

2017 Quarterly Issue: Vol 1 - Saving Lives Everyday

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SAVING LIVES EVERYDAY

2017
Vol.1

It's an Office Takeover

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Loving Our HDB Cats | The
Joy of Fostering | Comfort for
Grieving Feline Hearts | Be an
Observant Purr Parent | All
Aboard the Cat Bus





LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

We started with a vision – that all cats will be cared for as pet cats and treated with kindness as community cats.

This simple vision has spawned the efforts of many who sterilise, mediate and attend to thousands of cases every year so our pets and community cats would be safe from abuse, neglect and from being culled.

Without these dedicated volunteers, it would not have been possible to bring our nation's culling rates down to its lowest in its history. They are also the reason the Cat Welfare Society is the first animal welfare organisation to work

with the government on nationwide sterilisation of community animals.

But 2017 is the year we ask ourselves, despite all these years of effort, just how much more humane has our society truly become?

A truly humane society is one where everyone plays a part in choosing to be humane and compassionate, from government officers dealing with animal issues, people working in pet businesses, to the man on the street --- even when no one is looking. Even when there isn't a Society or anyone to call them out.

In 2017, we are putting our focus on education and advocacy to bring cat welfare issues into sharper focus in the media, in our communities and in the hearts of more Singaporeans. To do this, we need more voices of compassion and humanity to come together to be a force of good. We have been the voice for cats for over a decade. It's your turn. Join us.

Thenuga Vijakumar
President
Cat Welfare Society



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Bobble's Baubles Catnip Cat Toy

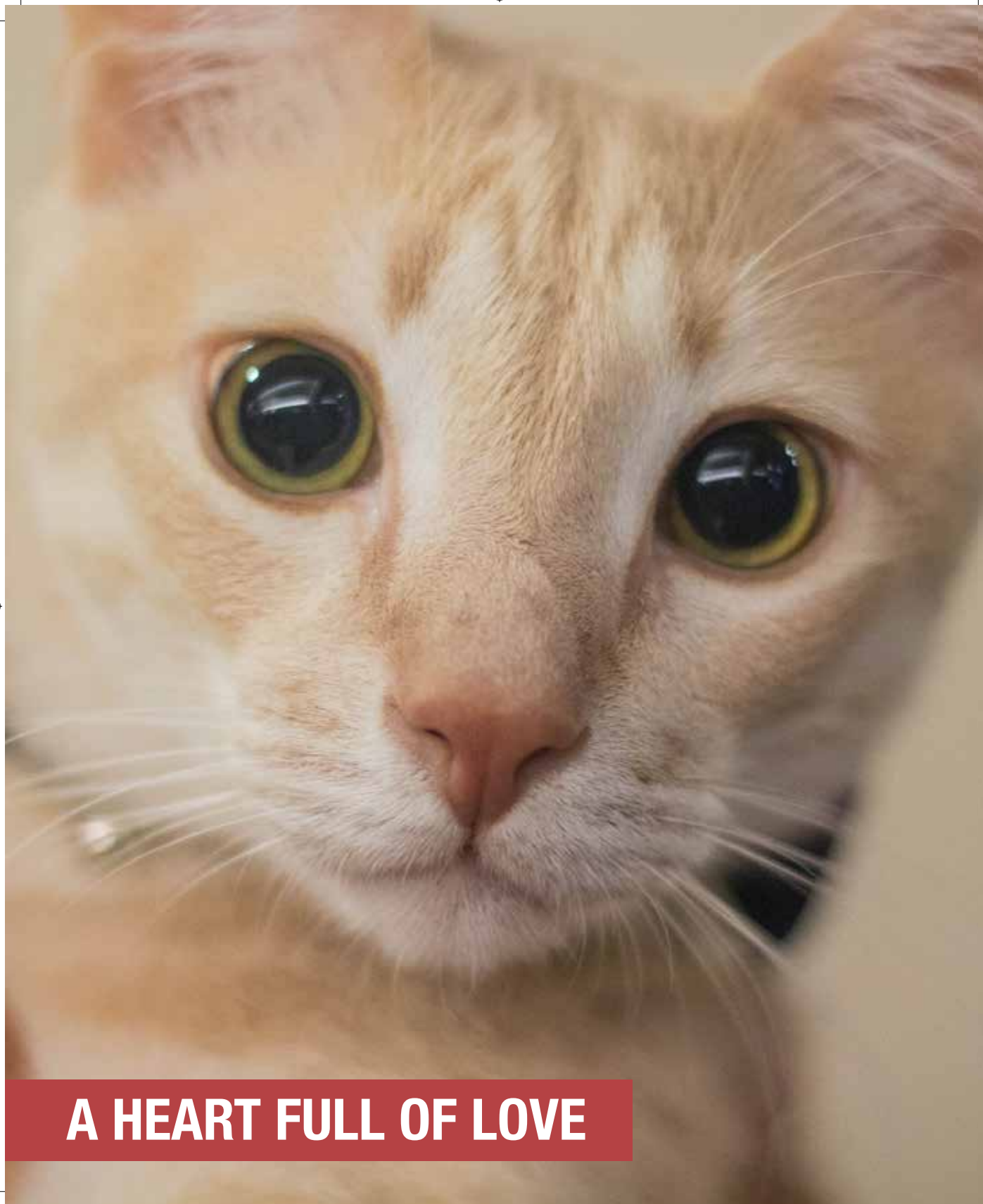
Hello, I am Bobble. I have Cerebellar Hypoplasia and a round head and cock eyes. My Mummy thinks I am the BESTEST cock-eye cat and should help all other cats. So we made Bobble's Baubles. Find me on www.catwelfare.org/shopforcats. All proceeds go to help cats!



