

THE ADVOCAT



Fall/Winter 2013

A Billerica Cat Care Coalition Publication

News for BCCC Members, Friends and the Public

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Help Homeless Cats and Kittens

Visit our web site:
www.billericacatcarecoalition.org

Learn About:

- Feral Cats
- Pet Overpopulation
- The Importance Of Spaying & Neutering
- View Our List of Available Cats
- Become a Volunteer

Donate To Our Food Bins at:

- Market Baskets in Billerica
- Billerica & Tewksbury Libraries
- Agway, Chelmsford

We have Donation Jars at:

- K-9 Comforts, Billerica
- Shank's Mare, Billerica

Our Sponsoring Vets:

- The Cat Doctor
- McGrath Animal Hospital
- Tewksbury Animal Hospital
- Middlesex County Animal Hospital

BCCC - Friend to Ferals

BCCC Mission

Although since 2004 BCCC has helped hundreds of stray and abandoned cats get adopted into their forever homes, our main mission is to reduce the suffering and death of feral cats through TNR: Trap-Neuter-Return.

Feral cats are domestic cats that have had little or no contact with humans. They are afraid of humans, so they are not adoptable, and would be euthanized if brought to a shelter.

What exactly is TNR? Feral cats living outdoors together in a colony are humanely trapped. The cats are then brought by volunteers to a monthly clinic to be neutered, vaccinated, and ear-tipped. The cats are then returned to their colony.

This ends the cycle of reproduction, improves the health of the cats, and over time, reduces the population of feral cats.

Thanks to your support, and the efforts of BCCC volunteers, local feral cats are getting the food, shelter, and care they need to live out their lives.

No Kill Nation

BCCC is also a member of No Kill Nation, a movement to end the needless killing of animals in shelters. The No

Kill Advocacy Center is working to create No Kill Communities across the nation. They have announced a nationwide campaign called "Just One Day" to make the USA a no kill nation on June 11th.

It is their belief that "The USA can become a no kill nation, even if it is for Just One Day. And if we can do it that day, we can also do it on June 12 for Just Another Day.

For more information, visit www.nokilladvocacycenter.org



Teddy is an approx. 5-year-old neutered tomcat. Though he is a big boy (14+ lbs.), he is gentle giant who loves to talk, purr, roll around and get chin scratches. He was found as a stray, in a very neglected condition. Teddy is FIV+, but in very good health and ready to find his forever, loving home. He is up to date on all of his vet care, including neuter and vaccinations.

He does well with other cats, but due to his neglectful past, he would do wonderfully as the only cat in a household so he can get lots of attention and TLC. He would also do well in a household where someone is around a lot/works from home, as he loves to purr give head rubs and hang out together!



Letter from the President

Dear, BCCC Friends,

Sometimes, it is hard to put into words all the situations BCCC experiences on an almost daily basis. From motherless, newborn kittens found in bushes to neglected or abandoned pet cats (who still love people), to feral cats being fed and cared for by individuals – we are touched and inspired by your choice to make the world a better place, one act of kindness at a time, by letting us know about them and that you want to be part of the solution to help.

Albert Einstein was quoted as saying *“The world is a dangerous place to live, not because of the people who are evil but because of the people who don’t do anything.”*

What we have seen over the past nine years since BCCC began are random and specific acts of kindness which, in turn, motivate us to continue to help through our humane programs such Trap/Neuter/Return (TNR) for feral cats and foster/adoption care for abandoned cats and kittens. Support from caring citizens has blossomed into a network of people helping throughout Billerica and neighboring towns and has extended to contact and resources with other no-kill organizations throughout the region, state and country!

Though we have been doing this for a little while (nearly a decade), the care we see from so many and the opportunities to help make a difference are still as fresh and new as the day BCCC first began.

And, as if that isn’t enough, just as I sat down to begin writing this letter, my rescued cat, Pearl, plopped herself down over my desktop, in front of the computer, as if to say “I’m all the inspiration you need to remember why you help!” Pearl was found as a dying, malnourished kitten, laying in a puddle of water in a rainstorm, too weak to run away, by a kind man who picked her up and brought her into his home, then reached out for help to BCCC. Guess whose house she landed at?



To all our friends – donors, animal control officers, veterinarians and their staff, to those who we do not see but we know you are there because you put cat food in our donation bins, to those who feed ferals, who volunteer in so many ways with their individual talents, who attend our fund-raising events – you make our community a place where we can be proud to live and work. And, we say a heartfelt “thank you!” None of this would be possible if it weren’t for all of us connected by a chain of human kindness.

