

# projectpurr

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nonprofit volunteer feral cat advocate organization

**Project Purr Board Members:** Margaret Rinner, Director; Lynne Achterberg;  
E.V. Sharp, DVM; Suzanne Haberman; Sheri Benkosky; Lucinda Swan

*Project Purr is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit volunteer organization dedicated to humanely decreasing the feral cat population by providing funds towards our lowcost feral cat/kitten spay/neuter program in Santa Cruz County, California. Project Purr advocates Trap/Neuter/Return (TNR) as the preferred method of feral cat population control as opposed to Trap and Kill.*

Something to MEOW About....

## September Sale SUCCESS



A huge THANK YOU to all of Project Purr's wonderful hardworking and dedicated volunteers, donators and shoppers. The September Sale 2005 earned Project Purr over \$20,000.00! Our biggest fall sale ever!!!! This assures the continued funding of our feral cat spay/neuter program at Adobe Animal Hospital in Santa Cruz.

A project of this magnitude requires dedication and many hours of hard work. Our thanks to the many volunteers who have given generously of their time to make this such an amazing success!

Thank you to Alice Weigel, Pat Lamboy, Isabelle Magnin, Jean Michel Trivi, Paige & Roger Connelly, Thea Danforth, Brenda Messenger, Myra May, John Henriksen, Cheryl Henriksen, Sue Hill, Johanna Hill, Todd Connors, Shirley Coleman, Marilyn Morden, Penny Huntsinger, Cheryl Morden, Sheri Benkosky, Nancy Keck, Ann Riddle, Deborah Moser, Sharon Sands, Jimmy Smith, Teresa Peterson, Marianne Mastopietro, Connie Marshall, Tom & Peggy Stames, Roz Murphy, Joan Dotz, Linda Eberhart, Amy VanMeter, Joanne Tanner & Doug, Ben & Lisa Lewis, Cindy McDonald, Susie McCullough, Sharon Wright, John Pianavilla, Steve Walker, Phil Kaplan, Pat Moore, Sandy Gembola, Paul Costa and Bob Achterberg.

And many thanks to the people who always give generously to keep the hard workers working by providing YUMMY food and drink; Costco,

Emily's Bakery, Nub Chai, Staff of Life, The Buttery, Trader Joe's and, as always, Gayle Ortiz of Gayle's Bakery.

We couldn't do it without our huge and handy storage facility that is always so generously donated, the kind owner-granted permission to use the perfect big field, the donation of a security guard for the weekend, the clean-up and removal helper, and the expert mower who knocks down the tall grasses! Many thanks to EVERY-ONE!!!!

(So very many, many people come together to make this fundraiser successful. If we have accidentally forgotten anyone, our sincerest apologies... OR if you'd like to get involved, please let us know! )

## Facts:

A female cat just having a litter of kittens and still nursing, within two weeks can come back in heat and breed again and while she's weaning her first litter, can be giving birth to her second litter.

And male cats are just as prolific...they can breed as early as four months of age, up to seven or eight female cats a day, every day and they take their job very seriously!

**Stop the Litters!**  
**Spay/Neuter Those Critters!!!**

## Project Purr is an all volunteer nonprofit FERAL cat/kitten rescue organization

Project Purr has a FERAL cat low cost spay/neuter Trap/Neuter/Return (TNR) program for residents of Santa Cruz County, California available at Adobe Animal Hospital.

Project Purr is a resource for FERAL cat colony caretakers and those who want to learn more about TNR or implement TNR programs.

Project Purr is **not** an animal shelter or cat adoption agency, although Project Purr does sometimes have cats/kittens available for adoption.

- Due to the lack of enough funding Project Purr has **no** shelter facility. We foster as many cats/kittens in our own homes as space and time allows... usually these are cats we have trapped and rescued ourselves.

- Due to lack of funds Project Purr is **not** a spay/neuter program for domestic/pet cats.

- Due to lack of funds Project Purr is **not** a feral cat removal or re-homing service, although we do assist with information/equipment for people willing to do the right thing and who can facilitate it themselves.

# Boo the Nose... The Feral That Wasn't

I garden at a friend's house. She has a large, wonderful yard full of wildlife and flowers. There were fruit trees and raised beds when we started our vegetable garden, but most of the back of the property was covered over with ivy and brambles. This area had been a hot bed of feral cat activity in the past.

