

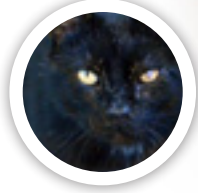
VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

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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

PO Box 23145
Lincoln, NE 68542
Hotline: 402-441-9593
info@thecathouse.org
thecathouse.org
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The Cat House is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, all-volunteer organization funded entirely by donations and adoption fees.

How to keep grooming your cat from becoming a hair-raising experience

By Ann Adams

Cats have built-in grooming tools with their tongues and teeth, but that doesn't mean you can't lend a hand. Some cats love being brushed, while others are a bit leery. The right tools and the right approach can help make your grooming efforts a success.

Introducing brushing while your cat is young is the easiest way to normalize the practice. Starting with an adult cat isn't impossible but may take more time. Whatever the age of your cat, pick a time when your cat is calm and relaxed and there are no distractions. It might help to keep a brush near you so you can easily access it without disturbing your perfectly relaxed cat.

Continued on page 7

Time to shop at The Cat House

The year 2020 has been a year of uncertainty and change for all of us. However, one thing is certain and that is The Cat House (TCH) residents have many ongoing needs. These needs include food, medical care, litter, and a safe, comfortable place to live. You can help TCH make these things available to our cats by shopping our retail "store."

Our volunteers make pet beds (aka purr pads) in two sizes. They also make medium-sized pet carrier liners, which have a rubber back to keep them from bunching up in the carrier. The beds are made with two pieces of fleece that have polyester batting in between the fleece. They are then top stitched to keep the batting from bunching. Pet beds are machine washable and dryable. The rubber-backed carrier liners should be air or fluff dried. Bleach can be used on all beds but is not recommended for the rubber-backed carrier liners. Beds come in a variety of designs for both cats and dogs.

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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 questions to volunteer@thecathouse.org. You're in for a rewarding experience!

Opportunities to help include:

- Open hours
- Daily care, feeding, room cleaning, and socializing of cats
- 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.

April	42
May	52
June	44
July	45
August	48
September	36

Volunteer Spotlight: Vicki Rumbaugh

By Alma Vlasak

Becoming the Trap/Neuter/Return (TNR) Coordinator for The Cat House (TCH) was a natural fit for Vicki Rumbaugh. Vicki's TNR experience began in 2007, when she and her family were living on an acreage and there were 36 kittens born over several months to various "mom" cats that lived there. Vicki ensured the male and female adults were spayed or neutered and vaccinated. The kittens came into TCH and were spayed or neutered, vaccinated, microchipped, and tested before they were adopted out from TCH.

The practice of live trapping cats and then having them spayed or neutered and returned to their point of origin are the basics of TNR. So, when TCH needed a new TNR coordinator, Vicki stepped up.

Fortunately, the position came open after Vicki had retired. Until retiring in 2017, Vicki worked for the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources as a supervisor of Ground Water Registrations for 3 years. Before that, she worked as a section supervisor of extended education at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Most TNR phone calls are routine in nature with people asking for help with feral cats that live on their property. However, in May 2020 Faye Stevens, TCH President, called to let Vicki know that she would be hearing from a Plattsmouth rescue group called Happy Paws.

Deb Vidlak, rescue organizer of Happy Paws, had been contacted to help with a hoarding situation near Alvo. A well-intentioned couple had been working with outdoor and indoor cats for a number of years. They were able to keep up with the



care until May, when poor health and a lack of resources made it impossible to look after the 28 indoor and 15 outdoor cats.

Vickie responded to Deb's call and spent the next month driving to and from Plattsmouth and making phone calls to help place the cats in situations appropriate for their level of socialization. Every day found Vicki in her car resulting in more than 1,000 miles of driving. Several of the indoor cats came to TCH. Others went to the Nebraska Humane Society in Omaha or were relocated to barn cat programs.

Megan and Matt Yank, two long-time TCH volunteers, also helped with this extensive project by trapping and feeding cats until all were taken care of or placed where they could be adopted out.

Now, Vicki and her two TNR assistants, Jamie Martinez and Des Burcham, continue working with community members to help the feral cats of Lincoln and of Lancaster County.

Catnip sticks, pet beds, and carrier liners!

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



Donegal

By Jill Green

Every cat that comes to The Cat House has a story—a past that has shaped it into what it is today. Donegal is no exception to this general rule, though he is truly an exceptional cat. Named for the street in Omaha on which he was found, this sweet and fun-loving boy most likely had a rough start to life on the streets.

