

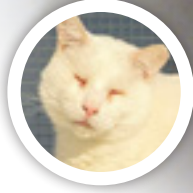
VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

The Gillam Family
PAGE 2



FEATURED CATS

Bell & Noodles
PAGE 3



ADVICE CAT

Spartacus
PAGE 7



THE CAT HOUSE Scoop

© Essence in a Flash by Kimberly McCarty

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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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Laura Wong

The Cat House is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. TCH is funded primarily by donations and adoption fees and is staffed primarily by volunteers.

Stranger Danger: Why Cats Hide and How To Help

By Ann Adams

If you've ever had guests over only to find your cat vanishing into the nearest hiding spot, you're not alone. Many cats exhibit fear or anxiety around unfamiliar people and understanding why can help you support your cat better.

Why Are Some Cats Afraid of Strangers?

Cats are creatures of habit and thrive on predictability. Sudden changes—like the appearance of a new person—can feel threatening. Below are some common reasons your cat might be retreating when company calls.

- Socialization: Kittens who weren't exposed to a variety of people during their first 2 to 9 weeks of life may grow up wary of strangers.
- Negative experiences: A history of rough handling or trauma can make a cat suspicious of new humans.
- Sensitivity to scent and sound: Cats rely heavily on scent cues. New smells and voices can be overwhelming.
- Territorial instincts: Your home is your cat's safe zone. Strangers entering this space can feel like an invasion.

Continued on page 3

DIY: Building a Shelter for Outdoor Cats

By Cassie Kilmurray

As the temperature drops, outdoor cats face a tough challenge--finding a safe, warm place to rest. The good news is that with a few simple materials and a little effort, you can provide a life-saving winter shelter for the cats in your neighborhood. Here is how you can make a difference this season.

What Makes a Good Shelter?

All successful cat shelters have two things in common:

- Warmth: Cats are like little heaters, and strong insulation helps their body heat do the work. Using straw, not blankets, towels, or hay, as bedding helps to keep the shelter dry and warm, while fabrics and hay can get damp and make cats colder.
- Small Space: A snug shelter means less air to heat. Two smaller shelters are better than one large one, so more cats can stay warm.

Other essentials:

- A raised shelter stays warmer and drier by keeping cats off the frozen ground.
- A small door (5 or 6 inches wide) keeps out predators and holds in heat.

Continued on page 7

Calendar of Events

MOAGS (Mother of All Garage Sales)

October 31 / 4 to 8 p.m.

November 1 / 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Sandhills Global Event Center

4100 N. 84th Street

Seward Junior Women's Holiday Craft Show

November 15 / 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Seward County Fairgrounds

Nerdmass IV

November 22 / 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Embassy Suites by Hilton Omaha-La Vista

Hotel and Conference Center

12520 Westport Pkwy, La Vista

Lincoln Women's Expo

January 2026 (dates to be announced)

Sandhills Global Event Center

Volunteer Opportunities

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
- Retail events
- Feral/TNR program
- Foster care

Volunteer Spotlight: The Gillam Family—Three Generations of Giving Back

By Laura Wong

For the Gillam family, volunteering at The Cat House isn't just an activity—it's a family tradition that has spanned three generations. Belinda and Tracy, along with their children and grandchildren, have poured countless hours into caring for cats, building friendships, and creating memories that will last a lifetime.

Belinda's journey with The Cat House began years ago when she was introduced to TNR (trap-neuter-return) work by Dennis Mathias, who helped launch the Husker Cats program at UNL. Inspired to give back, she started volunteering at TCH by washing litter boxes on Thursday afternoons, then later cleaning quarantine rooms, and eventually serving as a Team Leader. Tracy, however, wasn't immediately convinced. "The funny thing was Tracy told me it was fine if I volunteered but not to expect him to join me," Belinda recalls. As it turns out, that promise didn't last long.

When Belinda's shift was short-handed, she drafted Tracy a few times. He soon found himself enjoying both the cats and the camaraderie of other volunteers. Before long, he was regularly volunteering on Saturday mornings—even on shifts Belinda wasn't part of. "Amber Niemann used to lock him in the rooms," Belinda jokes, "and I think that sealed the deal."