As we cleared, one face kept popping up. Or popping over the fence, to be more precise. I nicknamed him Boo, since he was scared off so easy. We never got much of a look at him, but over time he seemed to become brave and walk past while we were gardening. But the minute we would move, he would be off like a shot.

One time, we were able to get a good view of him, and noticed he hadn't been neutered. This set in motion my plan to catch him and have him neutered. I called Project Purr and listened to the message on how to go about taking him in. I called the vet and got the appointment. Armed with kibble, I went out to the garden with a determined mind. And I got my cat. Only, he wasn't the screaming, scratching beast I imagined. I walked up to him, blocked his path and picked him up. I took him into our garden house, and fed him. He ate, then licked himself and walked off. Maybe he was sick, and that was why I could catch him. But the next day, there he was on the fence. I walked up, put food down, and he ate. I picked him up, put him into the cat trap, and took him home to prepare him for his trip to the vet the next day.

This cat that had been on his own for



several years, was a 6-toed softy with a white star on his chest. I was nervous about his being ill, but he passed all the tests at the vet, was neutered and turned loose again in our garden. He now is fed daily, and allows us to pet him. He has a place to sleep out of the weather, and two other cats to hang with. Amazingly, they had all worked out the property rights of way before we humans became involved. No hissing or growling. None of the stuff we were worried about. He is now a contented, cared for cat with a home. It may not be a conventional home, but he has food, and a dry place to sleep. He still has his freedom, but the worries are gone for one little cat. Thank you Project Purr for helping this feral that ended up being a little lost stray.

--Sara Mikles

## Joanne's BIG Run

Long before dawn, a bus transported the runners down the coast to Pfeiffer State Park for the start of the Big Sur Marathon. Joanne Curby competed with other athletes from around the world in one of the top 5 marathons in the world and the best in North America as the run along the western edge of the world began!

After training for many months in preparation for the 26.2 mile course, Joanne, a longtime Project Purr supporter and Project Purr kitten adopter, ran past such beautiful spots as Point Lobos, Hurricane Point, Bixby Bridge, and finally reached Carmel ... bettering her own time from the previous two years running... and raising well over \$700.00 in pledges for Project Purr!

Hurray for Joanne!

## Deliberating on Donations...

Wondering what to do with that cool "odd" or "old" treasure from your great -aunt that just doesn't quite fit into your life anymore?

Project Purr has great resources for finding that sentimental, might-be-valuable, special thing a new home!! "It" finds a home where it is appreciated, you get a tax deduction... plus the satisfaction of knowing Project Purr will receive the true monetary value to use for kitty rescue.

That feels good all the way around.

Project Purr receives lots of cool "odd and old" treasures such as vintage jewelry, Rolex watches, paintings, textiles, furniture and even an occasional BMW!!! Finding homes and caring for cast-offs is what Project Purr does best...whether it's cats or STUFF!

Call us to schedule any special donations you may have — 423-MEOW.

## Never Again

The tragedy inflicted by Hurricane Katrina was compounded by the failure of federal, state and local authorities to include animal companions in their disaster planning. As a result, many people chose to risk their own lives in order to remain with their pets when rescuers refused to take these animals to safety along with their human guardians. In the weeks since Katrina struck, volunteers have subse-

quently risked their health and safety by going into storm ravaged neighborhoods to rescue dogs, cats, horses, birds, and other abandoned animals.

In order to make certain this does not happen again, Representatives Tom Lantos (D-CA), Christopher Shays (R-CT) and Barney Frank (D-CT) have introduced federal legislation known as the "Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act" (H.R. 3858) to ensure

state and local authorities take into account people with companion animals during future natural disasters. The PETS Act would require that state and local disaster preparedness plans required for Federal Emergency Management Agency funding include provisions for household pets and service animals.

--from the Doris Day Animal League  
Animal Advocacy Newsletter

# Do You Need A Kitten ??

This is a question I ask every time I meet a nice responsible person. Many laugh and I know it's because "need" isn't exactly the right word... or maybe it is. Our hearts need to express themselves by giving loving care to something other than ourselves and our hearts crave love in return. What could be better than a cat or two to fill these needs.

