved the life of an innocent, deserving kitty. Even fostering a few cats a year makes a difference. Please consider becoming a foster parent – the rewards are indescribable.

If you are interested or would like to know more about fostering, please email Charlotte at jaysing@aol.com, call 610-327-6870 or fill out a volunteer application on our website at www.catangel.org.

P.S. Did you know that most CAN kitties live with foster families? Just ask any of our foster parents what an ultimate joy it is to know you've saved a life. There is no greater reward. 🐾

BARN OR OUTDOOR HOMES NEEDED FOR DISPLACED COLONY CATS

As this newsletter goes to print, we find ourselves in a difficult situation with a number of cats who lost their colony home due to no fault of their own. A change in situation with the property meant that all 16 cats had to go and, while we are fervent believers in TRAP, NEUTER, RETURN (with the emphasis on RETURN); there was no return location for these unloved animals.

Their caretaker, a longtime supporter of Cat Angel Network, asked for our help. Over the spring and summer, one of our dedicated volunteers, along with the cats' previous caretaker, trapped all of the cats, and while a number of them are somewhat used to people and can be socialized over time, many others are feral or semi-feral.

This is so often the hard part of cat rescue; situations where cats are misplaced from their current homes and not really adoptable as inside



cats. These cats make excellent rodent control for barn, home, or business situations, and they will more than earn their keep as colder weather approaches and pest control becomes more of a problem. Cat Angel Network will help with the re-homing process and do all we can to make this a Win-Win experience for both the adopters and the cats.

If you can help by placing one or more kitties in an outdoor situation of your own, or you KNOW someone who may be interested in barn-type cats, please email elainerichert@aol.com or submit an adoption application at www.catangel.org.

Together, we CAN make a difference in the lives of these cats that just want to spend their days in safe & caring "homes!" 🐾

HELP US RESCUE CATS WITH YOUR AMAZON PURCHASES!

There is no simpler way to support Cat Angel Network! Just go to smile.amazon.com and choose Cat Angel Network as your charity.

Then remember to always navigate to smile.amazon.com each time you make a purchase through Amazon. So far, Cat Angel Network has received over \$1,700 in payments from Amazon, but with your help, we could earn much more!

P.S. You can also view our Wish List of needed items on Amazon, on our Face Book page and on our website – www.catangel.org 🐾



CAT ANGEL NETWORK CONCERT RAISES OVER \$11,000!

While the actual physical concert had to be canceled this year, our steadfast donors came through with record shattering contributions for our annual Cat Angel Network Benefit Concert. We are so grateful for the donations received, especially during this difficult time. Please mark your calendar for next year - Sunday April 18th 2021 (3PM, Swope Music Building, West Chester University) for our next cat concert! 🐾

Ask “Angel” Inter-Cat Relations

QUESTION: I have three cats who do not get along as well as I'd like. I had always hoped for a harmonious group, but there is definite tension among them which sometimes erupts in hisses, spats, and chases. The oldest, Princess, is quite the diva, and does not want to be bothered. She hisses at any cat who gets in her personal space, and her overreaction spurs on the youngest, Rascal, who loves to ambush and chase the other two. He's just rambunctious and doesn't mean any harm, but he terrorizes the middle kitty Sissy who is something of a "fraidy cat." She sometimes doesn't use the litterbox, and I think it might be connected to her nervousness around Rascal. How do I improve the relationship among the cats and create a peaceful, safe environment for myself and my cats? I love them all and do not want to part with any of them.

ANSWER: Visitors to our shelter and multi-cat foster homes are often amazed at the number of kitties who live together harmoniously. Baskets and beds by the windows frequently contain multiple cats curled up together, and mealtimes reveal dozens of cats, each going to his or her own bowl, with no arguments or competition. The question often asked of our volunteers is "How can so many cats get along together in ONE ROOM, when my couple of cats at home can't coexist peacefully in an ENTIRE HOUSE? Well, the answer lies in our "P-A-L-S" Principles.

The "P" stands for "PLENTY," plenty of everything that's important to cats - litterboxes, beds, sunny window seats, toy mice, water bowls, etc. Abundance eliminates competition over scarce resources. The size of your home does not matter as much as the availability of the things cats need and want.

An examination of the conflicts and problems in a feline family will almost always reveal where there is a lack of abundance. In your household, for instance, there is a definite need for more litterboxes in several different locations. Sissy is telling you, by her behavior, that she is not always comfortable using the litter box when Rascal is in the vicinity. Very likely he has ambushed her while she was in or leaving the litterbox, and now she is avoiding it rather than risk being jumped. By the way, covered litterboxes should be outlawed in any home where there are inter-cat tensions resulting in litterbox lapses! (See "Ask Angel" article on litterbox problems on our website).