The couple's shared love of animals has roots in their childhoods. Tracy grew up visiting his grandparents, who ran a small nursing home in Elmwood. His grandfather loved cats and cared for the ferals near the property. Belinda and Tracy had a cat named Charley who famously taught himself to use the toilet and loved cutting in front of guests in the bathroom. When their son, Gene, was 8, a stray cat named Nicole found him at his grandparents' house. Nicole had been abused by local children, but she seemed to know she was safe with Gene. Despite Tracy's initial "no," it only took 3 hours of tears before Nicole became part of the family—and she arrived pregnant. From that point on, the Gillam household was full of cats.

Volunteering as a family has been both rewarding and bonding. Their grandsons, Stephen, Mason, and Madden, have grown up helping at The Cat House, never once



complaining when work needed to be done. One of Belinda's favorite memories is when Gene's family fostered their first bottle-fed kitten. The family had just purchased a camper, and Tracy declared, "no cats in the camper." That rule was broken almost immediately on their first family trip to Adventureland, when the foster kitten came along. Four-year-old Mason quickly grew attached, even proclaiming, "no one is going to take my kitten" when adoption time came. In the end, the family adopted the kitten, who lived happily with them for 14 years.

Over the years, the Gillam family has held many roles—from unloading supply trucks, to Belinda coordinating the Green and Purple Units and serving on the Board of Directors, to Tracy playing Santa Claus for photographs at Petco for 4 years. They've also had unforgettable experiences with certain cats. Belinda recalls Nibbles, who had been returned multiple times for biting but bonded with her and became Tracy's beloved foster failure. Then there was Mickey, a challenging cat who, against all odds, found his perfect forever family after first bonding with Belinda.

Through it all, the Gillams have learned that cats often choose their people. "For some reason, a lot of our difficult cats connect with Tracy," Belinda says. The Gillams have also discovered that the friendships made through volunteering are just as meaningful as the time spent with cats.

When asked what advice they would give to families considering volunteering, Belinda doesn't hesitate: "It's one of the best bonding experiences possible. You bond as a family, and you bond with the cats."

For the Gillam family, The Cat House is more than just a shelter—it's a special place that has shaped their lives, values, and memories together.

Bell & Noodles

By Kris Silva

On May Day this year, The Cat House welcomed two very special cats into our care—Bell and Noodles. From the moment they arrived, it was clear they shared an extraordinary bond.

Noodles is a big, handsome, red tabby boy with a gentle, protective nature. His best friend (and possibly, sister) Bell is a stunning white lady who, despite having no eyes, moves through her world with grace and confidence, thanks in large part to the companionship and guidance of Noodles. He helps her navigate familiar spaces, and together, they prove that love and friendship can overcome any obstacle.

Bell and Noodles were born around May of 2021, making them a young pair with many years of love and companionship ahead. They are inseparable. Whether curled up side by side for a nap, greeting volunteers for affection, or simply enjoying a quiet moment together, their devotion to one another shines. Since coming to the shelter, they have also started on a weight loss journey together.

The two are wonderfully friendly with people, seeking out cuddles and sharing their love freely. Because of their close bond, Bell and Noodles must be adopted together. They are looking for a forever home where they can continue their journey side by side, bringing double the joy, double the snuggles, and double the love to a lucky adopter.

If you've been searching for the perfect pair of companions, Bell and Noodles may just be the ones to steal your heart.



Stranger Danger, continued from page 1

Tips to Help Your Shy Cat Feel More Comfortable

- Provide a safe space: Give your cat access to a quiet room or high perch where it can observe from a distance. Never force interaction.
- Use positive associations: Offer treats or playtime when guests arrive, so your cat learns that strangers mean good things.
- Ask guests to ignore scared cats: No direct eye contact or reaching out. Let your cat make the first move.
- Try calming aids: Using Feliway or similar pheromone diffusers or giving calming treats can reduce anxiety during visits.
- Gradual desensitization: If possible, introduce your cat to new people slowly—start with short, calm visits and reward relaxed behavior.

