



CAT ANGEL NETWORK

Together, we CAN make a difference!



PO Box 3071, Stowe, PA 19464 - Phone (610) 327-6870 - Fax (610) 327-6878 - email jaysing@aol.com - visit our website at www.catangel.org

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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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25th Anniversary Retrospective

Cat Angel Network: Our Story and Our History

by Charlotte Jay and Elaine Richert

A single decision to help a single cat for a single week – that was the humble beginning of Cat Angel Network twenty-five years ago in August, 1996.



It started with a phone call from a cat rescuer about a pregnant cat on a Lancaster farm. The kitty was in danger of being sold to a company that used cats for experimentation. The rescuer was going on vacation and begged for someone to care for this cat for a week. We were horrified by the danger facing this mother-to-be, and since she was not expected to give birth for several weeks, we agreed to house the kitty in the storage room of a detached garage. But the kitty, named Mrs. Gray after a cat Charlotte had as a child, decided she couldn't wait, and on the first day of her "visit," five baby boys were born in Charlotte's lap.

The rescuer never returned to pick up the kittens, and the mama cat and her kittens stayed. We found forever homes for Mrs. Gray and two of her boys, and these became our very first adoptions. (Want to make a guess who became CAN's first "foster failure" and adopted the other three boys?)

News has a way of traveling fast, and it wasn't long before people started contacting us to help with a cat shot with BBs, a thin stray, and unwanted cats at a housing development. With each additional

(cont'd on page 2)

CAN Events Updates

2021 Auction Postponed, 2022 Concert Scheduled

2021 CAT ANGEL NETWORK AUCTION POSTPONED

With the current situation with COVID-19, we have decided to err on the side of caution, safety, and health and postpone our annual fall fundraising auction another year. Please keep an eye on the CAN Facebook page for other fundraising opportunities.

If you have any questions, please contact Henry Grabb (catangelpa@aol.com).

21ST ANNUAL CAT ANGEL NETWORK CONCERT SLATED FOR 3 PM ON SUNDAY APRIL 10TH, 2022

While we were disappointed this year to miss the 20th annual fun concert to benefit our mission, we are back on board for our 2022 concert! Please mark your calendars now as you won't want to miss this unique and enchanting experience. Please look for full details in our next newsletter.

25th Anniversary Retrospective

(cont'd from page 1)

cat we said, "Well, it's just one more – no big deal." Soon we began to realize that we would need to have a plan if we were going to continue to take "just one more." So we worked out a system for the intake, care, and adoption of kitties. We cared for as many as our pocketbooks could afford, solicited adopters from a tiny ad in the Pottstown Mercury newspaper, and had a \$35 adoption fee, with adopters signing a Spay/Neuter Agreement. As expenses (and the number of cats) grew, we began to seriously consider taking a GIANT next step, that of changing our informal project into a bona fide, non-profit corporation.

We discovered the process is neither easy nor inexpensive. There are pages of complicated forms to fill out, and thousands of dollars of fees to be paid. Our first challenge was registering a name for our non-profit that was not already being used in the state of Pennsylvania. In the '90's The Oprah Show often featured her charitable "Angel Network," providing assistance to people in need. From this we coined the name "Cat Angel Network," with the inspiring acronym we love - CAN. Then in March, 1998, we were granted our 501(c)(3) federal tax-exempt status which allowed us to solicit tax deductible donations so we wouldn't have to continue personal funding. We were on our way!

We realized that we needed capable people to handle the many functions of operating an organization and so a Board of Directors was formed. They created the mission statement that has guided us to this day with its philosophy of operating as a no-kill, all volunteer organization dedicated to the rescue, spay/neuter, and adoption of abandoned cats. Our motto "Together, we CAN make a difference!" reflected the acknowledgement that it would take the efforts of many caring volunteers to do this work.

We have indeed been blessed over the years with attracting capable, qualified, and cat loving volunteers. Some of our volunteers agreed to become foster parents, and these foster homes enabled us to increase the numbers we could help. Of course, we had no trouble acquiring the cats, but obviously this ability to foster additional kitties affected our need for an outlet for adoptions.