"Plenty of play" is another element you should add to your cats' daily routine. Rascal's behavior is indicative of a young cat whose need to play

is so great that he is desperately trying to engage any available kitties, whether they're interested or not. Now, out of boredom and excess energy, he's made a game out of their resistance. If you don't have a laser light toy, you need to run, not walk to your nearest Petsmart and get one! These inexpensive gadgets can wear out even the most high-energy kitty in one or two 10- minute sessions per day!

An even better solution, believe it or not, is to adopt another young male as a playmate for Rascal. The last thing most people with inter-cat problems are looking to do is add another cat to the mix, but it almost always works beautifully. The rambunctious kitty has a willing and able buddy that is available for wrestling, chasing, and ambush games, and the pressure is off the older party poopers.

The "A" of P-A-L-S stands for "ALTITUDE." Have you ever noticed that the top of the refrigerator is a popular spot for cats? The reason is its altitude. The fastest, easiest way to make less-social or timid cats more secure is to offer them plenty of high places on which



to perch. From a cat's point of view, height is safety, security, power, and, yes, just plain fun! Visit our "Sweet Kitty Suite" room at the shelter and you'll find the cat-walk, high placed shelves, and tall cat trees filled with serene kitties! For the most part, these are the more timid or aloof cats. When something happens that upsets them or they just want to be alone, they literally "run for the hills!" A cat tree is a great investment for any multi-cat home. Store-bought or hand-made, they offer lots of natural refuge and are worth every penny in terms of peace and harmony in a fur-filled family.

The "L" of P-A-L-S stands for "LOVE," "TOUGH LOVE", that is. Although cats are not pack animals in the traditional sense, they do look to their favorite people as the hub of the family wheel. If their most significant person cuddles and coddles them when they're behaving badly, you're encouraging more of the same. If, for example, Princess hisses at and bops the other cats when she's on your lap and wants you all to herself, you should quietly stand up and end her monopoly on your time and attention. You can reward her with treats at future sessions if she tolerates the presence of the others. Most cats

are bright enough to realize that every time they behave badly, something unpleasant happens and every time they behave well, something GOOD happens!

If Rascal is about to pounce on one of the females, make a distracting noise to interrupt the behavior. If he persists, use a squirt bottle. If he jumps on one of them, give him a 15 minute TIME-OUT in a cat carrier. By the time you let him out of the carrier, he'll have forgotten what he was up to, and the other kitty will have found a safe haven.

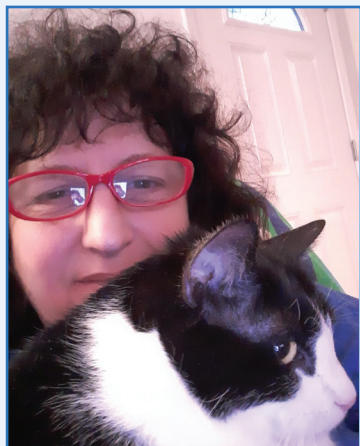
These "Tough Love" strategies should be carried out calmly and confidently. No yelling, screaming, or roughness. They will not make your cats hate you. Cats thrive on consistency and respect consequences that are predictable. The more you discourage bad behavior and reward compatibility, the better your cats will get along.

The "S" of P-A-L-S stands for "SOLITUDE." Sometimes the only solution to a situation where one cat has grown to dislike or fear another is to offer her a room of her own for all or part of the day. It's a very effective solution that many cat owners fight "tooth and nail," excuse the cat metaphor. The idea of closing off a beloved kitty in a separate room is an option that some owners won't even consider. Look at it this way. If a senior citizen were surrounded by high-energy toddlers all day, don't you think she'd appreciate some peace and quiet in a secluded spot for a while? That's how your oldest kitty Princess may feel! If an elementary school child were being harassed by the school bully during recess, wouldn't she jump at the chance to enjoy the play yard at a different time? That's how Sissy may feel! Giving the cats a break from each other while you are at work or during the night is an easy and effective answer that often results in more peaceful interactions when the kitties ARE all together.

At Cat Angel Network, large cages outfitted with perches and cozy beds are used to give cats an opportunity to get to know each other gradually and safely. Cats who are having disagreements can be separated and reintroduced. One CAN adopter who was having trouble with her kitties was reluctantly talked into borrowing a cage to help restore peace. A few weeks later she said she was returning the cage. It worked so well she was buying one of her own! Her pestered kitty loved it, and even after being released, was going into her "private apartment" on her own!