Purrs,
Sharon



Visit our Facebook page and see how BCCC is making a difference. We’ve got pictures, rescue stories, and more!

www.facebook.com/pages/Billerica-Cat-Care-Coalition/178563832586

MRFRS Catmobile



Wow! Low cost spay/neuter service for your cat in your neighborhood: \$80 for males, \$100 for females. The package includes exam, spay/neuter, rabies vaccination, flea treatment and nail trim.

And now there is a Catmobile2, which will serve central and metrowest Massachusetts.

To find out when the Catmobile will be in your area, go to www.catmobile.org

How to make an appointment:

Online: www.catmobile.org
Phone: 978-465-1940
E-mail: catmobile@mrfrs.org

Got Kittens? Tell us Immediately!



BCCC is often contacted about feral kittens too late (when kittens are 4-6 months old), usually due to cold weather concerns.

Please contact BCCC early, when kittens are first discovered, so we can try to help get them in and socialize them for adoption. When kittens are older, it is harder for us to socialize them.



THE ADVOCAT Volume 8 Issue No. 2

Editor
Jody Nelson

This newsletter provides general information. It is not intended to provide medical advice. Medical advice should be obtained directly from your veterinarian.

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2013 The Cat's Meow Chocolate Tasting & Silent Auction

Thank You! We'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of our supporters who attended BCCC's 9th annual "The Cat's Meow Chocolate Tasting" & Silent Auction June 14th at Tewksbury Country Club. We hope you had as much fun as we did!



Calendar of Events

September

9/14 - BCCC at "Yankee Doodle Day" at Billerica, MA - Information booth behind Billerica MA Town Hall, 11 am – 3 pm

9/14 - Meet & Greet our adoptable cats inside Billerica Bennett Library, 10 am – 2 pm

9/21 - Meet & Greet our adoptable cats at Burlington, MA Petco, 11 am – 1 pm

9/28 - Meet & Greet our adoptable cats at Habitat Restore in Burlington, MA Petco, 11 am – 2 pm

October

10/15 - "Save a Cat, Eat Pizza Fund-Raiser & Raffle" - Flatbread Restaurant, Bedford, MA, 5 pm – 9 pm

10/19 - "National Feral Cat Day" information tables at all Billerica, MA Market Baskets. Times vary by store.

10/26 - Meet & Greet our adoptable cats at Burlington, MA Petco, 11 am – 1 pm

November

Winter Farmers Markets at Chelmsford Agway - Check BCCC website for dates and times

Meet and Greet BCCC's adoptable cats - Check BCCC website for dates and times

SAVE THE
DATES!



Scan THIS QR code
WITH YOUR PHONE TO
GO DIRECTLY TO OUR
WEB SITE!

Winter Weather Tips

Stray and feral cats are at home outside, but they can always use some extra help in cold or severe weather. Follow these tips to help them stay even safer, warmer, and healthier during severe storms and winter months.

Shelter

Shelters keep feral cat colonies comfortable in cold and other harsh or severe weather conditions. Placing discreet shelters in quiet locations away from foot traffic helps keep cats from taking shelter in places where they are in danger or not welcome.

There are endless variations of cat shelters. Dog houses also do the trick with a few modifications. Here's a few tips to help you get started:

A good size for a shelter is at least 2'x3' and at least 18" high. Larger shelters are not necessarily better, since heat disperses quickly, leaving the inside as cold as the outside.

- Cats will huddle together inside for warmth, so provide colonies with multiple shelters that can fit three to five cats each. If you are caring for fewer cats, use a smaller shelter so it takes less body heat to warm up.
- Make sure the door is no bigger than six to eight inches wide to keep out other animals. If you're modifying a dog house, you'll need to block off part of the door to make it cat-sized. A flap on the door will also keep snow, rain, and wind out.
- Insulate the shelter with straw to repel moisture and keep cats warm and dry (Note: Make sure it's straw, but not hay, because hay absorbs moisture. Blankets may seem like a good idea, but since they are also extremely absorbent, they make bad bedding.
- Raise shelters off the cold ground to conserve warmth. Wooden pallets stuffed with insulation work well for elevating shelters and keeping out drafts.

Build a Feeding Station

A simple feeding station with a roof and sides will protect food and cats from precipitation and icy breezes during meal times. Building a feeding station also establishes a specific area where the cats know to come for food, so they spend as little time exposed to the elements as possible. As with shelters, elevating the floor of the feeding station off the ground keeps food and paws warmer. Feeding stations also offer many year-round benefits for your colony, including deterring



insects and making colony management easier. The moderate time and effort it takes to build one this winter will be well worth it all year round!

