

**VOLUNTEER
SPOTLIGHT**
Heather Swartz
PAGE 2



FEATURED CATS
Deani, Winnie, and
Buster
PAGE 3



LUIGI'S COLUMN
Words of wisdom
PAGE 7



THE CAT HOUSE Scoop

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ADOPTION FACILITY

3633 "O" Street
Lincoln, NE
Tuesdays & Thursdays 6-8 pm
Sundays 1:30-4 pm

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Lincoln, NE 68542
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The Cat House is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, all-volunteer organization funded entirely by donations and adoption fees.

Accommodating the special cat

By Ann Adams and Martha Stoddard

Caring for a special needs cat can come with some challenges and many rewards. Cats are highly adaptable animals, and whether they were born with a disability or became disabled later in life, chances are they will find amazing ways to overcome their limitations. There are things that you can do to help make life easier and more comfortable for your beloved pet by tapping into your own creativity.

Take Dolly, for example, a cat who lives with Faye Stevens and Steve Hankins. Dolly was born with deformed legs, which makes it harder for her to get around. Faye and Steve had special cat trees made with plenty of ramps so Dolly can see out the windows even if she can't jump. They also bought Dolly special litter boxes with very low sides. Some are marketed as dog litter boxes, and one is sold for use when potting plants. Steve built ramps to help Dolly get into and out of the boxes.

More common disabilities that can require special accommodations include loss of a limb and aging. Loss of a limb can have an impact on the cat's ability to jump, scratch, and use the litter box. Cats who have trouble jumping still have a desire to explore their vertical environment.

Continued on page 6.

Scratching the surface

By Ann Adams

If you have cats, you likely have scratching posts in your home. Scratching posts are a great way to harness your cat's natural desire to scratch in a way that is constructive rather than destructive.

Cats scratch on things for many reasons—to help slough off the outer layers of their claws, relieve stress, mark territory (both visually and through scent glands located on their paws), as well as to stretch and flex their bodies, feet, and claws. Even if a cat is declawed, scratching is an essential activity for a happy, healthy cat.

So where are the best spots in your home to place scratching posts and pads? Since scratching is a form of exercise and territory marking, it is important to not just stick a scratching post in the corner and call it good. A variety of scratching surfaces, such as tall, sturdy, vertical posts, cat condos, and angled scratchers strategically placed in various spots and on all levels of your home is key.

Pay attention to your cat's behavior when choosing a scratching post. Does your cat prefer to stretch up to scratch or is your cat a horizontal scratcher? There are options for both. Cat-favored scratching posts have a rough exterior, for example, sisal rope rather than carpet.

Continued on page 6.

Volunteer Opportunities

The Cat House has a very hard-working and dedicated crew of volunteers committed to improving the lives of cats in Lincoln and the surrounding area.

Our volunteer needs change frequently. We encourage you to check our website at thecathouse.org for updates.

You can fill out a volunteer application online at thecathouse.org, come in during open hours to fill out an application, or e-mail at volunteer@thecathouse.org. You're in for a rewarding experience!

Opportunities to help include:

- Open hours
- Care, feeding, exercising, and socializing of cats
- Laundry
- Facility maintenance
- Newsletter articles, photography, and production
- Assisting with communication to volunteers and/or the public
- Adoption counselor
- Post-adoption follow-up calls
- Filing
- Grant writing
- Fundraising
- Data entry
- Retail events
- Feral/TNR program
- Foster care

Happy Tails Stats

Here are the number of cats adopted in recent months.

October	19
November	25
December	27
January	38
February	22
March	33

Volunteer Spotlight: Heather Swartz

By Martha Stoddard

Heather Swartz began at The Cat House the same way many volunteers do—she offered to help with one thing. But pretty soon, one became two and three and more. In Heather's case, she started 3 years ago when TCH volunteers were working to renovate the "O" Street location. Heather was handy and she could paint, so she helped paint rooms and hallways throughout the building.

Then her work schedule cleared up, and she offered to work Tuesday night open hours, showing cats to visitors and helping potential adopters find the right match for their home.

That was enough to make her fall in love with the cats and to expand her volunteer efforts. She helped with Catsino and Meow & Chow—two of the major fund-raisers for



TCH. She scheduled Dine Out fund-raising nights at Noodles and at Cowboy Chicken, and she helped with bake sales.