Remember, every cat has a unique personality. Some may never become social butterflies, but with patience and the right approach, you can help cats feel safe and confident in their home—even when strangers come knocking.

These cats are looking for forever homes.

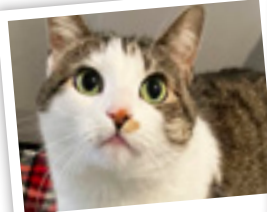
Visit our shelter on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6 to 8 pm and Sundays from 1:30 to 4 pm.



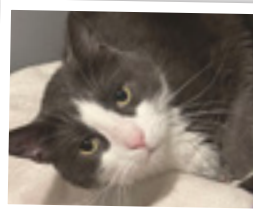
Walter (FeLV+) – 1 year



Jaja (FIV+) – 4 years



Luna – 5 years



Lars – 9 years



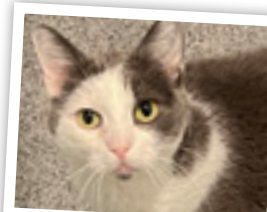
Gary – 8 years



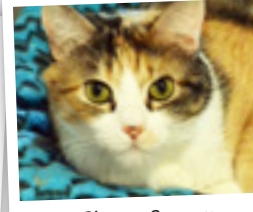
Elvis (FIV+) – 5 years



Kristie Kreme – 7 years



Bella – 9 years



Shay – 8 years



Harley – 9 years

Rainy Shines As Therapy Cat

By Allison Hunter Frederick

Is your cat friendly with people, adaptable to new situations, and open to being trained? You might have a potential therapy cat!

In April 2018, our family's second youngest cat became a certified therapy cat. In her 7 years of doing therapy work, Rainy has visited seniors in apartment complexes, retirement centers, and hospice programs. Since 2019, children have read to her at local libraries as part of the Read to a Pet Program. Rainy has also visited college students during exam weeks, demonstrated her training for Lincoln's 4-H Wonder Cats Club, and welcomed visitors to local table events promoting therapy cats.

How are therapy cats different from average house cats or emotional support animals? Therapy cats are certified pets who have been trained to benefit the emotional, mental, and physical well-being of people of all ages in all situations. Some of the more unusual places therapy cats have served include airports, courts, mental health institutions, and police stations.

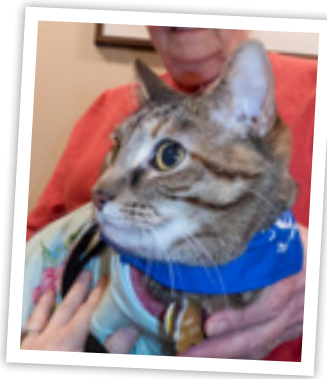
The two main certifying organizations are Love on a Leash and Pet Partners. Rainy and I are certified through the former. Our first step to certification was to have our vet fill out the LOAL Control Evaluation form. The form asks questions about Rainy's health and temperament. Our second step was to undergo 10 supervised visits at a local facility. Rainy and I were supervised by the activity director at a senior retirement center. Our third step was to fill

out the LOAL application for cats, which, among other things, includes a pet agreement which says that we'll continue to train.

What kind of training do therapy cats need? The top requirement, of course, is that they're people-friendly. Therapy cats must also do well away from home, due to the fact they'll visit in unfamiliar environments where they'll encounter new sights, sounds, and smells. Some ways that therapy cat handlers have helped their cats become more social include taking them to parties, stores, malls, parks, and friends' homes. Handlers also expose their cats to new experiences, such as riding on elevators.

Therapy cats must also be comfortable being in a carrier and on a harness and leash. I've met countless cat owners who are excited to tell me how friendly their cats are, only to then have them dismiss the idea of cat therapy because they don't think their cat will tolerate a harness. Although many cats do initially balk at wearing a harness, it's often a matter of acclimating them to one. There are several online videos by cat experts that show how to do so in a fear-free way.

A third requirement is that therapy cats must be groomed before a visit. Both of the national certifying organizations require that a therapy cat has clean eyes, ears, and teeth. The organizations also require that a



therapy cat has been brushed and their nails have been clipped. Husbandry is part of my morning routine with Rainy, and I reinforce her cooperation with treats.