I foster kittens. Litter after litter. Many are from feral mama cats. We spay the mama kitty and take the kittens, get them healthy, socialized and neutered and find them loving homes. Many of my foster kittens were abandoned or discarded by the road or dumped at a shelter. Either way these kittens will not survive without intervention of a rescue group or some kind soul.

Is it difficult time consuming work? Yep. But, between fostering kittens and trapping feral cats (that we spay/neuter) I feel like I'm working both ends of a serious problem. I rescue kittens that are

already born and I'm stopping more kittens from being born into a world without enough homes and a world that currently thinks euthanasia is the answer to this horrible problem.

The most important parts of all rescues are the permanent loving homes and the donations of money and saleable items for our

rummage sale. Without money we can't pay for the kittens' vet bills or afford all the spay and neutering and without homes I can't continue to rescue. I promise every kitten I foster that I will find it a good home or I will keep it myself. I have fostered over 230 kittens and have ended up keeping only four of them. I cry in my driveway every time one goes to a new home. I cry because I'm so happy for them and because by the time they are old enough to be adopted (about 10 weeks) I've nurtured them for a month or two and know them so well and love them deeply.

A huge heartfelt thank you to all of you

who have adopted kittens and cats from me and also from Project Purr and a huge thank you for those who don't have time or space for another kitten but have donated money.

I have a litter of four unweaned kittens right now. They should be ready for their new forever home about the end of October.

**Anybody need a kitten?**

-- Lucinda

## How Many Times Can We Say "Thank You"???

Project Purr's successful relationship with PURRR (Providing Un-adoptables with Rescue, Rehabilitation, and Residence) continues as early age spay/neuter surgeries, medications, dental cleaning and extractions, eye conditions, X-rays and ultrasounds are needed to keep our many rescued cats/kittens on the healthy road.

PURRR defrays many of Project Purr's veterinary expenses at Creekside Veterinary Hospital for several months each year. This happy relationship, in turn, allows Project Purr to cover the expenses of the feral cat spay/neuter program at Adobe Animal Hospital.

How many times can both Project Purr and all the kitties say "Thank You"???

Project Purr loves PURRR.....RRRR.

## In Memorium

Jane Wilhelms, professor of computer science and an expert in computer graphics and animation, died of cancer on March 26 in Santa Cruz. She was 56.

Jane began her career as a biologist, teaching anatomy and physiology for many years at junior colleges. Much of her work in computer graphics, including techniques for animal modeling and animation, drew on her background in biology.

She joined the UCSC faculty in 1985, immediately after completing her M.S. and Ph.D. in computer science at UC Berkeley. She earned a B.A in zoology and later an M.A. in biology at Stanford University. Her experience in computer graphics and animation included working as a consultant programmer at Lucasfilm, where the Star Wars

movies were produced, while she was a graduate student at UC Berkeley

The use of computer graphics to help other scientists visualize their data was an area in which Wilhelms made significant contributions at UCSC, serving as project director of the UCSC Scientific Visualization Laboratory.

Because of Jane's knowledge and love of animals, she chose Project Purr, as one of several animal rescue organizations, to become the beneficiary of her retirement IRA account.

Project Purr has received approximately an \$18,000.00 monetary gift from her estate.

Now her caring will continue - through Project Purr's caring for ever more cats and kittens.



## More Facts:

Blinking is a very powerful communication as a reassurance signal and is commonly used between cats when they are sitting or lying in a hunched-up, sphinx-like position. Blinks are used to relax house cats, feral cats, and even tigers in the wild...it is important to put them at their ease by allowing them to read the signals that tell them you are not a threat. (It is also a great way to say "I love you" to your favorite feline companion.)

A continuous stare has the opposite effect on cats. It is threatening and unsettling and is used effectively by cats in maintaining territorial distance. This explains why a cat that enters a room of strangers, all of whom are cat lovers except for one, will choose to approach the non-cat lover, the only one who is not staring at him.

# No-Kill Movement... It Takes A Community

A decade ago, the idea of finding a home for every healthy shelter dog and cat would have sounded like science fiction. Now we are poised to make it a reality. But whether you call it No More Homeless Pets, No Kill, or other things, in a nutshell, the challenge is to build a humane “society.”