Last year, she led a successful effort to raise the \$12,000 needed to pay for the emergency replacement of two of the four heating and air conditioning units at the shelter. Her most recent fund-raising project made use of her hobbies of working with fused and stained glass. Her paw-print necklaces and art glass creations are sold in the shelter's retail area and at various events.

Heather was born and raised in Nebraska and lives with her two rescued cats, Scarlet and Buddy. Along with volunteering at TCH and doing glasswork, she stays busy with two jobs—home ownership and flower gardening. She also loves Husker volleyball.



By Alma Vlasak

The seventh annual Lincoln Community Foundation's Give to Lincoln Day (G2L) is scheduled for Thursday, May 31.

The foundation initiated this event in 2012 as a way to raise money and increase new donor participation for nonprofits in and around Lincoln. Each year this event has become bigger and better for the nonprofit organizations here in Lincoln. This year a record-setting \$400,000 match fund will be divided among participants, with every group receiving a pro-rated amount based on how much is raised on G2L day.

This event has become an important source of funds for The Cat House and an excellent way for people to support

Lincoln's only no-kill cat shelter. The funds raised during this event help to pay for hundreds of spay/neuters, vaccinations, and other dental/medical work for the cats. Funds are also used to help fund our trap, neuter, and return program and pay other shelter expenses.

Check for the link on The Cat House web site or go to givetolincoln.com. Gifts can be made online at this site beginning May 1 to qualify for Give to Lincoln Day totals and matching funds.

Your generosity and caring will let us continue our work here in 2018 for the Lincoln community.

Featured cats: Deani, Winnie, and Buster

By Claire Jordan

Deani, Winnie, and Buster have had some unlucky breaks in their lives. For starters, all three started life on the streets. Winnie and Deani, both females, were found at a feral cat colony in June 2013, along with their brothers Lynx and Beau. (See Lynx's story on page 6.) They were about 2 months old, putting them at the upper end of the window when feral kittens can be most easily socialized to humans. Buster was trapped at a colony in September 2013 when he was about 6 months old. He was initially returned to the colony, as is normal for a trap-neuter-return situation, but when he seemed to be pretty friendly, he went to a foster home for some "finishing school."

Buster, Winnie, and Deani ended up living together when they arrived at The Cat House. That's where they had their second unlucky break. One of their roommates was a kitten who later died of feline infectious

peritonitis. There is no treatment, cure, or prevention for the disease, and it is still somewhat of a mystery how it is transmitted. The three never came down the disease. But because of the uncertainty about transmission, they had fewer visitors than kittens usually do, which didn't help with their shyness. As a result, they grew past the cute kitten months without finding a home.

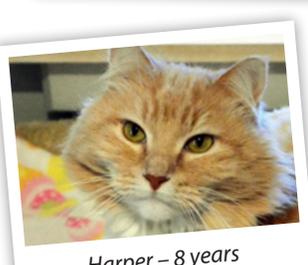
Winnie, Deani, and Buster continue to be cautious around strangers, but they have made great progress. They have learned to trust many volunteers and visitors and even know which ones will have treats available in exchange for some petting time.

Through everything, these three cats have had each other. It is so entertaining to watch the three cats interact and play, as they are all very bonded with one another. You can often find Deani and Buster grooming one another or Winnie perched up high basking in the sunlight. If you are quiet and respectful of their space, they will eventually show you how affectionate they are and what amazing personalities they all have. They are affectionate on their own terms and would be great pets for people who are willing to be patient and who understand how rewarding it is to see shy cats come out of their shells.



These cats are looking for forever homes.

Visit our shelter on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6–8 pm and Sundays from 1:30–4 pm.



Calendar of Events

Catsino Night

April 14 / Starting at 6:30 pm
Center for People in Need
3901 N. 27th St., Lincoln
Fundraiser for The Cat House (TCH)

Cornhusker Cat Club Cat Show ACFA Championship & Household Pet Cat Show

May 19 / 8:30 am – 5 pm
Christensen Field
Fremont, Nebraska

Give to Lincoln Day

May 31 / Midnight – 11:59 pm
givetolincoln.com

Adopt-a-Cat Month

June
The purr-fect month to find your new
furry forever friend

Haymarket Farmers Market

Saturdays, June 30 – August 4
8 am – noon
Haymarket in Downtown Lincoln
TCH volunteers will sell cat beds, catnip
sticks, and other items

Fall Blessings Arts & Crafts Fair

October 6 / 9 am – 4 pm
Lancaster Event Center

National Feral Cat Day Global Cat Day

October 16
globalcatday.org

Meow & Chow

Date and Location TBA
Fundraiser for TCH and LAA

St. Mark's Fall Arts & Crafts Show

November 10 / 9 am – 4 pm
84th St. & Pioneers Blvd.