Food

When temperatures drop, the colony will need extra calories to maintain energy levels. Provide extra food and water during the winter, and do your best to keep it from freezing. (See above to learn about building feeding stations to protect food and hungry cats from the cold.)

Food

- Feed the cats on a regular schedule. The cats will know when to come around, and both the food and the cats will spend less time exposed to the weather.
- On average, you can expect an adult feral cat to eat roughly 5.5 ounces of wet (canned) cat food and 2 ounces of dry food daily in temperate weather (add a half cup to that amount if only feeding dry food). In colder weather, make sure to feed larger portions than you usually do for an extra caloric boost.
- Observe the cats and the time it takes for the food to be eaten. If the cats eat all of the food in 15 minutes or less, put out a bit more.
- If you can keep it from freezing, feed wet food—it's easier to digest, so cats save more energy for keeping warm. Consider warming canned food prior to arriving at the site and using insulated bags to keep the food warm during travel.
- Since wet food is also quicker to freeze, make sure you put out dry food too, or if you think the food is very likely to freeze, you may want to feed only dry food.
- Spray insulation foam into the underside of plastic feeding dishes to keep wet food from becoming fishicles!

Water

Change water bowls twice daily to keep water from freezing. Use deep bowls rather than wide ones, and refill them with hot or warm water. If the colony is close to an outlet, heated electric water bowls will also do the trick.

- Keep the water in the sun and use dark colored bowls that will absorb the sun's heat.
- Purchase a Solar Sipper, a solar powered bowl, although we've learned from experience that these bowls work best at temperatures of 30°F or higher and must be kept in the sun.
- Insulate the bowls as instructed above or use double-layered bowls—they have an insulated air layer between the surface the water touches and the surface against the ground.
- Shield the water dish from wind by placing it inside a small styrofoam cooler or surround the top and sides of the feeding area with plexiglass to create a greenhouse environment for the water.
- Purchase a microwavable heating pad like a microwaveable disk to use under the water bowl.
- If there is a water source like a spigot, run the water slightly, since it won't freeze as quickly as still water.
- Add a pinch of sugar to the water to keep it from freezing as quickly and to provide an energy boost for the cats.

Winter Safety Tips

In addition to providing food, water, and shelter for cats in your neighborhood, observe these winter precautions to keep cats safe:

- Before starting your car, give the hood a tap and check between the tires—cats will sometimes crawl into the engine or hide underneath the car for warmth.
- Winter is also the time of year for antifreeze, which often tastes irresistible to cats and other animals, but is toxic and deadly. Keep it out of reach and clean up any spills!
- Remember to shovel out cat shelters when you're shoveling your own driveway. Cats in shelters can get snowed in, so keep entrances clear and shovel an exit for cats who may be taking refuge under bushes, porches, or other hiding spots.
- Stay away from salt and chemical melting products. These products can be toxic to animals and harmful to

their natural snowshoes—paws!

Trap-Neuter-Return

Cats have a 63-day gestation period and usually mate in the winter. Trap-Neuter-Return can be done during the winter months, as long as you take precautions to make sure the cats are not exposed to extreme weather.

Cats are very vulnerable when in traps and can't move around much to generate warmth, so be sure to keep trapped cats covered and secured in a temperature-controlled vehicle or holding area while you trap. Use your judgment when deciding if it's too cold to trap.

Educate Others

Educate your family, friends, and neighbors about the habits of outdoors cat during the winter, especially the safety tips above. Pass on these tips to keep cats everywhere safe and well cared-for throughout the winter.

Source: Alley Cat Allies, www.alleycat.org

Buy a Shelter for Ferals Keep them Warm Throughout the Winter

Help keep your ferals warm with a BCCC feral cat shelter. Sturdy and easy to carry, these shelters provide a safe haven from harsh weather conditions. The cost is \$40.00 and they are made to order, so be sure to get your order in on time!

To order, contact us at info@billericatcarecoalition.org



Volunteers - It's What Makes BCCC Purr

Volunteering is an awesome way to meet people who share similar interests as you and support a cause that's near and dear to you. If you're unable to donate money to support your local cause, donating your time instead is just as valuable. Who knows, maybe you'll learn some new skills and make some new friends. Volunteering with an animal rescue group such as Billerica Cat Care Coalition can provide a sense of responsibility because people and the cats really depend on you.