The last component of therapy cat training is perhaps the easiest to accomplish because, to a degree, it'll happen automatically while pursuing the others, and that's instilling your cat with trust in you. One cat handler told me, "It's impossible to desensitize a cat to everything, so looking to me for direction/assurance is vital."

Happily, my training with Rainy paid off. Even though she stays alert to visitors entering the room of a patient, she also welcomes their attention. Although she also stays alert to sounds in hallways, she remains calm in the face of security alarms. At one point, I used to decline invitations to visit seniors in a common room because Rainy would shy away from the hustle and bustle. Now common rooms are no longer an obstacle.

There are fewer than 500 certified cats in the United States; the demand outweighs the supply. If you're interested in therapy cat work, please contact Love on a Leash or Pet Partners.

Thank you to The Cat House for inviting me to feature Rainy in my article about therapy cats. We fostered her for TCH as a kitten, and we're happy she became ours.

Sarah's Fund to Aid TCH Alumni

By Martha Stoddard

Sarah Fitchett loved The Cat House cats. While she lived, the Lincoln woman was a faithful TCH volunteer, who came in to spend time with cats even after her health declined and she had to drag an oxygen tank along with her. More than anything, Sarah was a tireless advocate for cats that needed extra attention because of their health or lack of socialization.

So, when TCH wanted to do more to help our feline alumni, it seemed fitting to name the effort after Sarah and to fund it initially with her bequest to TCH. Sarah passed away in 2022. The new Sarah's Fund program is being launched this fall with the

goal of aiding adopters who struggle with major, unexpected veterinary costs for cats adopted from TCH.

The program could provide help, for example, for a TCH alum facing major dental surgery and multiple tooth extractions, for one who requires emergency hospitalization for a urinary tract blockage, or another who needs a leg amputated to live pain-free.

As established, the program will provide assistance on a more formal basis than previous, ad hoc efforts. Adopters seeking help will be asked to fill out an application and provide information about their situation and their TCH alum's medical

issues. TCH volunteers will then review each case, bringing in veterinary expertise as needed, and collaborate with adopters on a plan to help the cat.

Interim TCH President Deb Schaaf said she hopes the new Sarah's Fund program will make it possible for more TCH alums to stay happy, healthy, and in their homes. She also said TCH plans to continue building up the fund, so the assistance can last well into the future. TCH supporters should watch for fundraising events specific to Sarah's Fund down the road. In the meantime, people can donate to TCH and designate the money for Sarah's Fund.

Donations in Memory & Honor Of...

In memory of

Barb Knapp and Socks from Jerry Tyrrell
Cindy Wehrwein from Ronald Riethmuller and Bonnie Robbins
Lance Long from Deanna Long
Loren Burmeister from Cindy and John Wenzl
Ed and Pat (Murphy) Roth from Jan Roth-Schoonover
Cory Filipi from the Filipi family
Pablo Cochran Guild from Angela Calcaterra
Sammy from Catherine Cecava
Bill Mack from Judy Allen
Steven P. Oberheu from Susan Riepe
Vernette Coleman from Jean Hulbert
Frank Borden from Sandra Borden; Sandra L. Jones; Sandra Skinner; Mark and Renee Sinclair; Janet Harig; Geraldine Leibel; and Tracy and Belinda Gillam
McKenzie Hadley from Rebecca and Matthew Miratsky; Michelle Ducre; Cindy Mefford; and Renee King
Jack Diehl from Joni Sundquist; Orson Robinson, Jr.; and Gary Hollman
Joan Powers from Don and Kathleen Dowding; Ron and Arlene Dowding; Diane Dowding and Jeff Olson; Steven and Erin Ronhavde and family; Kirby, Cindy, and Quentin Drake; and Dan and Kim (Smith) Horak
Charles R. Langston from Judith Lawson and Debra Haar
Lenore Rourke from Cheryl Rourke; Robert and Victoria Northrup; and Daniel Lehman
Taco, a big orange cat, who was deeply loved, from Cheryl Cassiday
Lee Sronce from Judy Allen
Fae, a TCH alum, from Julie Petersen
Daisy from Mary Garrison
Eric Andrews from Joanna Andrews; Sharon Moore; Kim Converse; David Wallick; Rebecca Evans; Denise Scharton; Justin Walter; and the Pius X High School Science Department
Judy Fallon from Judy Jones
Kathy Benes from Andrea Larkins

