

catmatters



Every Cat Matters. Every Person Counts. Spring 2011

“Kindness, Kinship, and Kittens: A Cat Tale of Compassion”

by Val Maloney



The Greater New Haven Cat Project, Inc. (GNHCP) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization formed in 1996 to address the problems of cat overpopulation, neglect and abuse in our area. GNHCP provides spay/neuter assistance for feral, stray and abandoned cats, and promotes responsible pet ownership through educational workshops. The organization is comprised solely of volunteers, and is funded through private donations, fund-raising events and grants.

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Megan Tokarski

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“A cat has nine lives” is a popular adage; this is a story of a life with nine cats, and a sister (Camille) and a brother (Amy) who care for them. Camille is a retired teacher and Amy is a retired

computer software designer and engineer from IBM/New York.

Because of their Mother’s untimely death, Camille, an infant at the time, and her sister were sent to foster homes. Amy (6 yrs.) was sent to the New Haven County Orphanage along with his two brothers. As the siblings reached 18 years they moved back home with their father. It’s clear their life experiences have given them a great sense of compassion which extends to their outdoor cats.

Today Camille and Amy live in their late father’s home where they care for several outdoor cats. They understand that stray and feral cats cannot fend for themselves so they make sure any cat that finds their yard receives the best care.

In 2002 three kittens were born in the grove in the back of their yard. They first spotted the kittens under the bird feeders looking for food. They called The Greater New Haven Cat Project (GNHCP) for help.

One of GNHCP’s volunteers trapped the kittens, brought them to be spayed/neutered and returned them to Camille and Amy’s yard. The kittens lived outdoors in



Stripes and Blackie at the window

a large insulated cardboard box on their back porch. Hoping not to get attached to the kittens, Camille named them Kitty 1, Kitty 2, and Kitty 3. However, Kitty 3 later required surgery and time recovering indoors where he has remained. Kitty 3, now called Big Guy, is Camille and Amy’s only indoor pet.

As all cat owners know, there is never a dull moment when you care for multiple cats. The antics of cats can be quite

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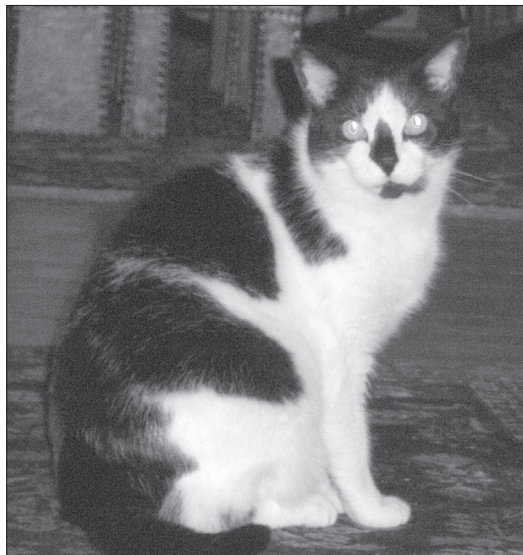
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entertaining. Camille was watching her kittens from her window and she never expected what would happen next. Right before her eyes a chicken hawk picked up one of the tiny kittens. Camille and Amy didn't hesitate to run outside and scare the hawk into dropping the kitten. The kitten had a cut on its head but Camille treated it and it survived the harrowing experience; harrowing not just for the kitten.

Camille and Amy's home is located within a half block of a very large apartment complex. In 2008 the apartments went through a major renovation and the residents were forced to move. Unfortunately, many residents left their cats behind. These unfortunate and starving cats strayed into Camille and Amy's yard where they would never be hungry again. Their luck had changed forever.

It wasn't long before litters of kittens began to appear. Camille was "overwhelmed and frantic" to get the cat colony under control. In her desperation she again called upon GNHCP for help. The greater part of the summer of 2009 was spent trap-

ping the kittens and having them spayed/neutered and immunized. GNHCP was able to adopt out some of the kittens and they were left with a colony of eight outdoor cats and no further pregnancies. Camille understands that trap/neuter/return is the best method of controlling the cat colony population. Although she was



Kitty 3

anxious during the trapping she knew the cats would be back in a couple of days spayed/neutered and immunized. Camille and Amy have a cat shel-

ter designed and donated by GNHCP fashioned out of a large plastic tote lined with sheet insulation and stuffed with straw. A two-room dog house in their yard provides shelter for multiple cats. And, their best cat shelter is a space under their back hall with a cat flap to the outside. A heat duct runs under the back hall which keeps the cats warm in winter. The cats come and go at will and are safe and warm.