Our prayers were answered when we were contacted by the manager of PetSmart in Downingtown in early 1999 with the very welcome offer to become their store's adoption partner. We have continued that wonderful relationship for the past 22 years. In October, 2005, PetSmart opened its Pottstown store, and we became the adoption partner in that store in addition to Downingtown. We've had a very successful and rewarding relationship with them for the past 16 years. Our association with this second store pushed our adoption numbers for the year 2006 over the 600 mark for the first time! We look forward to the opportunity to find many more loving forever homes through both our adoption centers.

Raising funds to cover the extraordinary expenses involved has always been a challenge. Two ongoing events have greatly helped to keep us going. In the spring of 2002, we held our first Annual Benefit Concert at the West Chester University, and we haven't missed a year since with the exception of 2020, the year of COVID-19. Our first auction was held on November 8, 2003. It was an art auction and was so successful that we decided to expand it and hold an Annual Auction that included both silent and live auctions of all-donated items. It has continued to be our major fundraiser ever since.

The funds raised through these efforts were instrumental in turning that detached garage on private property into a heated and air-conditioned eight room shelter, plus a small storage area and a bathroom dubbed the "CAN CAN." Volunteers installed flooring and painted walls, including the addition of beautiful stenciling in each room. Slowly but surely the shelter was outfitted with cages, cat trees, and all the equipment necessary to comfortably care for cats and kittens and prepare them for adoption. Today hundreds of kitties every year pass through the meticulously maintained rooms of the shelter on their way to foster homes or to PetSmart. Other cats, especially the shy and senior ones, have become life-long residents who are lovingly pampered by our shelter volunteers.

It is so satisfying to look back over the years and think about the thousands of kitties who have been touched by the work of CAN. Where would they be if we had not decided to open that storage room to Mrs. Gray in August of 1996? The many volunteers, fosters, trappers, veterinarians, donors, adopters, etc. who have been a part of this twenty-five year journey have to know that they have indeed "made a difference." Looking forward, we are committed to standing together to improve and expand our efforts, as we know that the need for our work continues! 🐾



*Sheldon and Bodey
snuggling in the shelter*



*Alfie, happily recovered from injuries
after being hit by a car*



*Two of the 80 kittens rescued
during a large TNR project*

Recycle Your Printer Cartridges

Now that many people are returning to the office to work, we would like to remind you to save and donate your empty printer cartridges to Cat Angel Network. You can bring them to the Pottstown and Downingtown PetSmart stores and leave them at the Cat Adoption Center in the store.

We appreciate your participation in donating these cartridges; we accept personal printer cartridges and office printer toner cartridges and turn them into funds to help the kitties.



Ask “Angel”



Multiple Cats With Different Food Requirements

QUESTION: I would like to adopt a kitten in the near future but am wondering what to do about the feeding situation. I presently have two adult cats who are eating a special low-calorie food, and I know kittens need a kitten chow which is high in proteins (and calories!) How do I prevent my adult cats from getting into the kitten's food? The vet has already told me that my cats are overweight, and I am concerned that they might put on even more unhealthy pounds once the kitten is here. Any tips on how to manage the food setup so all the kitties reach and maintain a healthy weight? I notice most of the cats at your shelter seem to be so slim and trim.



ANSWER: Thanks for the compliment! We shelter kitties have to maintain our gorgeous figures for a very important reason – we want to get adopted! And the truth is, overweight cats are often passed over at adoption time in favor of cats that present a younger, healthier appearance. That motivates us to cooperate with the feeding system followed here at the shelter. Our friends, the volunteers, are really MORE concerned with our health and well-being than anything else, and they know that overweight kitties experience a lot of problems: illnesses like diabetes and fatty liver disease, a reluctance to jump and play and get proper exercise, and also the embarrassing problem of difficulty cleaning the “backside area” the way a normal cat can. This results in unsightly matted hair and “stinky stuff” clinging to our fur. And when we cats can't keep ourselves immaculately clean, **THIS ANNOYS US!** So here's the feeding system followed for all of us C.A.N. cats: First, and most importantly, we are fed a MEASURED amount of a high quality dry food: a quarter cup, twice a day. NO FREE FEEDING! NO SELF FEEDERS! Cats were never meant to be grazers. In the wild we catch a mouse, and then our body fasts until we catch again. Grazing on food all day long is not natural or healthy for predators like cats and is the NUMBER ONE reason cats become overweight or obese.