Seward Junior Women's Craft Show

November 17 / 9 am – 3:30 pm
Seward County Fairgrounds
TCH volunteers will sell cat beds, catnip
sticks, and other items

TCH alum carrying on Oskar's legacy

By Alma Vlasak

The world of cat celebrities and their people are a 21st century phenomena coming to us through Facebook and other social networks and devices.

Enter Oskar, the blind cat, and his "brother" Klaus. Oskar was born in 2011 on a farm in western Iowa. He was born with microphthalmia, which meant that his undeveloped eyes left him sightless. When Oscar was adopted by Bethany and Mick Szydowski in 2011, he didn't know that he would soon meet his brother Klaus. The Szydowskis had adopted Klaus in 2006 from The Cat House in Lincoln. Klaus had been trapped by The Cat House as part of the trap, neuter, and return (TNR) program, but when it was determined that Klaus was not feral, he was put up for adoption.

The Szydowskis followed advice to slowly introduce the two felines over a couple of weeks. This slow introduction gave Klaus time to open his heart to the little blind kitten.

Proud pictures of the dynamic duo started to pop up on the Internet featuring Oskar's discovery of the world around him. A fearless explorer with a curious spirit brought him notoriety on social media. Oskar rose to fame in 2012 by being named

Friskies Internet Cat of the Year.

Before long, the two buddies were featured in two children's books highlighting Oskar's can-do spirit, with Klaus somewhat reluctantly following Oskar on various adventures. They became known as "the dudes," demonstrating lives well lived no matter what their age or physical limitations. They inspired everyone whose lives they touched.

Continued on page 5.



In addition to monetary donations, you can donate items that we use in the day-to-day care of our feline friends. To arrange a drop-off time and location, you can call us at 402-441-9593 or email info@thecathouse.org.

DRY CAT FOOD

- Any dry cat food
- Science Diet Optimal or Light
- Science Diet M/D, C/D Stress*
- Royal Canin Baby Cat
- Calm or Royal Canin Rabbit*

CANNED CAT FOOD OR PACKETS

- Science Diet or lams – kitten & adult – turkey, chicken, salmon (ground or minced)
- Fancy Feast – turkey, chicken, salmon (Classic); Grilled Delights with Cheddar; or Broths sold in pouches
- Hartz Delectables – sold in packets
- Science Diet Light
- Science Diet A/D, M/D, C/D Stress, or Z/D*
- Royal Canin Rabbit*

CAT LITTER

- Non-clumping, regular clay litter (no clumping, pine, or newsprint type litter)

SUPPLIES

- Brooms
- O'Cedar Light 'N Thirsty cloth mop refills
- Paper towels and bathroom tissue
- Kitchen and office size trash bags
- Copier/printer paper

CLEANERS

- Scent-free liquid laundry detergent (*sensitive skin*)
- Scent-free dryer sheets (*sensitive skin*)
- Clorox bleach (*regular type*)
- Anti-bacterial hand soap
- Dawn dishwashing soap
- Dishwasher detergent
- Clorox disposable wipes
- Swiffers
- Hand sanitizer

MISCELLANEOUS

- Meat flavored baby food (*chicken or turkey*)
- Small chenille or cotton reversible bath rugs (*no rubber backs*)
- Large litter boxes without covers
- Aluminum trays (*no smaller than 8" x 13"*)
- Lint rollers
- FortiFlora® Feline Nutritional Supplement
- Gift certificates to entirelypets.com
- Gift cards to Tractor Supply, Walmart, Target, Petco, or PetSmart

** sold at vet clinics*

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Jodi Dillon from Lianne Baue
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Shirley Veldman from Teresa Lorensen
Sweety from Nancy and Larry Lehecka
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Joan Huffer from Donna Giebelhaus
Morris, Suzan Connell's cat, from Nancy Bowen
Susan Valentine from Michael and Teresa Fritz
Jim and Muffy Mertlik from Sandra Mertlik
Skye from Deborah Swearingen
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Mozart the cat from Lynne Nevin
Pounce Vlasak from Shirley Huck
Lynn Ruple from Kay Ruple
Jody Pavlish from Lisa Bahle
Ruth Knight from Karen Hassler, Susan Holton, Lynda Molyneaux, and Kristine Chavez
Zuni from Rebecca Peters
Duffy, Sasha, Nicky, and Norman from Susan Dobberstein