In honor of

Wade Peterson's birthday from Karen Savage
Gary Fehr from Josie Tidball and Mariah Zajic
Rosemary Thornton from Evelyn Stewart
"Five wonderful kittens" from Joe and Mary Divis
Cerah Hedrick from Miriah Zajic and Jose Tidball
Janeen Schack's birthday from Karen Beck
Ashley Becher, a SERVE Award recipient, from Nelnet
Chubs Moslander's birthday from Emma and Taylor Martin
Kevin's monthly mission and Joey and Jasmine, my two grand cats, from Janice Heywood
Susan Lowry's birthday from Prudence Coccodrilli
Jerry Wilkins from the Wilkins Family Reunion
Lars from Don Wendling
Janice's birthday from Terri Noyes
John and Jill Lartison's wedding from them and Sandy Blanco-Anderson
Amelia Davis's 12th birthday (Amelia brought in toys, treats, and a cash donation)
Addyson Christensen from Robyn Sprunk

Special thanks to

Dr. Kelly Jordan	Cause For Paws
Dr. Shelley Knudsen	Nature's Variety
All Feline Hospital	Petco
Driftwood Vet Clinic	Tractor Supply
Pitts Veterinary Hospital	
Tomorrow's Veterinary Care	
Vondra Veterinary Clinic	
Wachal Pet Health Center	
Creature Comforts Mobile Veterinary Service	

Wish List

DRY CAT FOOD

- Any dry cat food
- Science Diet Optimal
- Science Diet C/D Stress*
- Royal Canin Baby Cat
- Science Diet Metabolic*

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 Metabolic or Z/D*
- Royal Canin Baby Cat Loaf

SUPPLIES

- Brooms
- Paper towels
- Kitchen and office trash bags (*13 gallon size*)
- String mops

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/pods
- Clorox disposable wipes
- Swiffer

CAT LITTER

- Non-clumping, unscented, 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*)
- Aluminum trays (*no smaller than 8" x 13"*)
- Lint rollers
- Purina Pro Plan Hydra Care Supplement
- Purina Pro Plan Calming Care Supplement
- Gift certificates to entirelypets.com
- Gift cards to Tractor Supply, Walmart, Target, Petco, or PetSmart

* sold at vet clinics

The Purr-Fect Scoop: A Comprehensive Guide to Cat Litter

By Cindy Wenzl

As a cat owner, one of the most important decisions you'll make for your feline friend is the type of litter to use. With so many options available, it can be overwhelming to choose the right one. In this article, we'll delve into the pros and cons of various cat litter types, helping you make an informed decision.

1. Clumping Clay Cat Litter

Also known as scoopable or original classic, clumping clay litter is one of the oldest and most popular types. It forms dense clumps when exposed to moisture, making it easy to scoop out waste.

Pros: Widely available, many brands to choose from, relatively inexpensive

Cons: Very heavy, especially when soiled; often dusty and messy; prone to tracking around the house; requires regular scooping

2. Non-Clumping Clay Litter

This type of litter doesn't form clumps, eliminating the need for scooping.

Pros: No sifting or scooping clumps, many brands available, relatively inexpensive

Cons: Must be changed frequently, messy and muddy when wet, prone to dust and tracking

3. Crystal Cat Litter

Made from porous silica crystals, crystal litter is a newer, innovative option. It absorbs fluids effectively, which controls odor and minimizes mess.

Pros: No clumps to scoop, lightweight and highly absorbent, superior odor control, can go weeks without changing, 99 percent dust-free, low tracking

Cons: Relatively expensive pound for pound (although it can last longer), least environmentally friendly as not biodegradable

4. Recycled Paper Cat Litter

Eco-friendly and biodegradable, recycled paper litter is a great option for environmentally conscious cat owners.