Secondly, some cat carriers are left out at all times with cozy mats in them. At feeding time they are used to insure that each kitty gets the food that is best for his or her individual needs and that no “Greedy Gus” steals someone else's portion. When the volunteer comes into the room with the tray of plates, she calls out, “Supper time!” and, believe it or not, each of us runs to our very own spot or carrier to eat! Visitors are amazed, since many think it's impossible to train a cat to voluntarily go into a carrier. NOT SO — we LOVE our carriers and never run and hide when we see one like so many other kitties who only see their carriers when they have to go to the vet's office. This is the way you would be able to feed your adult cats their special food while allowing the kitten to have her high protein/high calorie kitten chow. Kittens under 10 months old can be fed more than twice a day. Three or four feedings a day will help to meet your kitten's high nutritional needs because of her rapid growth and high energy output. She should be weaned down to two meals a day between 10 and 12 months of age unless your vet feels she is a skinny Minnie.

The cats who come to the shelter already overweight are very gradually tapered down to the quarter cup portion. It is EXTREMELY dangerous to drastically reduce an obese cat's food intake too quickly! We kitties can develop a potentially fatal condition known as fatty liver disease so SLOW is the way to GO!

I'm so glad your vet gave you a “Heads-Up” alert about your adult cats' weight issues. A normal female cat weighs eight to ten pounds and a male should weigh ten to twelve pounds. So often people don't acknowledge that their beloved kitty is overweight, preferring to describe him as “big-boned” or “fluffy.” If your kitty does not have a visible waist when viewed from above or his belly hangs close to the floor, making his legs look short, you've got a FAT CAT! And, as Dr. Fel(ine) McPaw always says, “You can't fix what you don't acknowledge!”

Reducing a special pet's food and treats can be very difficult for an owner that equates food with love. BUT FOOD IS NOT THE ONLY WAY TO SHOW LOVE TO US KITTIES! How about spending 10 extra minutes playing with your cats every night? If you haven't treated your kitties to a Laser Light or interactive dangly toy like the CAT DANCER, you're all missing a lot of fun and laughs! If a kitty doesn't show an immediate interest in toys, keep at it! Some of us who are “out of shape” can take a while to be tempted out of the recliner! Brushing and



kitty massages are additional ways to say “I love you.” A bird or squirrel feeder placed near a favorite window perch can be another way to add spark to our lives without adding pounds. And, of course, you've already figured out the best way to get sedate adult cats to run and chase and play like youngsters again — ADD A NEW KITTEN!



Donate Your Car

By using DonationLine (www.donationline.com), you can donate your car to Cat Angel Network with a few easy steps. Simply go to their web site, or call 1-877-227-7487 to find out if your car is eligible for donation. Most cars are eligible even if they are not running. Generally, DonationLine will accept cars that they can sell at a wholesale auction for more than the cost of towing and processing.



The process is easy and painless, and most of our car donors have reported that their vehicle was picked up within a few days! In addition, since DonationLine is a national company, your friends and family members outside of this area are eligible to donate cars to Cat Angel Network as well. Since we began this program a number of years ago, we have had several donations from across the country.

Car donation is an outstanding way to help Cat Angel Network and remove the stress of dealing with selling a car that you are no longer using.



Meet Our Volunteers

When **Wendy Leister** was asked to be featured in our Pottstown Volunteer Spotlight for the Spring 2021 edition of our CAN newsletter she obligingly submitted a very brief summary consisting of a modest 10 lines.