To meet that challenge, we need to get the community excited, to energize people for the task at hand. Everybody needs to be a part of the mission. And the measure of how much we succeed—or fail—is a function of what happens to the cat living in an alley in our community, whether the business downtown adopts a ‘pets at work’ policy, whether landlords will help our lifesaving goals by saying yes to renters with dogs, whether our neighbors adopt imperfect pets because they believe in our lifesaving mission. It is about the cafes, the storefronts, the squares, the neighborhoods. That is how we will be measured. And that is

## The Amazing Feline Tongue

Cats drink by converting their long tongues into spoons. The tip of the tongue is curled backward to create a hollow shape that acts like the bowl of a spoon. Then he dips this into the water and flips it back and up, toward the open mouth. Small quantities of liquid are flicked toward the rear of the mouth. The cat swallows after every fourth or fifth lap, when enough liquid has accumulated at the back of the mouth. The barbs, or papillae, on the tongue soak up the liquid like a sponge. They are raspy and are also designed to rip the meat off of bones. (If you have been licked by your feline friend, you already knew this.)

The backward-pointing barbs serve to move food and water into the cat’s mouth, but they can also make it difficult for the cat to remove a piece of string or yarn from its mouth. (Always check your house and Kitty’s toys for potential hazards.) Some other uses for this incredible little bit of feline anatomy are: To wash and clean the cat’s fur (a washcloth). To smooth the fur when ruffled (a comb). To dry the fur when wet (a towel). To pant when the cat is hot (an air conditioner). To additionally cool the cat by covering his fur with saliva which then evaporates.

what it takes to save all the lives at risk—regardless of how big or how small your shelter is.

What confuses a lot of people in this movement, what stops them before they start is the completely false idea that to end the killing of healthy and sick homeless pets, you need to start with big bucks and big shelters. That helps, it helps a lot, but it is putting the cart before the horse. And that’s not so great an idea when our cart and our horse have a long way to go.

To reach our goals, we must first focus our energies, not on building a shelter, but on rebuilding our relationship with the community.

If No Kill is going to become a reality in our hometowns, the ethic, the beliefs, the desire must penetrate the community. No-Kill may be defined by what happens to the animals within the halls of the shelter, but it can only be achieved by what happens outside of them. How much the lifesaving ethic is embraced in the cafes, storefronts, squares and neighborhoods. By how much we build our image by reflecting the values that people hold dear, and in turn expand the resources to save more and more lives at risk.

Let me give you one example. Jamie had never heard of feral cats. All Jamie knew was that after she fed the hungry stray in her yard, she started noticing others — all of them hungry. So she started feeding them. And she wanted to have them spayed.

She managed to catch them — one by one. And since she paid full price, over \$200 for an exam, vaccinations, and spay/neuter, she could only afford one cat every two weeks.

When the local SPCA opened a feral cat spay/neuter clinic and began loaning out traps for free, Jamie went on to trap and alter over 120 cats in one year alone. And a team of 70 “Jamies” put together a neonatal foster

network that reduced kitten deaths by 85% throughout the city.

Jamie exists in every community. We need to tap into that energy, that compassion, that desire to do the right thing—and harness it. We build a humane shelter within our walls. We become a humane society by embracing the landlords, merchants, and feral cat caretakers in our communities — and energizing them for the lifesaving effort ahead.

It is absolutely essential for the humane movement to embrace the community we serve. We cannot save the lives of animals without people’s help.

If you reflect the community’s values, if you are doing a good job for animals, if you tell them about it, and then ask for their help. They do help. They want to be a part of the effort. Jamie traps cats for spay/neuter. Landlords make their apartments “pet friendly.” Others give donations.

Whether its pets in rental housing, dogs at work, cats in alleys, or finding homes for older, sick, injured or traumatized pets in our shelter, if we are going to save lives, we need four things: desire, creativity, flexibility, and most importantly, community support.

The big, beautiful shelter, the expanding resource base, the successes will all be a byproduct of that, not their cause.

**About the author:** Nathan Winograd is the Executive Director of the Tompkins County SPCA in Ithaca, New York. Nathan has been instrumental in developing groundbreaking programs for feral cats for more than ten years at institutions like Stanford University and the San Francisco SPCA. Winograd has also worked with the Animal Legal Defense Fund, the Greyhound Protection League, the Palo Alto Humane Society, Farm Sanctuary, Alley Cat Allies and the ASPCA. In a former life, Nathan was a criminal prosecutor.