All of the cats get along and come up to the deck twice daily for their meals. Most of the cats are not socialized but Stripes and Blackie are getting friendlier with Camille. These two cats climb onto a low roof and wait by a window for Camille to offer treats to them. Could it be long before they are brave enough to come into the house?

Camille wanted to reiterate her appreciation for the GNHCP volunteers who, without their help, would never have been able to get the cat colony under control. Camille and Amy send their special thanks to the volunteers who spent so much time trapping the cats and caring for them during their recovery.

Friend Us On Facebook

*by Val Maloney
edited by Katherine Conroy*



With more than 500 million active users, more than half of whom log on daily, Facebook recently surpassed Google as the world's most visited website. The average Facebook user has 130 friends and is connected to 80 community pages, groups or events. Facebook is used in many ways, from the historical, such as by protestors to coordinate and share information during the recent uprisings in the Middle East, to the romantic, by facilitating reconnection with a long lost "first love."

The Greater New Haven Cat Project's Facebook page can't recon-

nect you with your first love, but we can introduce you to our beautiful, adoptable cats that you will be sure to love. Please visit our Facebook group page—under the name "The Greater New Haven Cat Project, Inc.—to meet our gorgeous felines looking to "friend" you. You can click on a cat's photo to view his/her biographical information. You can also check out our calendar of upcoming events, share "What's on Your Mind" at our Discussion Board, and stay up-to-date on the latest GNHCP news, including recent adoptions and new arrivals. Please feel free to share and cross-post

our upcoming events and available cats on your wall.

You can also find our cats at www.gnhcp.org, www.petfinder.com and www.adoptapet.com. The Petfinder and Adopt-A-Pet websites have searchable databases of high-quality adoptable pets in need of loving homes. These websites help shelters across North America to increase the overall effectiveness of their pet adoption programs. When you visit either of these sites, select The Greater New Haven Cat Project from the searchable shelters menu, and soon you will be saying "Here, Kitty Kitty!"

Volunteer Spotlight: Anne Voloshin

by Megan Tokarski

It's no surprise that Anne, a native of Hamden, Connecticut, became a volunteer with The Greater New Haven Cat Project (GNHCP) when she returned to Connecticut in 2003, after many years living in Florida. Raised in a family of animal lovers, Anne is a passionate animal rights activist who considers it her privilege to advocate on behalf of animals on a variety of fronts. Her lifelong dedication and energy, which she hopes might encourage others to act to help protect the voiceless, is truly an inspiration.



Compass and Kitty

While caring for her ill mother, Anne first encountered GNHCP through a neighbor, who was feeding several feral/stray cats. Anne and the neighbor called upon GNHCP to trap and spay/neuter the cats. Then, following a 2005 move to a New Haven condominium, Anne again called upon GNHCP's Trap/Neuter/Return program when she discovered a significant feral/stray cat population in the area. GNHCP helped Anne trap and adopt out three kittens that were discovered in the condominium community, as well as 13 cats living in a colony and cared for, at the time, by a nearby resident. When the resident became ill, Anne assumed responsibility for feeding his cat colony and

continues to do so today. In addition, Anne discovered a cat colony behind a New Haven government office and feeds the colony on weekends to supplement weekday feedings by a government employee. Despite unprecedented snow last winter, Anne was remarkably able to maintain a regular feeding schedule for her colonies, with only one missed feeding due to inclement weather. She personally assumes the full costs of caring for her two cat colonies, affectionately referring to it as her "expensive hobby."

A member of more than 100 animal rights causes, Anne spends approximately two hours each day on the computer researching, signing petitions, and writing letters to legislators, prosecutors and judges. Anne is also active with the Humane Society of the United States, and represents the organization at New Haven's Pit Bull Awareness Day with posters and flyers speaking out against dog fighting. Anne has worked her way as far as the Department of Agriculture on behalf of this cause, which she identifies as a significant problem in New Haven, but she has not yet gained traction. Her volunteer work with GNHCP focuses primarily on fundraising, and due to her efforts, GNHCP's fundraisers have become more successful.