Pros: Eco-friendly and biodegradable, dust-free and absorbent, safe for kittens

Cons: Harder to clean, more expensive than clay litter, not all cats like it, can be difficult to find

5. Pine Cat Litter

Made from recycled wood, pine litter is a non-clumping, eco-friendly option.

Pros: Environmentally friendly, non-toxic, light pine scent, recycled product

Cons: Must be cleaned often, spreads quickly, scent may be too strong for some cats or people, bulky texture some cats dislike

Less Popular or Harder-to-Find Options

Other types of cat litter include:

- Wheat cat litter
- Corn cat litter
- Grass cat litter
- Walnut cat litter

These options may offer unique benefits, but their availability and popularity vary.

In conclusion, choosing the right cat litter depends on your individual needs and preferences. Consider factors like odor control, dust level, and eco-friendliness when making your decision. By understanding the pros and cons of each type, you can provide your feline friend with a comfortable and healthy litter box experience.

Halloween Costumes: A Cat's Perspective

By Kris Silva

At The Cat House, we love celebrating holidays with our feline friends! But when it comes to Halloween costumes for cats, we always put their comfort and well-being first. While it's tempting to dress them up as pumpkins, witches, or bats, not every kitty enjoys the spotlight. Some cats might tolerate a costume for a quick photo, while others will make it very clear that it's not for them. Respecting those boundaries is one of the best ways to show love.

Safety & Comfort Come First

Our shelter staff and volunteers often remind families that costumes should never cause stress or discomfort. Cats need to move, stretch, and groom naturally. Bulky outfits or anything covering their face or ears can quickly turn festive fun into frustration. If you notice flattened ears, wide eyes, or your cat trying to wiggle away, it's their way of saying "No thanks!" A cat's mental and

emotional well-being is just as important as their physical health and keeping them comfortable is always the top priority.

Festive Alternatives We Love

Instead of a full costume, many of our adoptable cats enjoy simple, lightweight options:

- Seasonal bandanas or collars in Halloween colors.
- Bat wings attached to a secure harness; cute, but still easy to move in.
- Small bow ties or charms that add a touch of festive flair without being overwhelming.

These little touches can let our cats participate in the holiday while keeping their stress levels low. Even something as simple as a cozy blanket in autumn colors can help them feel included in the season.

And of course, while you enjoy candy and treats this season, remember to keep sweets safely out of paw's reach. Chocolate and many

candies can be harmful to cats, but extra chin scratches and playtime are always welcome. If you want to give your cat a "treat," try a new toy or a safe catnip surprise instead.

A Final Thought from the Shelter

For us, Halloween isn't just about costumes, it's about community and connection. Whether a cat is dressed as a "purr-fect little pumpkin" or simply curled up in the window watching trick-or-treaters, they deserve to feel safe and loved. That's what we strive for every day at our shelter, and it's why your support makes such a difference.

This month, we invite you to stop by and meet some of our adoptable cats who are looking for their forever homes. Who knows, your next Halloween might include a new furry friend keeping you company at the window, enjoying the sights and sounds of the season by your side.

Spartacus Offers Relationship Advice

Dear Advice Cat:

I had two cats, who were best friends. They slept together, groomed each other, and rubbed up against each other when walking. Recently, one cat died, and the other seems to be depressed. I want to find a new cat to keep him company. How do I get them to be best friends as well?

Signed, Would-be Matchmaker

Dear Matchmaker:

Please convey my condolences to your cat. Losing a best friend can be heart-breaking, and it's not surprising that he is sad. Bringing home a new companion may be just the thing to give him a new outlook on life. They may get along quite well together and enjoy each other's company.

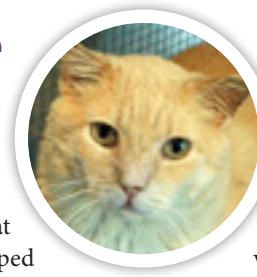
However, I would urge you to temper your expectations about how they will interact. Most felines can learn to co-exist in the same living environment if you approach the introductions properly. Whether they become best friends depends on their personalities, in much the same manner as friendships among humans, and such friendship can be difficult to predict.