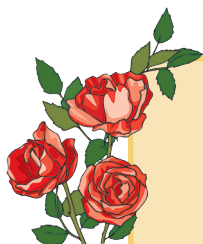
Volunteers are vital to the success of our no-kill organization's mission which is to reduce the suffering and death of feral cats in Billerica and surrounding towns through a Trap/Neuter/Return (TNR) Program. BCCC volunteers promote low-cost spay/neuter of companion animals through local programs such as The Catmobile, educate the public on local animal issues via our newsletter, and offer advice and assistance to the local community and folks dealing with homeless cat situations or needing to re-home a cat. As part of the cat overpopulation solution what little you can do will make a difference and positively impact our community.

Many volunteers work tirelessly behind the scenes - from our retirees to those with a full time job. Despite their busy lives, volunteers manage to set aside some time to help keep BCCC purring...our Accountant, Attorney, Food donation bin pickup, Thank you letter writer, Petfinder & Adopt-A-Pet photographers, Newsletter editor, Foster home providers, Foster & Adoption Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator, TNR Coordinator, TNR team-Trappers, Drivers and Caretakers, Feral colony feeders, Shelter builders, Event planners, Fundraisers, Webmaster and Designer, and Board of Directors. To all our wonderful volunteers who donate their time in support of Billerica Cat Care Coalition and you the community who support us with cat food donations, supplies and monetary donations... a heartfelt THANK YOU!

It takes a lot of great support with fabulous volunteers willing to do whatever is necessary to be a successful organization and help the cats and kittens in need. If you're 18 years or older, we'd love to hear from you. If your schedule is full and don't have much time to commit to volunteering, but still want to make a difference, our website lists several opportunities to help us. For those animal lovers under 18 yrs, BCCC has a few special projects and great suggestions on how you can help the kitties, just contact us.

Please visit www.BillericaCatCareCoalition.org for a volunteer application or write us at Billerica Cat Care Coalition, P.O. Box 141, North Billerica, MA 01862.

Billerica Cat Care Coalition encourages everyone to find their passion, whatever inspires you and volunteer. What you get back from volunteering is so much more than what you give. There are endless volunteer opportunities where you can make a difference.



In Memory

Earlier this year, Bill Rossi, our dear friend and volunteer extraordinaire passed away. Bill was part of BCCC's founding members nearly 9 years ago. Always eager to help the cats, especially the ferals, Bill's efforts went beyond expectations and didn't go unnoticed. We miss you Bill, the ferals do too!

Thank
You!!

BCCC would like to thank the following organizations and people for their generous support:

- Agway, Chelmsford
- Billerica Public Library
- Pat Bucko, Artist
- Charles J. DiMatteo Jr., CPA
- DeMoulas Market Baskets
- K-Nine Comforts, Billerica
- Michael Kuszek, Photographer
- McGrath Animal Hospital
- Middlesex County Animal Hospital
- Jody Nelson, Designer
- Shaun Nelson, Web Designer
- Nestle Purina
- Petco Foundation
- Petco in Burlington
- Shank's Mare, North Billerica
- Tewksbury Animal Hospital
- Tewksbury Public Library
- The Cat Doctor
- Donna Turley, Attorney

Thanks also go out to the private citizens who have donated to the BCCC. You help us keep the cats fed and healthy!

Volunteers Needed

We are in need of several professionals to help us help the cats and kittens of Billerica, MA. Requirements include experience, references and a love of cats.

For complete volunteer information please visit our website at: www.billericacatcarecoalition.org

- Fundraiser
- Grant Writer
- Carpenter
- Foster Care
- Drivers
- Trappers



Fostering Cats and Kittens

Fostering an adult cat is no different than adopting one – the new family member (whether temporary or permanent) must integrate into a busy household including the resident adults, children of different ages, other cats, and often, dogs.

The safe room is something that foster homes are familiar with, a room that is uncluttered and free of hazards like loose string, elastics, window cords, etc; with a door that can be closed; that houses a litterbox, food and water. But the safe room is really so much more, a place where SAFETY begins – where the new “stranger” in the house can begin to feel welcomed, can begin to establish trust, can decide when it’s safe to assimilate herself into the mainstream of everyday life.

S is for sanitary and secure. The newly-arrived foster could harbor a parasite or disease, posing a risk to your resident cats. Depending on the situation, it is sometimes several weeks before your foster cat can be properly “vetted out.” For this reason, the newcomer must be kept separate from other household pets. It is advisable to wash your hands thoroughly between handling the new foster’s dishes, litterbox and bedding, and the bedding, boxes and bowls of your other cats.

