



# Catalyst for Cats

A Non-Profit Organization Dedicated to Altering the Future for Ferals

## NEWSLETTER

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### From the Founder

## They still need our food, our help and our love

When your life has been consumed with helping felines through the Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR) approach and associated rescue work for over 25 years, it is impossible to not respond to a situation when called upon. This was clearly the case with a feral mom and her kittens that were brought to our attention recently in Carpinteria.

Read the story of a cat named Stray on page 3.

Otherwise, though, we are settling nicely into the era of our new mission statement. Even though we have officially disbanded Catalyst's TNR program, we spay and neuter as needed—such as when a cat is under our Tiny Tim Fund (for medical care) and has not been neutered, or a call comes in from someone with a cat in a trap and no other options are available.

Of course we no longer do hundreds as in the past, but a few dozen. Our work definitely continues to aid felines, primarily in the North County. We've been instrumental in successfully responding to calls regarding spay/neuter availability, medical and

behavioral questions, and general information as well as supplying food for our many feeding stations.

Our group of volunteers manages to feed approximately 350 felines at more than 25 feeding stations daily, and the feeding program is going well for the most part. In addition, when newcomers show up at our feeding stations, we TNR them in order to re-

stabilize the colony.

This tends to be an ongoing issue and part of the many challenges for feral cat organizations. It is very important to feed properly. Please look over our explanation of how to feed properly on page 4.

We are most grateful to all who support this work. Once spayed and neutered the cats in our colonies live good lives for many years despite the challenges they face. We do our best to make their lives as comfortable as possible. Your financial support is what allows us to do that and we are most grateful.

*Randi Fairbrother*



*Photo by Amy Smith*

*Enjoying the "Life of...Milo": This five-week old tame kitten was rescued and fostered by Catalyst's Amy Smith in Santa Maria. Amy describes her as "all pleasure and fun." He is adorable and Amy named him Milo. Milo has already been spoken for and will be introduced to his new home with first-time parents and new home buyers in September. A very happy and lucky kitten.*

# In Appreciation

🐾 To all who show kindness to animals.

🐾 To **Belinda Burns** – despite working full time, she starts early in the morning by feeding a colony. Using her organizational skills she dedicates many hours during the week and on her days off to feed, foster and relocate felines. She is also the liaison for the Santa Ynez Valley volunteers.

🐾 The donations of cat food have made a significant impact on the amount of food we purchase. We are most grateful for your generosity

🐾 To **Beth Rushing** – for fostering strays and never letting us down when needed.

🐾 To those who give monthly – it's good to know you're there.

🐾 To **Reese Thompson** – for cooperating with the need to change a feeding station, both in terms of time and place. The transition is going well.

🐾 Aware of the urgent need and repercussions of the lack of a TNR program in North County, Santa Barbara-based **Animal Shelter Assistance Program (ASAP)** has designated **Mike Fontaine** as their Community Cats Coordinator to spearhead a TNR program in North County. We welcome this news most heartily. We know the challenges and will do our best to assist him. This directly benefits felines, prevents litters from being born, and significantly eases the burden of all the feline rescue groups countywide.

🐾 To the team **Amy Smith** has assembled to feed daily at many of our feeding stations in Santa Maria: **Suanne Canus, Cathy Farrell, Javier Hernandez, Cara Houghton, Jessica Leyva, Maureen Perry, Kathryn Pirky, Al Ruiz, Ernie Rodriguez, Orlando Saoit, Mas Shinomiya, Amy Smith, Jay Tenda, Joyce Wilson and Richard Wilson.**



*Leno, a neutered male from one of our feeding stations, TNR'd by Debbie Merry, was likely struck by a motor vehicle and suffered a partially severed tongue and several head injuries. He was treated at Pet Services Emergency Hospital in Orcutt, Orlando, his caregiver, is fostering him.*

## Tributes & Memorials

Each one of these names represents a level of love and caring to those remaining.

### In Honor of:

My beloved **Charley** – by Charlene Maltzman

**Randi Fairbrother**, my long time friend since she was two (and I three) – by Ethel Barclay

**Randi Fairbrother**, my cousin – by Sally Troscher

**Foster** – by Margery Nicolson

**Romeo** – by Allison Coleman

**Rufus** – by Barbara Calado

### In Memory of:

**Itty** – by Wilma Titus

**Max** – by Barbara Calado

**Molly** – by Patricia Massette

**Sammy** – by Nan Cisney

**Skeeter** – by Belinda Burns

**Sweety** – She was a bright-eyed, very pretty, but shy, grey tabby at one of our feeding sites. A couple of weeks ago I noticed Sweety was off her feed. I hoped to trap her to take her to the vet, but she seemed so uncomfortable that I decided not to stress her further. The next day I found her in the neighbors' yard, where she had passed. I know it's all part of life, but it doesn't make me care any less because she was feral. Sweety was just that, a little sweetie, and she is definitely missed. – by Cara Houghton

## Wish List

- We are in dire need of a **feeder or feeders for a site near Buellton**. It is a five-minute drive from Buellton and would take another five minutes to feed. Please call Belinda Burns at 688-6369.
- We welcome all **donations of food**.
- **Trappers** needed to assist with the newly formed Community Cats Program, especially in North County. Call Mike Fontaine (805) 450-8756.

