



# Community Cats News

Community Cats TNR  
P. O. Box 384  
Ludington, MI 49431

Winter 2023—2024

[www.communitycatstnr.org](http://www.communitycatstnr.org)

A humane Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program to reduce the number of homeless cats

## A strange new land

Suppose you got on a plane that landed in a country/city you didn't recognize. Then you realize you don't have your phone or wallet—no money to get home. It is cold, you are hungry and penniless and night is falling. With dread, you see a sinister person eyeing you. You want to escape, but you don't know where to go—where to hide. Consumed by fear, you wonder where you are and what's happening.

Surprise! You have been trapped and relocated!

Dropping unwanted cats off in the country within site of a barn is cruel and inhumane and is also unlawful abandonment.

Cats are territorial. They may be part of a colony of related cats living outdoors, or they may consider your home their territory. Cats in a feral colony know their home intimately with all of its pitfalls, shortcuts and hidden passages. Next to food and water, their surroundings are the factor most important to their survival.

Relocation of outdoor cats is difficult and should be considered only if cats are at extreme risk in their current location. When a cat is being introduced to a new location, it is absolutely imperative that he/she be confined for a period of time and gradually introduced to other pets, new people and a new "territory" until a comfort level has been reached. They need to overcome fear and know this new location provides food and shelter, and hopefully, love.

Dropped off cats are frequently chased out of the territory by other cats, and they make every effort to return "home." They no longer know where to find food, and they don't know about new potential predators. They take off across fields, roads, and rivers trying to find their way back. Too often a death sentence!

The best outcome for the cat in your care is for you to seek a new, caring home, and to place siblings together if possible. Your cat's life depends on you!

## Meet Bandit

*Bandit is the 1,500th cat TNRd by Community Cats TNR. She is a spunky black and white beauty who shares an outdoor home with a large feline family and a caregiver who makes sure they all have food, water, shelter and attention every day.*



*Bandit with Dr. Alex Alvarado, and Veterinary Technicians Sandra and Jessica at Country Veterinary Clinic. Bandit was spayed and vaccinated on November 7, 2023.*

*The mission of Community Cats TNR is to work with caregivers who are providing food, water and shelter to the homeless, abandoned, free-roaming, feral cats that are unlikely to be adopted and need to be humanely trapped to get them to a veterinary clinic.*

**Visit our website: [www.communitycatstnr.org](http://www.communitycatstnr.org)**

**Like us on facebook**

"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated."

## THE NEED FOR SHELTER

Every year, the Community Cats TNR newsletter stresses the need for winter cat shelters! Winter is brutal for homeless cats. They need help throughout the winter months to find shelter that provides them protection from cold and wet weather. Without a good shelter, cats may become ill, and may suffer from frostbite on their ears, nose and paws.



A view of the interior of the Alley Cat winter cat shelter plan displaying double insulated walls, insulation under vinyl flooring and wind guard. Interior will be filled with straw.

There are many ideas and designs available for winter cat shelters, but all good designs share two qualities: strong insulation and minimal air space. The insulation is needed to trap the cats' body heat. Minimal air space is necessary so that cold air doesn't fill the empty space and chill the cats. Straw is the best insulating material to use inside the shelter. Blankets or towels will become wet, will freeze and draw body heat away from the cats. Cats will cozy or burrow into straw and keep their body heat from escaping.

Visit [www.alleycat.org](http://www.alleycat.org) or [www.bestfriends.org](http://www.bestfriends.org), or [www.neighborhoodcats.org](http://www.neighborhoodcats.org) and [www.communitycatstnr.org](http://www.communitycatstnr.org) for ideas and information on how to build shelters. Community Cats TNR volunteers have built numerous Alley Cat shelters during the past eleven years. Donations of 1/2" exterior plywood, luan or paneling, insulation board and fiberglass insulation, exterior latex paint in a "camouflage color," and 50 and 30 gallon storage bins are needed.

### RIGHT NOW, WE NEED:

- \* 1/2 INCH PLYWOOD (DOESN'T HAVE TO BE FULL SHEETS)
  - \* RIGID "BLUE BOARD" INSULATION—1/4", 1/2", 1" AND 2"
  - \* 50 AND 30 GALLON STORAGE BINS
- AND VOLUNTEERS TO BUILD THEM!!!**



A view of one finished Alley Cat shelter with rubber roof next to large totes of similar size ready to be constructed.

**THANK YOU STEVE, BUD, MONA, CLAUDIA, BOB AND RICHARD** for volunteering and building cat shelters. They are at various locations throughout the County keeping cats warm and dry!

### IN MEMORIUM

Community Cats TNR remembers those who loved and cared for cats, and thanks family and friends for contributions in 2023 honoring their memory:

Dori Astrowski	Mary Polcin
Billie Kelley	Zoro
Nicky & Penny	Henri & Mixie
Rita Yeck	

### Did you know that . . .

Research is on-going to find and test an injectible drug that will prevent ovulation from occurring in feral females. In other words—birth control for cats. It appears to still be a long way to reality, but stay tuned.