# Project Purr Feral Cat Spay/Neuter Program

An affordable low-cost spay/neuter veterinary package for **FERAL** cats and kittens is **NOW** available in Santa Cruz at Adobe Animal Hospital as a direct result of a 18-year liaison with Project Purr, a non-profit, no-kill all-volunteer feral cat advocate organization.

## Eartipping

Eartipping is the universal sign of a neutered feral cat. Even the famous cats of Rome, Italy (the place with perhaps the most feral cats... estimated to number between 250,000 and 350,000... organized in about 2,000 colonies) near the ancient Coliseum are eartipped after neutering! The procedure involves removing a quarter-inch in a straight line cut off the tip of the cat's left ear. This is done while the cat is anesthetized (microchipping is still too expensive for most situations)

When Project Purr first started working with feral cats, we avoided eartipping as it seemed like a kind of mutilation. But everything else we tried failed. Taking photos of the neutered cats was fine if you saw the cats often and could easily tell similar-looking ones apart. But in colonies where the cats were all black and white and the caretaker caught random glimpses, the photos were useless. We tried tattooing the inner ears, but then it was impossible to tell at a distance whether the cat had the tattoo and needed to be trapped or not.

We were won over to eartipping when we had a cat operated on who had already been spayed, but not eartipped. Fortunately, the veterinarian saw the scar and stopped the procedure. Nonetheless, the cat was unnecessarily trapped and anesthetized with all the corresponding stress.

*There may still be rare exceptions when eartipping is not needed (microchipping is still too expensive for most situations) but in the vast majority of cases, it ends up being to the cat's benefit to be easily recognized as neutered. Project Purr currently has in place a system where we are notified when eartipped cats are brought into shelters and we are able to try to locate the caretaker. Eartipping Saves Lives!*

This program is available to all residents of Santa Cruz County. It is an amazing accomplishment that a grassroots organization and the helpless, unowned feral cats should jointly achieve this benchmark towards the ethical treatment of all animals!

Adobe's program offers quality care to the cats through FeLV testing, spay/neuter, vaccines (FVRCP/distemper and rabies) and **mandatory** eartipping. Feral cats must at least 4 months of age and be presented for surgery in individual humane traps! Only healthy (no abscesses, upper respiratory or wounds) cats can participate in our low-cost spay/neuter program.

**Your** responsibility is \$25.00 for each cat payable to Adobe Animal Hospital.

Project Purr pays the remaining balance for each cat!!!

Call **831/423-MEOW** or visit

our informational website at [www.projectpurr.org](http://www.projectpurr.org) for details. Detailed information packets, **both** in English and Spanish, are available where traps are loaned.

Project Purr's community oriented program would not be possible without all of Adobe's doctors, entire staff and hospital generously donating their time and services. Together Project Purr and Adobe have altered over 4000 cats/kittens and given assistance to thousands of others. Ultimately, this means lower stray intake rates for the shelters, tremendous cost savings for taxpayer-funded animal control, less competition for homes for adoptable cats, and less euthanasia for all cats!

***Each abandoned/feral cat or kitten altered brings us closer to ending the suffering and reaching the goal of no more unwanted homeless animals.***



### **Four Tiger Babies Will Work for FOOD!**

*Need organic garden, barn or backyard -*

*Have been spayed and neutered, tested and vaccinated.*

*If You Have A Barn Or Stable  
or even a Backyard*

## **You Can Help Save A Cat!**

Project Purr almost always has cats that do not wish to be pets. These independent cats are beautiful and healthy. They would love to pay their own way by taking care of your rodent problems in exchange for food and shelter. The cats will be tested,

altered, vaccinated and ear-tipped prior to placement.

Your tax deductible donation to Project Purr helps cover the cost of their veterinary care.

Please call us at 423-6369 for more information.



## Animals In Our Hearts

Keep your animals for their lifetime! Honor your bond of love and promise of care.

When you acquire an animal, choose carefully for compatibility with your lifestyle, finances, personality and family needs to help ensure a commitment to lifetime love and care.

Pets are not a convenience. They are a commitment for life...and bring a lifetime of love. Please see animals through the eyes of love...not ego, status, pride, greed or convenience.

Animals bring us great love and devotion and deserve no less in return. Those of us fortunate enough to love and be loved by animals know the exquisite joy and quiet fulfillment that comes from animals living in our hearts. We know there is no turning back from loving animals intensely once we experience this bond.