Oskar the Blind Cat from Betty Reibstein and Gary and Patricia Schenaman
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Cheryl Johnson from Aki's Bargain Basement

Special thanks to

Dr. Kelly Jordan	Cause For Paws
Dr. Shelley Knudsen	Nature's Variety
All Feline Hospital	Petco
Wachal Pet Health Center	PetSmart
Vondra Veterinary Clinic	Walmart
Pitts Veterinary Hospital	

Oskar's legacy, continued

Oskar's fame brought him opportunities to make personal appearances, proving that he was a very real cat. Mick and Klaus, who often accompanied them, ensured Oskar's well-being as he met his many fans. Eventually, Oskar was made an honorary member of the National Federation of the Blind.

It was with great sadness that the world learned Oskar had passed away suddenly at his home in Seattle on February 5, 2018. However, his loss is not the end of the story.

Klaus has agreed to step up to fulfill Oskar's obligations. Klaus is a personable sort who is anxious to continue to tell Oskar's story and demonstrate the wonders of adopting the less than perfect or older cat. He will be making a solo appearance with Mick at the New Jersey Catsbury Park Cat Convention in April.

Although Klaus misses Oskar terribly, he compensates by spending more time with Mick and Bethany and their two little girls. Recently, the 16-year-old Klaus had

a physical and was declared "healthy as a horse." Mick said Klaus's good health resulted from living a low stress life and eating a specially formulated diet to accommodate his advancing years.

Mick has many future plans to encourage people to think differently about their animals by telling Oskar and Klaus' story. Klaus will continue to demonstrate The National Federation of the Blind's motto to "Live the life you want."

So will be the legacy of Oskar and Klaus.

Patience pays off for Davy and Kelly

By Claire Jordan

Davy was a shy kitten with a curled ear in early 2014 when Kelly first met him at The Cat House. At the time, his name was Lynx and he shared a room with his siblings and with Rusty and April. Kelly ended up adopting Rusty and April, but she thought of Lynx often. She always ended up talking herself out of adopting a third cat. Then, in February 2016, April tragically and unexpectedly died.

After almost 2 years, Lynx was still waiting for his forever home at TCH. Kelly visited Lynx once again, and although he was still a very shy kitty, Kelly decided to adopt him. She hoped Lynx would help Rusty cope with the loss of April and knew that Lynx would most likely be happiest in a quiet home with just one person. So, Kelly brought Lynx home and renamed him Davy.

In the early days, Davy would hide under the furniture even when Kelly was home. She spent many hours on the floor talking

to him and, at times, reaching under the couch or bed to pet him. Kelly could tell that Davy was exploring the house while she was at work—he left dark hairs around like clues on a trail. Sometimes at night, he would jump on the bed and just look at her. Apparently she didn't seem so scary when she was a lump under the covers.

Rusty was very welcoming to Davy and quickly gained his trust. As the weeks went by, Rusty became a mentor to Davy. Rusty showed Davy how it was nice to be petted or to play with the feather toy when Kelly flipped it around the room. Although it took several months, Davy became completely relaxed and happy and a devoted friend to both Rusty and Kelly.

Now, Davy follows Kelly around the house, meowing until he is picked up and snuggled. Rusty and Davy race to be the first on Kelly's lap every time she sits down. Although Kelly's friends and

family don't see Davy because he still hides when they visit, Kelly tells them he has a "start button" on the top of his head; she just has to touch it lightly and his motor is on full throttle.

There are many more shy kitties, like Davy, who want loving homes. They just need patient people who will give them the time and space to overcome their shyness. They will repay those people with unwavering love and devotion.



Accommodating the special cat, continued

Giving them access to steps and ramps will enable them to explore high spaces and reach areas that they enjoy such as windows. Make sure steps and ramps are covered with carpet or fabric that will allow your cat to get traction while it climbs. Depending on which limb(s) the cat is missing, a horizontal scratch pad may be a better option than a vertical scratching post.