What would have turned many a good cat into a rough-and-tumble rascal, Donegal has maintained a remarkably calm and kind disposition, so much so that he has been deemed a good mentor for other cats coming into The Cat House from foster care.

The only hint of his past that Donegal shows is a wonky eye, currently under care and being monitored by The Cat House. Causing him no health issues or distress, you will find it has not affected Donegal whatsoever, from his love of people and other cats, to his enjoyment of life and play that makes him a favorite among his caretakers, to what will surely make you fall in love with him.

Donegal's sleek black fur and sweet open face will invite you in to meet him, and his preference for laps and toys will compel you to take him home. After his experience on the streets, he is ready for his forever home and is eager to share his love and the rest of his life with you!



Khaleesi

By Jill Green

Khaleesi means “queen” in the Game of Thrones language Dothraki, but you don't need to know that popular television show to see that this kitty will be the queen of your heart and of her forever home!

Like a queen, it takes time to earn Khaleesi's trust, but with a little brush on her face, you'll be well on your way to being happily governed by this stately girl. Khaleesi came to The Cat House after being removed from a meth house where she lived as a kitten. It was an environment that did not suit her obviously high-born status (nor her itchy skin!).

After food trials and some loving care, this shy but intelligent beauty is proud of her now gleaming black fur and the gentle tuft of white on her chest. She'll invite you to admire her striking green eyes as she lies comfortably in her bed, content with an arms length of space between the two of you as she gets to know your presence. With time, you may be judged acceptable and allowed to give her pets.

Spending time with a queen definitely has its benefits, and Khaleesi is ready for a quiet home where her new subject can patiently give her the love she deserves, while getting that and more in return.

These cats are looking for forever homes.

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



Calendar of Events

Seward Craft Show

November 21 / 9 am to 3:30 pm
Seward County Fairgrounds

Santa Photos at Petco

TBA / December

Lincoln Womens Expo

January 16, 2021 / 10 am to 5 pm
January 17, 2021 / 10 am to 4 pm
Lancaster Event Center
4100 N. 84th St.



Continued from page 1

Time to shop at The Cat House

These beds make thoughtful holiday or hostess gifts as you remember people and their pets during the holidays.

What else do we sell for your furry feline? Why volunteer-made catnip sticks in large or small sizes of course! Catnip sticks are stuffed with polyester and catnip, which is especially attractive to most cats. The response to catnip is a genetic-related trait that occurs in kittens when they reach about 5 or 6 months of age.

The TCH retail section also features t-shirts, sweatshirts, volunteer-made paw design necklaces, and refillable catnip mice. Come in during our open hours to shop Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6 to 8 pm or Sunday afternoon from 1:30 to 4 pm.

All proceeds go toward supporting TCH felines and taking care of their many needs.

Primordial pouch? What's that?

By Ann Adams

Does your cat have a flabby tummy that swings when it walks? Well, there is a name for that and it's not just fat. It is called a primordial pouch, and cats get it from their ancient ancestors--not from too many treats.

The primordial pouch appears in adulthood and is located in front of your cat's hind legs. It can be hard to spot on some cats because of their fur but can usually be detected when a cat walks or runs.

What does this pouch do for your cat? This excess of skin and fat can allow cats to store food in case they were to face a long

period without food. It also allows your cat to easily stretch and keeps its abdomen more elastic for jumping. Lastly, this extra layer of skin provides protection to your cat's abdomen and organs from the sharp claws of other cats or animals. If you have ever seen two cats fighting, you know that could come in handy.

It is not only domestic cats who have a primordial pouch, even big cats have it. So, the next time you see your cat's primordial pouch on full display, know that you are seeing something that has existed on cats since the beginning of their time on earth.

A hero for Bruce Wayne

By Jeff Kennedy

Sometimes, the real superheroes are the people who adopt cats.

Take the cat named Tony Stark who lived at The Cat House. A beautiful cat with the long fur and sealpoint markings of a Himalayan, Tony was a shy cat with a certain hesitancy toward humans. One might speculate that his past wasn't particularly happy. Tony lived his life at the shelter with cautious optimism, it seemed. He was starting to become used to the volunteers who took care of him every day--maybe humans could be ok after all.