Animals and their love stay in our souls, once we've let them in. And we are better for it, more complete, more whole, more compassionate, and often transformed.

Loving this much, we also know the searing pain of losing them. And we know the frustration, the overwhelmingness and compassion fatigue inherent in rescue and sheltering work, and the awareness of the devastation of wildlife by human ignorance. In loving so much, we open ourselves to profound intimacy, and also to pain.

If you give of your life energy to help animals, professionally or as a volunteer, you know the urges of compassion; you know the driving desire to help. And you know the pain of seeing how many more there are, and the pain of realizing you can't save them all. And you know the joy and fulfillment that comes from helping and saving the ones you can.

—from Teresa Wagner's great website [www.animalsinourhearts.com](http://www.animalsinourhearts.com)

# Vets Are Our Heroes

The vets and staff at Adobe Animal Hospital are both involved at the highest level of our organization and should be treated like the heroes they are!

***Without the vet community, we are just a lot of well-intentioned people feeding cats.***

Project Purr applauds everyone at Adobe Animal Hospital for their ongoing support in helping all the Santa Cruz County animals! Kudos to Drs. Chuck Kessinger, Craig Evans, William Baumhefner, Molly Tackabury and the smiling, efficient Gina, Carol, Linda, Josh, Camille, Mary, Nancy and all the many other wonderful behind-the-scenes staff.

Veterinarians often become involved in caring for or sterilizing feral cats as a service to the community. Some veterinarians become involved because of their unwillingness to euthanize a healthy animal, because they have information that trapping and euthanasia are not effective, or because they want to investigate other options. Others get involved through their clients.

Education is a key contribution by veterinarians in dealing with feral, as well as domestic, cats. Veterinarians are uniquely equipped to educate clients about pet overpopulation, the importance of sterilization, choosing an appropriate pet, normal cat behavior, alternatives for pets that must be given up, and considerations for outdoor cats.

Veterinarians can also educate cat caretakers with information on quarantine for new cats and kittens coming into a household (why, when, and where and how to clean and disinfect), information on the types, causes, treatments, and prevention of common infectious diseases, how and why to keep treatment/vaccination records, and medications for cats and kittens. These are all helpful for animal caretakers' efforts.

***You, too, can make a difference!*** Share this information with a friend. Speak with your veterinarian. Help Project Purr and Adobe Animal Hospital humanely continue the battle against pet overpopulation.

## My story...

On Presidents Day I went into my garage to do a little laundry and heard an unusual sound, at least for my garage. I followed the sound to find four just born (still wet) kittens. As I have a cat and two dogs I was surprised that they would appear, moreover that a feral cat would pick this place to feel safe enough to drop her babies. I quickly gathered my pets and went into the house with hopes the mom would return to clean and feed them.

We waited three hours and then I began to fear for their lives. I know they need to eat. So, I called my vet for advice. They told me to bring them in and they would check them out. I gathered them up and off we went to Animal Hos-

pital of Soquel where Anneke and others took on the joyous job of caring for these little babies.

I contacted Project Purr to get a trap in hopes to catch the mom. To make a long six week story short, I trapped the Mom, had her spayed, immunized and then released her back to her neighborhood. The kittens were hand fed for six weeks and two have been adopted by folks at Animal Hospital of Soquel, my neighbor adopted one and I have Talula! The mom is still in the neighborhood and three or four neighbors leave food for her. One young neighbor girl is trying to get close to her and recently told me she did get to pet her once!

Thanks for all your help,

Marie Henley

# Saving You from the Long Road... Looking for the Cure for URI

Feline upper respiratory infections (URI) can be baffling and frustrating, but sometimes are very curable, especially if the cause is a bacteria called *Bartonella henselae*.

It didn't take very long to figure out why no one wanted to adopt "Charlie", an adorable silver tabby with watery eyes and a crusty nose. You couldn't ignore the buzzing noise as he inhaled and exhaled through his tiny, constricted nostrils. Left behind after all his littermates and even his mother found new homes, Charlie the seven-month old kitten, was battling an URI almost since the day he was born.

The shelter director explained that this kitten had been treated with a variety of antibiotics but never seemed to respond to any of them.