# A very shy mom discovers a remarkable support system

By Randi Fairbrother

When Keith noticed a cat under his porch in Carpinteria, he wanted to be responsible and get it neutered. He rented a trap from Animal Services, but the feline visitor wouldn't go near it. When he returned the trap the second time, Animal Services gave him my number.

By the time we connected, and with the history he gave me, I determined this mom had dropped her litter about a week prior to his call. A tabby with lovely white markings, she appeared to be almost a kitten herself. Keith named her Stray, and she was ravenously hungry.

Delivering our Big Gun trap to the site, I hid in the car while I watched Keith feed her. She barely ventured out from under the porch to eat. *Catalyst* old timers may recall the Big Gun was handmade by Jim Smock, husband of Berka Smock, former owners of the Redwood Inn in Santa Barbara and founder of the Ten Lives Foundation. Berka taught me how to trap.

Stray continued her reluctance to go near the trap I'd set up, but I reassured Keith she would eventually follow her kittens into the cage for the food. It took a long time with a lot of patience on Keith's part, but finally three healthy kittens followed mom out from their safe place under the porch. Stray had fed her kittens so well that they were not that interested in the food at first, but after a few days they began to enter the cage for food. I received daily reports and questions from Keith.

Keith fed Stray early in the morning before she brought her kittens out—she appeared to be letting them “sleep in.” After several weeks he called me early in one morning and said he had caught her. Now it was time for the next phase. Because she was nursing, she needed to dry up before being spayed. I called Beth Rushing and she agreed to foster her to allow time for that.

It was easy to catch the kittens. We approached ASAP to get them into their very successful Tiny Lions program for socializing kittens for adoption. Because the shelter had a serious situation of upper respiratory infections raging at time, they arranged for the kittens to go directly to a foster home to avoid contact with the respiratory infection. How many



*Now You See Me, Now You Don't:* Staying out of sight under a porch was Stray's main talent, along with caring for three new kittens. With patience she was trapped and brought into a coordinated system of fostering and socialization for herself and family.

organizations are able to provide that? My guess, very few. We are very fortunate ASAP has the resources available to provide such excellent service.

Fast forward: Stray has been spayed and is happy to be home, living just about a perfect and natural life. She sleeps in a cat house on the porch (not under the porch), and neither she nor Keith could be happier. The kittens (one male and his two sisters) have graduated to the shelter proper and will soon be ready for surgery and adoption. I trust their luck will continue and they will find “forever homes” without much delay.

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## Ask Debbie: Dealing With Ants

*We've received many complaints regarding ants at feeding stations. We asked Debbie Merry to share how she copes with this problem:*

“First pick up all the bowls and sweep the area well, not leaving any morsels of food anywhere. I use Bayer brand ant spray in the gallon jug (from Home Depot or Walmart). Totally saturate the entire area, including fence lines, garage doors, sides of buildings or whatever surrounds the feeding area in about a three-to-five-foot radius. It dries within minutes. The best time to do this is in the warm part of the day. It will last for several weeks, depending on the weather, but needs to be repeated after a rain. I hope that helps.”



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**Every litter adds to the problem  
Every spay/neuter adds to the solution!**

## A Guide to Proper Feeding

**F**eeding properly avoids many problems. Daylight hours are preferred to avoid the evening creatures from showing up.

Make a sound they will recognize as feeding time, such as shaking the kibble, or calling to them. If you drive to the site, they quickly recognize the sound of the car. If feeding in your yard, opening the door works the same way.

It's best to establish a routine time to feed. You want them waiting for you. This allows you to take a quick census and check if any are injured, sick, or if there are any newcomers. Do not leave food out unattended. Remove the dishes and any food left over (unlikely). It's generally eaten within 15–20 minutes. Take this time to interact with them. Give them names and don't be surprised if they wrap themselves around your feet. Sometimes they allow you to pet them, but they do not like to be picked up.

Ideally it is best to feed in separate dishes. Paper

plates work well because they are easily removed and do not require washing. It also makes it easier to trap any newcomers that may show up if they do not eat in a communal bowl. Also, if medication needs to be given, it is easier to dispense. For antibiotics, which are usually prescribed twice a day, the dose can be doubled and given once a day.

A stabilized colony tends to keep other cats at bay. If food is left out for hours at a time, or at night, the colony will never become stabilized. The mothers will not bring their kittens out until you leave and will not be seen until they are too old for removal and adoption. Newcomers will be encouraged and you will have no idea how many or even who you are feeding. Many other creatures will be attracted to the food, such as opossums, skunks, and raccoons. It thus becomes increasingly costly. And worst of all, you will be adding to the problem, which will never be solved. Finally, proper feeding results in fewer complaints from neighbors.