Then one day, Riley Hamilton applied to adopt a cat at The Cat House. His girlfriend had adopted a cat named Camo from the shelter and recommended TCH. Riley visited and spent some time with Tony Stark, and it seemed to be a match. Riley's own past hadn't been particularly easy either, and he felt a connection to Tony. After discussing it with volunteers and visiting a few times, Riley decided to adopt Tony Stark.

That is when a transformation happened.

Riley changed Tony's name to Bruce Wayne. "I had Iron Man comics too but always liked Batman better," he said. Riley kept Bruce Wayne in a small room, letting the cat slowly acclimate to the new home. "I would go in and sit with him and just spend quiet time together," Riley recalls. "It was a month before he would let me reach out to him." But as sure as the cat's name had changed, so too did his demeanor. It took

a few months living in that room, sitting alone with his person, but eventually Bruce Wayne learned to trust.

Then a second thing happened. Riley's girlfriend, now fiancé, Sara, and her adopted cat Camo moved in. The transformation that started with Riley and Bruce Wayne sharing a small room took an even bigger step with the introduction of a new cat friend.

Riley and Sara knew that a cat can be upset and territorial when a new cat moves into its home so they took the introduction process very slowly. Sara would hold Camo on her lap and Riley would let Bruce in to meet him. Riley and Sara limited the interaction at first, but soon it became clear that Bruce Wayne was really interested in spending time with the other cat in the home. So as the supervised visits continued to go well, the cats were allowed to live in the same spaces in the house. Bruce Wayne was happy to have a friend. "Honestly I think Camo did more to get Bruce to come out of his shell than I did," Riley said, "they just get along so well."

The moral of the story--superhero stories often have morals after all--is that some cats are shy or timid or scared and it takes a lot of patience and empathy on the part of the adopter to make sure they feel safe and loved. In this case, Riley did all the right things and his reward is a cat who is content and has found his true forever home and family.

Donations in memory & honor of...

In memory of

Phoebe, Suzanne Kohmetscher's beloved cat, from Denise Wiemer

Sunflower from Suzon Ahern

Lowell Thomsen from Beverly Thomsen

Esme Downing, a fine furry friend, from Randy Vaupel

Daniel Wingard from Kathleen Wingard

Max from Richard and Shirley Draper

Kasey from Sarah De Rienzo

Norma Patzloff from Errol Vanicek

Kay Eggers from Gary and Mary Gerkin, Marion and Karen Tatum, Ron and Sally Ruff, Mike and Connie Stefkovich, Dan Nolte, Sally Hinds, Kent Jex, Suzanne Laws, Jerry and Nancy Edmonds, Heather and Cam Palmer, Paul Young, Dave and Diane Curtin, Susan Kinyon, and Kawasaki Motors Manufacturing Corp.

Bubba (aka Lucky), the best snuggler, confidant, treat chaser, pillow hog, head-butter, and friend a girl could ever have, from Rebecca Coulter

Dorothy Dunning from Virginia Ortiz Harford

Benjamin Chesser from Larry Oltman, Susan Dawson, Jane Fahrnbruch, Hyla Robbins, and

Judith Henning

Willa, beloved cat of Amy and Christina, from Matt Isbell and all your friends at "For Fawkes Sake" and Trivia Saturday

Meri from Catherine Cecava

Buddy Arnold from Rebecca Arnold and All Feline Hospital

Bella Blunt from All Feline Hospital

Halfie from Susan McClain

Bayou from Veronica Cammarata

Jeanette Carlson from Julie Reinwald

Geanine Bordogna from Geanine Bordogna Charitable Trust

In honor of

Scott Leigh's birthday from Bonnie Leigh

Mr. Meeks from Kathy and Rick McLaughlin and Paula Einemann

Roger Barber from the Mexico, Canada, and TCU Divisions of Werner Enterprises

Anita Friehe's birthday from Bruce and Debra Wilcox

Penny2 from Joia Givrad

Dave Fowler's 80th year on this planet from

Helena Hoffman

Bayou from Julia Stanley

Julia's birthday from Julia Stanley

Ava from Julia Stanley

Daisy from Julia Stanley

Charlotte from Julia Stanley

Khaleesi from Julia Stanley

Deb Pearson from Katherine Walter

Maggie from Michaela Andersen

Peggy and Rascal from Suzanne Kohmetscher

The B Street Katze from Jeff Agler and Kenneth Broekemeier

Max the Tuxedo Cat from Jenny Chapin

Megan's birthday from Gary Fehr

Special thanks to

Dr. Kelly Jordan

Dr. Shelley Knudsen

All Feline Hospital

Wachal Pet Health Center

Vondra Veterinary Clinic

Pitts Veterinary Hospital

Cause For Paws

Nature's Variety

Petco

Tractor Supply

Thank You!