Many, maybe most, so called feral cats can be socialized to some extent. Kittens under six weeks and even up to 12 weeks are more likely to respond to gentle voice and petting. Food and toys help the socialization process greatly. Even older cats can learn to trust and find friendship with their caretaker. It is important, however, to let the cat decide how friendly she wants to be. Trying to pick up a wary cat will backfire. A frightened cat may inflict serious scratches or even bite. Encourage friendship over a long period of time if necessary.

## THIS AND THAT

**Website**—the Community Cats TNR website is being updated to become more phone friendly. It will soon be complete and can be accessed at [www.communitycatstnr.org](http://www.communitycatstnr.org).

**Yard sale**—the annual yard sale held on the last two weekends in August was the best ever. So many supporters donated a variety of gently used items and so many volunteers turned out to help set up, staff sale days and close the sale. Thanks to all!

**Mary Polcin**— Mary was one of the very first volunteers of Community Cats TNR. When the organizing group was meeting to develop mission, goals and protocol, and learn how to effectively carry out a humane trap-neuter-return program, Mary was the first to say “I can do that—I can trap cats.” She served as vice-president of the 501c3 board and weekly trapped, transported and cared for cats before and after surgery. She and her husband, Pete, took in many special needs cats and gave them the special care they required. Sadly, Mary passed away in February, 2023, and is missed by all who knew her.

**Fresh water**—Free-roaming cats have a real struggle finding fresh, clean water, especially during the winter. Maintaining proper hydration is critical to their overall health. For your pet cats and the outdoor cats, provide clean water daily and wash the bowls frequently. During the winter, a heated water bowl is ideal.

## EXPLORING NEEDS AND IDEAS

Throughout the year, as volunteers are trapping free-roaming, homeless, feral cats for spay/neuter surgery, health check and vaccinations, litters of kittens, too young for surgery, are present.

Ideally, these kittens could be caught as soon as weaned and placed in foster care for socialization and adoption. But, the rescue resources in Mason County are so often overwhelmed by the numbers, many of these kittens are left until they are big enough to trap-neuter-return. Sadly, many of them don’t make it.

**NEED**—a network of more foster homes and publicity, outlets and action for successful adoptions.

From time to time, Community Cats TNR is asked to help relocate outdoor cats that are in danger due to loss of caregiver or demolition of property. As explained on page one, relocation of homeless cats is risky business.

Right now, CCTNR is aware of a number of cats that are at high risk of survival.

**NEED**—new homes for these cats where they can securely be confined for a period of time so they know they are safe, fed and sheltered. So they will stay there after released to go outside.

*Ideas for volunteers and locations to address these needs?  
Please call (231) 845-7888.*

The success of the Community Cats TNR program relies upon donations and memorial contributions. Please consider making a donation today! Make check payable to COMMUNITY CATS TNR and mail to P. O. Box 384, Ludington, MI 49431 **THANK YOU!**

YES—I CAN HELP!

Name

Address

Phone Number

Comments

(Community Cats TNR is a 501c3 public charity. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.)

## What is Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)?

Homeless, free-roaming, abandoned, feral cats are:

- Humanely trapped by trained caregivers and volunteers.
- Transported to veterinary clinic
- Given a health check, parasite treatment, rabies and distemper vaccines
- Spayed or neutered
- Left ear tipped for identification
- Returned to colony to continue their better quality of life.

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This is Pirate—He is Bandit's brother. He was found with a very serious eye injury requiring surgery to remove his eye. He found a new home with the family that nursed him back to health.

**Thank You to . . .**

An anonymous foundation that awarded a grant again in 2023 to assist with the cost of spay and neuter.

To our 2023 veterinary partner—the doctors and staff of County Veterinary Clinic. Without their help, support, and professional expertise, Community Cats TNR would not exist.

To Dan and Laura, Claudia, Traci, Vicki, Theresa, Shelby and caregivers for patiently and humanely trapping and transporting cats.

To all who made direct and memorial monetary donations, donations of cat food at Family Fare, donations of building materials and straw for shelters, donations of a huge variety of items for the annual yard sale, and especially all those caregivers who continue to feed, water and shelter homeless cats.

**Food Donations**

The cost of cat (and dog) food has increased dramatically in the last few years. Family budgets are finding it difficult to feed the family pets and the unowned cats sitting on the back porch. Community Cats TNR is making every effort to help provide cat food to help caregivers continue to care for the TNRd cats in their care. Please consider depositing cat food (Purina Cat Chow is a favorite) in the box at Family Fare. In addition, donations can be made to Community Cats TNR at PO Box 384, Ludington, MI 49431 designated for food on the notation line. Another on-going NEED!

Cats are cats . . . the world over. These intelligent, peace loving, four-footed friends – who are without prejudice, without hate, without greed – may someday teach us something.

Lilian Jackson Braun