My life has certainly been enhanced by my friendship with my roommate, Essie, but I would not have anticipated that we

would relate well together. She does not care for humans, while I enjoy people and petting. She is reserved and prefers to stay in our room, while I enjoy short adventures outside that space. Nevertheless, we have developed a mutual respect for each other and, with time, have created a strong bond.

While you cannot completely control the outcome of welcoming a new cat to your household, you can enhance the likelihood of a friendship developing. I would advise you to begin by choosing a cat that appears compatible with your own. Consider the cat's age, sex, size, and personality. Take some time to acquaint yourself with the new cat and how it interacts with you and with other cats. Also, ensure you have enough litter boxes, food and water bowls, and comfortable sleeping places to reduce potential conflicts.

The next steps require time and patience. Remember that it can take up to 90 days for both cats to make the adjustment, which requires perseverance on your part. Start by setting up the new cat in its own room, separated from your current cat. Do not allow the two to see each other. Once the new cat appears calm and settled in its room, you can proceed to familiarize them with each other in slow steps. You can exchange



scents between the cats by rubbing an old sock or a dry washcloth on one cat's cheeks, then letting the other cat smell it and vice versa. Try shutting the

current cat in a room and letting the new one explore the remainder of your residence. Feed the cats on the opposite sides of a door, so they begin to associate each other with good things.

If all goes well, you may proceed to allowing the cats to see each other. Crack open the door to the new cat's room, under supervision, or set up a pet gate. Such a gate would be taller than a baby gate, which most felines can easily jump over. Continue to feed them on opposite sides of the barrier. Finally, let them both into the same area and engage each one in play. Again, the goal is to nurture positive associations between the two. The last step would be to remove any barriers while using food, play, and love to help them continue building their relationship.

This advice may be more than you had anticipated. I sincerely hope it will help your cat find a new friend or at least settle into a comfortable co-existence with any new cat you add to the household.

Regards, Spartacus

DIY: Building a Shelter for Outdoor Cats, continued from page 1

- A hidden, safe spot ensures cats feel secure.

DIY Shelter: The Rubbermaid Bin Method

One of the most reliable designs uses two Rubbermaid storage bins (unlike other brands, they don't crack in the cold), along with Styrofoam and straw. You can find these supplies at Home Depot, Lowe's, Tractor Supply, or your local hardware store.

You'll need:

- Two Rubbermaid bins (one large and one smaller)
- One sheet (8 ft. x 2 ft.) of 1-inch-thick, hard Styrofoam
- Box cutter
- Duct tape
- Yardstick
- Straw for bedding
- Optional: Drill for ventilation/draining

How to build it:

- Cut the doorway: Make a 6-inch x 6-inch hole in the large bin, several inches above the bottom to avoid any flooding. Add duct tape around the hole to cover any rough edges.
- Insulate: Line the bottom and sides of the large bin with Styrofoam pieces, cutting a matching doorway in the Styrofoam.
- Nest the bins: Place the smaller bin inside the larger one, snug against the insulation, and cut a doorway that lines up with the larger bin.
- Add bedding: Fill the second container inside with straw (again, no blankets, towels, or hay) and snap the cover on.
- Seal it up: Cut a Styrofoam "roof" for insulation, placing it on top of the smaller bin, then snap on the larger bin's lid.

Optional extra steps:

- Weigh it down: Use bricks, rocks, or even barbell weights so it won't blow away.

- Drainage holes: Drill a few small holes on the sides or bottom of the shelter to allow any water to drain.
- Ventilation holes: Drill a few small holes near the top to allow for extra air.

Placement Tips

- Face the doorway toward a wall or fence for safety and to help block the wind.
- Raise the shelter off the ground with 2 x 4's, bricks, or other material.
- Place the shelter in a quiet, discreet spot where cats already feel comfortable.

A warm, dry shelter can mean the world of difference between comfort and danger for outdoor cats during the coldest months. It is a small act of kindness that can save many feline lives. So, grab a storage bin, some Styrofoam, and a bundle of straw and turn a chilly backyard corner into a cozy haven for the cats who need it most.



THE CAT HOUSE
THE NO-KILL ALTERNATIVE
PO Box 23145
Lincoln, NE 68542

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THE PHILOSOPHY IS THAT
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