As with this stranger’s physical health, you don’t know her mental health either, and how she responds to other animals. Nor do you know how readily your resident pets will accept her. The safe room provides both you and the newcomer with security – you know that your resident pets are protected, and the newcomer gets the sense that this is her space, which other animals won’t invade.

A is for approach. Your safe room may be no more than a dog-sized crate, but whatever the scenario, it allows for approach. Your new foster is nervous, wary, perhaps even terrified. In the safe room, your new charge gets to know you. A family member (enlist your children) should hang out there during waking hours whenever possible. A computer or TV in the room draws company. The new cat needs to feel that people are approachable, and that’s best accomplished by having humans on hand. Reward her for all attempts at approach – be it peering out from under the couch, establishing eye contact or hopping up onto the end of the sofa. Offer a finger tip or spoonful of canned or baby food.

At feeding time, try to pet the newcomer (best tried by an adult.) Cats who have lived on the lam may growl at first, as they’ve learned to defend their food. Once they realize that meals come served on a platter at regular intervals, they’ll usually allow the petting. This is also a good time to administer any necessary medications.

F is for follow. Once your foster starts to greet people regularly when they enter the room (heads toward you; gets under your feet; or just comes to the door of her crate), you’re halfway there! Cats that trust you will start to “own” you – rub up against your legs; give head-butts, purr. Following you around is a huge step for your foster cat, and a great accomplishment for the entire fostering family!



E is for emerge. Now that you’ve established a trusting relationship, a baby gate across the doorway of the safe room will encourage the exchange of pleasantries between the newcomer and your resident pets. Once given the medical “stamp of approval”, let the foster cat take the lead, emerging from hideout or quiet spot to sniff at the gate, and its passing people or four-leggeds. All positive interaction should be rewarded. Dogs should refrain from yapping or rushing the gate, and while a nose touch is the best-case scenario, expect some hissing from the cats.

T is for trade. Once the new foster has “friended” all your other pets through the gate, it’s time to start trading places. This means herding some (or all) of the other four-leggeds into the safe room, and letting the newbie roam the greater expanse of your house. Not only does this increase her level of confidence in her surroundings, but “site swapping” immerses both resident pets and newcomer in each other’s scents. In effect it allows both parties to “own” all the spaces in the house. This is key with cats, who are territorial by nature. (It is advisable to cover the litterboxes during site swapping. It’s not necessary that they share the privy!)

YES, you’re there! The foster cat leaps the gate. It’s on her terms. She feels confident navigating the family dog, the resident cats, and the kids a-foot. Your newcomer knows when she’s ready – she can feel it and you can trust her feeling. You’ve done what every foster family sets out to do – successfully integrate your foster cat into ordinary family life.

The safe room is ready for your next incoming foster!

Christy Fajkowski owns and directs HabitOts, a Billerica preschool that fosters cats for BCCC.
Contact: christy@habitOts.com

How Can You Help The Cats?

You Can Save Lives.... Right Here, Right Now.

The cats are depending on you. You can make a difference. You can make their hard lives a little bit easier.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS GIFT OF:

\$25 \$35 \$50 \$250 OTHER_____

All contributions are fully tax-deductible and greatly appreciated.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Email _____



Thank You!

You may donate online at www.billericacatcarecoalition.org using PayPal

You may also send a check to:

Billerica Cat Care Coalition P.O. Box 141 N. Billerica, MA 01862

THANK YOU FOR DONATING FOOD AND SUPPLIES TO OUR FOOD BINS. IT IS GREATLY APPRECIATED!

Donation Locations

Donate cat food or supplies at:

- Market Baskets in Billerica
- Billerica and Tewksbury Public Libraries
- K-Nine Comforts, Billerica
- Shank's Mare Thrift Shop, Billerica
- Agway, Chelmsford

Donate pet store gift certificates or gift cards. Buy items on our Wish List at Amazon.com

Wish List Items

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| • Canned Cat Food | • Cat Litter |
| • Dry Cat Food | • Litter Boxes |
| • Kitten Food | • Litter Scoops |
| • KMR Kitten Milk Replacement | • Cat Toys |
| • Paper Plates | • Kitten Bottles |
| • Ceramic Plates | • Paper Towels |
| • Cat Beds | |

OTHER WAYS TO HELP:

- Donate inactive cell phones/Blackberrys
- Use GoodSearch.com for BCCC
- Use iSearchiGive.com for BCCC
- Shop online at www.iGive.com/BCCC
- Volunteer Your Time
- Donate Your Used Vehicle www.donationline.com