TCH Wish List

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
- Science Diet M/D, C/D Stress*
- Royal Canin Baby Cat
- Calm or Royal Canin Rabbit*

CANNED CAT FOOD OR PACKETS

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

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

CAT LITTER

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

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

Wish List

From “cat TV” to forage boxes: Enriching your cat’s life

By Allison Hunter-Frederick

Enrichment improves the physical and mental health of cats. It also reduces stress and abnormal behaviors. There are several kinds of enrichment, and in this article I will focus on sensory enrichment. This enrichment involves stimulation of the five senses: visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile.

There are a few popular types of visual enrichment. One is to provide cats with a window view by putting an elevated bed or a cat condo near a window or installing a window perch. Another is to play videos on your TV or computer of real or animated birds, butterflies, etc. Another is to give cats the opportunity to play iPad cat games that allow them to “hunt.” Visual enrichment can also include a water fountain; the moving water will encourage cats to increase them to drink more water, which is a plus. In addition, the sound and movement of the water provide a multi-sensory experience.

When it comes to sounds, scientists have found that classical music helps cats relax. Research has also shown that audiobooks and talk radio help dogs be less vigilant. The effect on cats isn’t yet known, but it is suspected that soothing voices will have a soothing effect on them as well. In addition, as part of early socialization, it is good to expose kittens to sounds that they will experience in an apartment or house. Those include the sounds of dishes, vacuum cleaners, washer and dryers, air conditioners, and elevators. They also include nature (especially storms) and city sounds; you can find recordings of these on YouTube and elsewhere.

Enriching a cat’s sense of smell is so important that it is one of the five pillars of a cat’s healthy environment. The best way to do this is through scratching posts, as scratching allows cats to deposit scent from their glands on their paws and to mark their territory. You can also provide your cat with cat grass (wheat, rye, oat, or barley) or catnip. Other options include cat-safe people food, such as certain fruits, vegetables, and herbs. You can bring the outdoors inside by opening your windows or by collecting feathers, leaves, rocks, and sticks. In addition, as part of socialization, it is a good idea to expose kittens to soaps, sprays, fresh laundry, shoes, diapers, and

other people smells. However, be sure and watch if the kittens are allergic to soaps, sprays, or dryer sheets.

A discussion of taste enrichment could fill an entire article by itself. Because studies of wild cats and feral colonies show that they catch and eat several prey daily, one recommendation is to divide food up into small portions and place them throughout your cat’s environment. Some of those portions could be hidden. Another recommendation is to provide treats after play to mimic the hunt-prey sequence cats experience in the wild. Food puzzles are becoming popular as a way to slow a cat’s eating and to engage its mind. As part of socialization, it is good to expose kittens to a variety of cat foods, including canned food, so that they will have broader tastes when they are adults.

Cats will enjoy having a variety of different surfaces to explore. You could create a play box by cutting small holes in a

cardboard box and then adding toys, treats, and other household items. Your cat could then use its paws to “forage” in the box for treasures. You could bury natural objects in a small box of unscented natural litter, play sand, or shredded paper to give your cat opportunity to dig. Ice cubes and bags of water may fascinate them too. In addition, as part of early socialization, it is good to expose kittens to a variety of textures such as different container tops and floorings.

When brainstorming ideas for sensory enrichment, try to vary the stimulation on a regular basis rather than providing all types all the time. Also, many ideas for sensory enrichment are simple to implement, so let your imagination go. Finally, while sensory enrichment is important for cats of all ages, many of the ones I’ve covered are most applicable to younger cats. I will cover how to adapt them to older cats in another article.



Clockwise from top left: riding in the car; trying peanut butter; exploring objects; encountering a prickly plant; checking out a Ziploc bag filled with water.

Almond Joy shares care tips for your aging feline

Dear Advice Cat:

I love my cat so much. She's been part of the family since she was a kitten and has seen me through a lot of tough times. I know she is getting on in years now and I'm worried. How can I keep her around as long as possible?