Most litter boxes tend to have high walls and can be difficult for some cats to navigate and enter. You will need to find a shallow litter pan or modify a deeper pan. It is also helpful to keep the amount of litter in the pan on the shallow side to prevent sinking and slipping (think walking on a sandy beach). Some cats who are missing limbs have trouble covering their stool and may need some assistance with that.

When you adopt or care for a cat with physical limitations, you are helping it to live a fuller life. You will be amazed at how well they adapt, and they may even inspire you to be more adaptable in your own life.



Scratching the surface, continued

The best spots for scratching posts are where your cat will find them to be most naturally useful. Think about areas of your house where your cat already likes to scratch. Is there a couch, chair, or wall that your cat seems to gravitate toward? Placing scratching posts in these locales will deter your cat from choosing to scratch your belongings.

Another thing to think about are the rooms that your cat spends the most time. Is there a spot where your cat likes to nap? This would be an ideal location to include a scratching surface. Picture your cat waking up from a long, luxurious nap and taking a good stretch/scratch against a pad or post when he wakes.

Some cats may also enjoy a scratching surface near where they eat. There's nothing like a good stretch after feasting on the catch of the day. High traffic areas in your

home can also benefit from scratching surfaces. Some cats get excited when their owners return home after a long day and like to show off their scratching skills. If this sounds like your cat, placing a scratching post near the entrance of your home can come in handy.

Having multiple scratching posts can become especially important in multiple cat households. Even if your cats get along, they still need to feel that they don't have to share all of their resources. Indoor cats are protective of resources such as food and water, space, sleep areas, attention from humans, litter boxes, and scratching surfaces. Making sure that each cat has access to all of these resources will help ensure harmony.

Luigi talks litter box training

Dear Luigi, the Advice Cat:

I want to get a kitten, but I have never had one before. In fact, I've never had a cat before, just dogs. Is it hard to train a kitten to use the litter box? How long does it take?

Signed, New to Cats



Dear New to Cats:

Buongiorno! I'm happy to hear from you, and congratulations on deciding to go with a superior species this time. Kittens usually don't

need litter box training. Instinct—and their moms—take care of that concern. I remember back when my dear mother taught me and my siblings. She was a saint, my mother was. Once I was in the litter box with my brother and we were wrestling and my mother got frustrated ... Oh, sorry, I got carried away. You had a question about litter box training and kittens.

Mother cats take care of cleaning up very young kittens. Once they reach about 4 weeks, their mother will show them where to relieve themselves and what substance to use. Generally, they will prefer something like dirt or sand. If their mother uses a litter box, she will show them how to do it too.

But while kittens are young, they may need a little encouragement and help to use a litter box faithfully. I suggest you get a low-sided box so they can climb in and out easily. As an alternative, you may be able to rig up a ramp or something into a higher-sided box. Myself, I like a low-sided box now, but that's because of my arthritis. What I wouldn't give to be spry and nimble like a kitten again. Those were the days. I could climb pants legs and leap out of hiding onto my brother and ... Oh, right, I

was answering your question.

For litter, I recommend basic clay. Do NOT use clumping litter for small kittens because they may eat it and get blocked up. Also, don't fill the box too deep. If your kitten has lived outside, it may be more familiar with dirt than litter. If so, try adding a bit of dirt to the litter until the kittens have made the transition. You can also buy some products that attract the cat to the litter. Leaving a tiny bit of waste in the box can help some kittens remember its purpose, but otherwise, clean the box regularly, at least once a day.

Be sure to put at least one box on every level of your home, so kittens don't have too far to run. Kittens, like toddlers, can get distracted until the last minute. Put the litter box in quiet places, where the kitten won't get startled or distracted. A laundry room is not a good choice. A kitten who gets scared by washing machine noises while using the box may start to avoid the box.

Until your kitten gets into a routine, you may need to bring it over to the box to remind it to go. For young kittens, you also may need to demonstrate scratching in the litter and covering up. Don't grab the kitten's paws to scratch, though. That could upset them and discourage litter box use.

That may sound like a long list of dos and don'ts, but you may not need any of them. As I said at the beginning, cats are the superior species and they learn quickly. Well, except for my brother. He put his paws on the side of the litter box so he was practically standing like a human when he had to go. How my dear mother ever ... Well, you don't need to hear an old cat's stories. Good luck with your kitten.

Ciao, Luigi, the Advice Cat

Catnip sticks, pet beds, and carrier liners!

To purchase, stop by the shelter, or call the hotline at 402-441-9593.



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