So give our P-A-L-S Principles a shot in your home. You have nothing to lose (except some hisses and growls), and so much to gain. Watching mistrust s-l-o-w-l-y turn into tolerance and eventually even friendship is one of the most rewarding and beautiful experiences you will ever know. It is well worth the effort! 🐾

Meet Our Volunteers



CHERYL JONES

Cheryl was born in Pottstown but lived on a farm in Meadville where her love of animals developed. Her family eventually moved to Honey Brook where she graduated from Twin Valley High School.

Cheryl has a very long and varied history of rescuing kitties. In 1998 she took in a newborn kitten who spent her life with Cheryl. Leo entered her life in 1999 and in 2003 she rescued Homer and cared for him after he developed hypothyroidism. Leo and Homer both crossed the rainbow bridge in 2017.

Cheryl says: "2014 changed everything when an acquaintance wanted to "get rid of her cat because he was peeing everywhere." Cheryl took in Benji and had him treated for a urinary

blockage. Today he is a loving family member with no peeing issues. Later that year she rescued 4 kittens and went from 3 to 13 cats.

In 2017, when 3 kittens were found, Cheryl proceeded to rescue them and put out an urgent plea for help. A CAN volunteer answered her call and those kittens became Cheryl's first CAN fosters.

Since then Cheryl has fostered many CAN cats and kittens. "I cry every time they leave for their furever homes, but I know that is the goal and I am so thankful for CAN and the work they do. Now, if I find a stray or get a call from a friend, I know if I foster a kitty, CAN will help with the support and resources needed to find a forever home. 🐾



DIANE & AMANDA KOPISTECKI

Diane Kopistecki and her daughter Amanda are originally from Phoenixville but now reside in Harleysville. Both mother and daughter attended Phoenixville schools but Amanda graduated from Spring Ford in 2016. They love all animals but have a particular fondness for cats. After graduation Amanda got involved with various volunteer organizations including Coaches vs Cancer and some local food drives. Diane began looking for volunteer opportunities working with animals and a friend suggested Cat Angel Network. After applying to volunteer and going through the training process, Diane and Amanda began volunteering in the Adoption Center at the Pottstown PetSmart. According to Diane: "we remain involved because Cat Angel has proved to be the highlight of our week.

Amanda has a knack for showing the cats an amazing amount of love and caring that really brings them out of their shell and helps them feel comfortable in unfamiliar surroundings."

Indeed, there are many pictures posted and shared among CAN volunteers of Amanda holding and loving a cat that was particularly shy or scared. Diane has completed several photo albums with CAN cats and framed a few of their favorites. However, the accompanying photo is of Diane and Amanda with their own cat, Alaska. When they are not loving on CAN kitties at PetSmart the pair enjoy visiting local parks and lakes to pursue wildlife and landscape photography. They also enjoy going to Irish festivals, visiting the mountains and going to the beach. 🐾

RETIRED? TAX DEDUCTION FOR SENIORS

Are you retired? Do you have an IRA, 401K, or other tax deferred retirement plan? If so, by April 1st of the year following your 72nd birthday you must start taking a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your plan. If you reached age 70 ½ before January 1, 2020 and were already taking your RMD the age increase does not affect you. Your RMD is taxable. This is how Uncle Sam gets a cut of the money you saved tax free over your working years. The minimum amount you must take annually is calculated by dividing the balance at the end of the prior year by an IRS life expectancy table. Your account manager can advise you.

Beginning in Tax Year 2018 the standard deduction increased so only if your qualified deductions total more than the standard deduction would you be able to deduct

charitable contributions. But you can still receive a tax advantage while donating to your favorite charitable organization (Cat Angel Network, of course). By submitting a Qualified Charitable Distribution Form (QCD) to your retirement plan you may direct all, or a portion, of your RMD to Cat Angel Network (CAN). It can be done monthly, quarterly, or annually and can be directed to more than one charity if you desire. Your management firm will send the money directly to your charity or send you a check made out to the charity. Your donation not only helps our many cats and kittens receive care until they are adopted but you receive the benefit of having the donated amount excluded from your taxable income. Your Qualified Charitable Distribution is considered a normal distribution for which you receive a 1099R form at tax time and it does



not require you to itemize so that you can take advantage of the higher standard deduction.

As always check with your tax or financial advisor to be sure you qualify but this is a great way to help CAN and take care of yourself as well.

*Note: Due to the Coronavirus pandemic RMD requirements have been waived for 2020 to aid in economic recovery. However, you may still take your distribution if you wish. 🐾