Signed, Age is Just a Number

Dear Age:

Can you believe it? They like me, they really like me! I have finally become the Advice Cat! This is such a thrill! You would not believe how long I've dreamed about this. Oh, wait until I tell all my Cat House volunteer friends! Finally, I get recognized for something! I will give the best advice, just you watch. My open hours friends will be excited, too, although I haven't seen as much of them since this human disease started going around.

What's that, you wanted to know what happened to the last advice cats? Erle Stanley and Sundance are gone, they have been adopted. Now, I finally get to wear the crown! What's that again? You wanted some advice? About keeping senior cats healthy? See, I was paying attention. You have come to the right cat for this question. I, myself, have reached senior status and had my first

senior wellness checkup just this year. It was a piece of cake!

Let me tell you, those checkups are very important. They are important even for youngsters. When you reach about 10 years old or more, they are even more valuable for keeping a cat happy and healthy and feeling her best. See, cats get a lot of the same health problems as humans when they get older--heart disease, high blood pressure, kidney disease, diabetes, arthritis, cancer, and so forth. A lot of those problems progress for quite a while without causing symptoms. And cats are good at hiding symptoms until the disease has gotten so bad that they really feel terrible. Something about surviving in the wild, I'm told.

The first advice I have is to go to the veterinarian more often, so they can spot health problems early and take action. The vet will want to see your cat at least once a year and likely every 6 months. During the visit, they will weigh your cat and compare that with the past. Sudden weight loss can be a sign of disease, while overly "plump" cats are at risk of arthritis and diabetes. The vet also will do a physical exam, looking



at eyes, ears, skin, teeth, and gums; feeling for abnormalities in the joints, abdomen, and neck; and listening to your cat's heart and lungs.

The vet probably will do routine laboratory tests, as well. Blood tests check for signs of diabetes, kidney disease, liver disease, thyroid problems, inflammation, and infection. Urinalysis helps detect diabetes and kidney disease, not to mention dehydration. If problems are found, more testing may be recommended. Those tests can include other types of blood tests, X-rays, or ultrasound exams. Blood pressure readings may be taken. The vet also needs to know about changes in diet or eating, changes in, shall we say, "output," and changes in behavior. All of these clues can tell the vet what is going on with your cat's health and what treatments or changes in care would be beneficial.

Oooh! Look, my first column! I'm so thrilled, I think I'll see if there is any food left to eat.

Until next time,
Almond Joy

Continued from page 1

How to keep grooming your cat from becoming a hair-raising experience

Try a small soft-bristled brush or fine-toothed comb for cats. The first time you brush or comb your cat, make sure to do so gently and slowly—always going with the coat, not against it. Do only a few passes at first and then stop. Let your cat sniff and inspect the brush if they like, but put the brush away if your cat tries to attack it. You don't want them mistaking it for a toy.

Pay attention to your cat's body language. If he begins to swish and thump his tail, he is becoming overstimulated and it is time to stop. Respecting your cat's boundaries will

keep him from associating your grooming routine with an unpleasant experience. If your cat is food motivated, a treat at grooming time might help sweeten the deal.

Long-haired cats, older cats, obese cats, and those with disabilities may struggle to reach some areas of their coat and require your assistance to keep it clean and tangle free. Even short-haired cats benefit from grooming, as it can reduce hairballs, lessen shedding, and help them become more comfortable with being handled by people. If you are unable to remove matted fur



through brushing, make sure to contact your vet or a professional groomer. Cutting out matted bits of fur can result in accidental cuts to your cat's skin.



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 Mail to: PO Box 23145, Lincoln, NE 68542

- Please select your contribution amount:**
- Other \$ _____
 - \$25
 - \$50
 - \$75
 - \$100
 - \$250
 - \$500



We need your support!

The Cat House needs your support so we can continue helping our feline friends. To donate food, toys, or supplies, please call 402-441-9593 for an appointment. Contributions can also be made with a credit card through Paypal. Please consider donating, or visit our website to learn how you can help!

The costs to operate the facility continue to grow. One way of reducing costs is to minimize the number of newsletters that are printed and mailed out to our supporters. We are, therefore, asking if we can send future issues of The Cat House Scoop to your email address instead of mailing you a printed copy. Rest assured though, if you don't have access to a computer, we will continue to send the newsletter to you by mail!

If you'd like to receive The Cat House Scoop by email, please send your name, home address, and email address to info@thecathouse.org. Please use "Newsletter" as the subject of the email.