Anne also worked with an alderman in New Haven researching methods to make the New Haven Animal Shelter a "no-kill shelter." Although the economic downturn has slowed action on this issue, Anne points to Delaware, which recently passed legislation putting it firmly on the path to become the first "no-kill state" in the country, as an exemplar for Connecticut. In addition, Anne is trying to establish a national animal abuser registry, pass legislation against animal dissections in public schools, and is active with Missourians for the

Protection of Dogs in support of legislation outlawing puppy mills in the state. Anne has direct experience with this issue, having adopted and raised a puppy mill dog many years ago, which resulted in more than \$15,000 in veterinary bills to treat the physical damage inflicted by the inhumane puppy mill conditions.

Although Anne formerly considered herself "a dog person"—having owned dogs for much of her life—her return to New Haven and introduction to the care of cat colonies has led her to realize that she is also "a cat person." Back in 2003, Anne rescued a cat from her neighbor's colony, and Kitty became one of her favorite pets. It would be several years before Anne discovered that Kitty, who she believed to be female was actually male, and by this time, the name Kitty had stuck. Although Kitty passed away a couple of years ago, Anne keeps busy with her 11-year-old Himalayan, Compass, her two feral cat colonies and numerous animal rights causes. GNHCP, and animals everywhere, are fortunate to have Anne on their side.

Memorial Contributions

In Memory of Sweet Pea
- Pauline Rossi

In Memory of "Man" & Jamie, Beloved Forever
- Barbara Szirbik

In Memory of "Mom" Bailey
- Penn's Crew at Pier 1

In Memory of Shadow, Little Girl, Little Boy & Penny
- Judy & Marlo Bedini

In Memory of Molly Kat
- Ruth Rutlin

Donations

The Greater New Haven Cat Project, Inc. (GNHCP), begun in 1996, works to combat the cat overpopulation dilemma with a comprehensive spay/neuter program that focuses on the numerous feral colonies and abandoned cats of Connecticut. We also locate excellent, stable homes for the friendly cats and kittens that are found or abandoned in the streets and houses of the Greater New Haven area. Finally, we offer other programs such as The Tommy Fund, Barn Home Project and regular operations at our Center. If you would like to aid and abet our burgeoning mission, then please consider one of the following options for your gracious donation:

Basic Donation:

With an annual donation of \$25, you will receive copies of our newsletter, *Catmatters* twice a year.

Population Donation:

With an annual donation of \$45, you will receive a copy of our newsletter, *Catmatters*, twice yearly as well as a 10% discount on all GNHCP merchandise or tickets for a GNHCP fundraising event. Most importantly, this type of gift enables GNHCP to spay one female cat and to promote a healthy, humane approach to the cat overpopulation problem.

Gift Donation:

With a minimum donation of \$25, this gift is a great idea for a birthday or holiday for the fellow or sister cat lover in your life. The recipient will receive an acknowledgment on your behalf in addition to our newsletter, *Catmatters*, for one year.

Memorial Donation:

You can recognize a special animal or person in your life with a donation that will help other cats.

Additional Contribution:

Any additional donations received through our newsletter will help to fund our spay/neuter program, The Tommy Fund (for extraordinary veterinary expenses) or operations at our Center.

Foster Cat Sponsorship:

With a donation of \$125, you will receive our newsletter, *Catmatters*, for one year, a photo and update on your sponsored cat and a 10% discount on GNHCP merchandise or tickets for a GNHCP fundraising event.

Please sign me up for a:

Basic Donation (\$25) : _____ Population Donation (\$45) : _____ Gift Donation (\$25) : _____ Sponsor a Foster Cat (\$125): _____

Memorial Donation: \$ _____ In memory of: _____

Contribution to GNHCP: Spay/Neuter Program \$ _____ Tommy Fund \$ _____ Center expenses \$ _____

Name _____

Full Address _____

Thank you for your support of our efforts. All donations are tax deductible.

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