She said if I decided to adopt him, I could "always bring him back and choose another cat if his condition persisted." There was no other cat for me; Charlie was the one I wanted. He looked and acted like a playful, wholesome kitten in every other way and I was determined to take him under my wing and nurse him back to health.

Immediately after I adopted him, we paid a visit to a veterinarian and Charlie was back on the antibiotic Clavamox for the next two weeks, after which there was absolutely no improvement. In fact, he seemed to be doing worse by discharging copious amounts of thick mucus and suffering fits of severe sneezing. The vet decided to switch him to Orbox, a more potent antibiotic for two more weeks. But again, the outcome was disappointing as there was no significant change. The vet said it was now time for further investigation with diagnostic testing for nasopharyngeal polyps. This meant Charlie had to spend the day in the animal hospital under light sedation while they probed around for a polyp. Luckily they did not find one, but on the other hand, his condition persisted and there were still no answers.

Expensive and more invasive in nature, x-rays of the head was to be the next diagnostic step. But in reading over his notes, my vet hesitated and thought that because Charlie came from a shel-

ter, he just may have come in contact with the *Bartonella henselae* bacteria. This astute veterinarian explained that most cats exposed to this bacteria, which is prevalent in multi cat communities like shelters, don't exhibit any symptoms at all, but some do come down with an URI like Charlie's. He recommended that he get tested before we venture any further. The blood test takes 5 to 7 days to get results, and when it came back positive, Charlie was aggressively treated for three weeks on Zithromax.

As I drizzled the last dropper full of Zithromax in Charlie's mouth, he was still not doing any better. Feeling discouraged after this long series of failures, I decided on no more treatment for a while. But, as if by magic in seventy-two hours, all of Charlie's symptoms disappeared — the antibiotic had taken effect. His sneezing turned into blissful sniffing as he poked his fully functioning nose all around the house like it was a new cat toy.

The research on *Bartonella henselae* is relatively new, according to the Cornell Feline Health Center, Cornell University, but there needs to be more awareness of this type of infection. Instead of automatically trouble-shooting URI symptoms with a myriad of antibiotics, a careful look into a cat's background can reveal important diagnostic information. It could spare cats from long suffering and their owners hundreds of dollars spent on the wrong treatment.



# Black Cats and Kittens

Why is it harder to find black cats and kittens homes ?? We don't know. But it's true with every shelter and rescue group. Maybe it has to do with silly archaic superstitions. The ones I've known, sleek or fluffy, have been extraordinary. I got a call the other day that several 2 1/2 week old kittens were brought into the shelter without a mother.

Shelters routinely euthanize young kittens because they don't have time to bottle feed, much less assist the kittens with elimination (peeing and pooping), which they cannot do on their own. I can tell you from experience it can be a tricky business.

All 4 kittens are black, fluffy and adorable. They will be ready to adopt about the middle of December. Anyone need a kitten or know of a good home?

--Lucinda

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The Scots have a belief that seeing a strange black cat on your porch brings you prosperity and....

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Groucho Marx once said: "A black cat crossing your path signifies that it's going somewhere."

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In relation to their body size, cats have the largest eyes of any mammal.

\*\*\*\*\*

Sir Isaac Newton, who first described the principle of gravity, also invented the swinging cat door for the convenience of his many cats.

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"I have felt cats rubbing their faces against mine and touching my cheek with claws carefully sheathed. These things, to me, are expressions of love."

—James Herriott



nonprofit volunteer feral cat advocate organization

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**Project Purr is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization (Tax I.D. #31-1576984). All of our programs and services are supported solely through the generosity of our contributors, whose donations and gifts are tax deductible. We do not receive federal, state, or local government funding.**

Your donation of *any* amount is greatly appreciated.

**Help Save Lives Today! Thank You!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_



Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

**Please mail donations to Project Purr, P.O. Box 891, Santa Cruz, CA 95061  
or donate on-line at [www.projectpurr.org](http://www.projectpurr.org).**



## Thank You!!!

The unprecedented giving to national rescue organizations in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina was overwhelming. Want to help a Katrina animal? Katrina caused over 5% more pets to need shelter over the normal homeless pet population. You can help too by adopting an animal from your local rescue group or shelter today.

Can't adopt...but still want to help? Consider donating to that same local rescue group or shelter! After millions of dollars were raised to help Katrina animals, local placement groups have had their own donations plummet. This makes local donations more vitally important than ever.