Charlotte's response (as CAN President) to the suggestion that Wendy would be a good choice was: "I can't believe we've never featured Wendy! She's been with us for well over 12 years and volunteers every Monday night at the shelter and every Wednesday night at PetSmart. She's been very active and very involved in every facet of cat rescue activities and has been an outstanding representative of our organization."

Wendy Leister grew up in nearby Boyertown and has worked for Iron Mountain for 15 years. She says it has actually been about 15 years since she came onboard as a Cat Angel Volunteer. She lives in Pottstown with her fiancé and his twin 7-year-old daughters. She has 3 kitties: Lolly, who was a personal rescue, and siblings Calvin and Susie from a CAN foster home. According to Charlotte, Wendy has been responsible for several adoptions and rescues on CAN's behalf.

It's obvious from the pictures and videos she posts on CAN's Volunteer Facebook page that Wendy enjoys her time with the kitties at PetSmart and the shelter. Wendy has also supported CAN by her involvement in many fundraisers over the years: flea markets, pet photos with Santa, our CAN 20 year volunteer picnic and has often done private fundraisers. such as making and selling yummy Easter eggs.

When she's not playing with kitties, Wendy enjoys doing crafts and diamond paintings, baking, gardening and upcycling. She loves all

animals and volunteers "because it feels good to give back and because cats don't talk back."

Amy Pippin and her sister were raised on a small horse farm in Chester County. "Our entire family has an insane love for animals and they are often the most important part of any family occasion. Growing up we had horses, dogs, cats, goats, chickens, ducks, and even the occasional pig. My Dad was always bringing home another critter and we enjoyed them, work and all."

Amy has a BA in Psychology and has worked with special needs children both one on one and as a case manager. She worked with and facilitated an afterschool program for at risk students in the Coatesville school district. She has also taught riding to individuals of all ages and abilities and currently runs an equine boarding, training and lesson barn with 50 students. Her farm includes a 4H club, summer camps, and an active program for volunteers who are interested in having a farm experience. Fostering CAN kitties fits nicely into these activities too.

Their foster experience began when Amy's daughter asked for a kitten, but with plenty of animals to care for, Amy wasn't on board, but acquiesced to fostering instead. Amy homeschooled her daughter from 4th through 12th grade and fostering was a great learning experience. Since they were home most of each day the kitties got lots of TLC.



The family had many cats over the years and when her old kitty passed at 17, after many years of health problems, Amy was not planning to have more house cats but 2 CAN foster kitties, who held a special place in her heart, Delilah & Phoebe, had other plans.. Presently, the farm family includes 2 dogs, 14 horses, 4 feral rescue barn cats, 4 goats, 2 rabbits, lots of chickens and a duck. There are also 14 border horses and her daughter's 2 geckos.

"When people come to help at the farm or

with my CAN kitties they often remark on the nice cats, how wonderful and friendly they are. I think this is because these kittens are so intensely loved from the moment they come in the door by everyone who sees them. They have lots of supervised play time and the kids like the responsibility of taking care of them. Although it can be sad when they leave, the kids love that they have helped make that special kitty for a loving family and knowing they are going to happy forever homes." 🐾

A Very Happy Ending for Ben

Ben was first introduced to a Cat Angel volunteer when she went to a home to pick up a momma kitty and her three babies to foster. Ben was hanging out close by. He obviously was not in good shape with a torn ear, scratches all over his nose and a bite on his neck. It was hard to leave him knowing that he might be hurt further if he continued to live outdoors.

After a visit to the vet, which included shots and neutering, Ben was lucky to be placed in a loving foster home. He hid under a blanket for days but accepted petting and took his meds without incident. Although his wounds began to heal, he developed a cough, wasn't eating and was lethargic so he received more meds.

Finally he was cleared for adoption and was lucky to have his new mom fall in love with him from the moment she saw his story and his photographs. He is a handsome boy who can be expected to live a long time with his wonderful mom who treats him like a prince. His first two years were tough but he's living the good life now. Ben's adoptive mom says "Ben entered my life at a time when I needed him as much as he needed a forever home. And so we began our life together. He is my companion, my comfort and my joy." 🐾