Illustration by Lan-Ting Hsueh

"It is a very inconvenient habit of kittens (Alice had once made the remark) that whatever you say to them, they always purr."

—Lewis Carroll (author, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland)



A HEART FULL OF LOVE

The Joy of Fostering



Sri Yanti started her fostering journey in 2012 when she got a call from a friend who found a kitten and didn't know what to do with it.

Since she already had two cats, it seemed only natural that she took in the kitten as a fosterer before a good adopter comes along.

"I decided to take the kitten in because I had the supplies already, and I had experience with cats," said Yanti, who had Hugo and Miu Miu, her very first cats.

With a laugh she added: "I thought this would be a one-time thing, but it grew into a whole lot more."

By a stroke of luck, the kitten was adopted by a man who didn't mind that it was not in the best of health. It blossomed beautifully in his care.

"People wanted to kidnap it!"

That first experience fostering a kitten led the flexi adjunct teacher to open her home to more cats in need. Not long after the kitten, she found out about a beautiful ragdoll who was abandoned near her home. People wanted to kidnap it for themselves.

Trusting her instincts, Yanti decided

that she would not run the risk of letting someone take the cat home without first being able to check if the adopter would be able to properly take care of the cat. She was determined the cat would not have to go through the whole experience of being abandoned again.

Together with her friend Nasha, they trapped the cat. "That was the first time I was really going through the whole process, from taking care of a cat to screening potential adopters," she said of that experience.

"It's a lot about gut feeling," she shared, about how to listen for words potential adopters use and the questions they ask in figuring out their sincerity and commitment. With every batch of foster cats that came into her care after that, she would sharpen her instincts on sieving out serious adopters from those who only wanted to adopt a cat for the novelty, particularly those who did not bother to do any research on how to care for a cat before wanting to adopt.

With Joy Comes Risks

"People don't know how much work goes into taking care of kittens," said Yanti, "they eat a lot, poop a lot and are actually a lot of effort— but they get adopted pretty fast."

Yanti has helped to foster about 23 kittens in the past year, most of whom have become adopted.

The joy of fostering also comes with risks, as Yanti found out. A clowder of kittens she took in turned out to have ringworms, infecting everyone, including her four cats and her.

Everyone in the family has since recovered but to her disappointment, she has had to stop taking cats in temporarily as it is the right thing to do. "I found out that ringworms spores take six months to die, so with kittens having a lower immune system compared to my older cats, I don't want to take the risk."

The incident hasn't deterred her but taught her so much. She can't wait to start fostering again.

"I'm very lucky to have a very understanding husband and a support system from CWS," said Yanti of the network of fosterers she is now in touch with. She adds that "kitten care can get very expensive, so sometimes, from the adoption fee, I'll take a small part to subsidise the cost." She donates the rest to CWS.

**Open your home to a cat in need.
Save a life today.
<http://www.catwelfare.org/fosteracat>**

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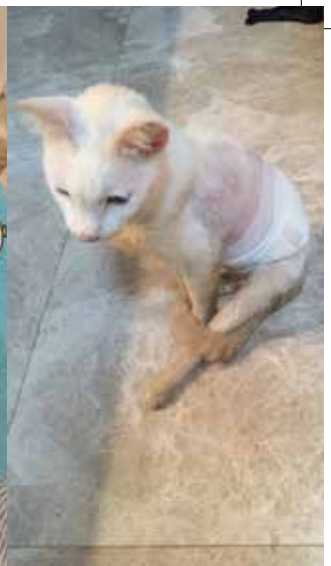
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SAVING LIVES EVERYDAY

Everyday, Cat Welfare Society mediators face difficult situations referred by Town Councils, AVA or reported by the public. More commonly, they attend to negative feedback about cats that require them to help ease tensions. They do that by solving problems and educating for tolerance.

Every so often, a case hits that truly tears at the hearts of mediators and volunteers. The stories of these cats would not be told without the people who changed their lives for the better.

All hands on deck

What happens when one cat turns into five, turns into 45? That was what happened to one Woodlands family who faced eviction from their rented flat.

Thankfully, unlike many cat owners who face the same situation, they did not give up their cats. The family accepted CWS' assistance to sterilise their cats and found a shelter they could afford so their cats have a chance at life. But the thought of their cats facing a lifetime in a shelter fills them with regret for how things have turned out.

Eliena met the family and is fostering 2 of the cats – a black Persian and a Siamese. She says, "As a fosterer, what we can do is to save a few cats at a time, as much as we can handle. When they start to respond to human interaction and find a good home, the feeling is pure joy, relief. Then we start the whole process again with the next cat who needs our help."

To join Eliena and a nationwide network of volunteers and fosterers who make all the difference, visit www.catwelfare.org/fosteracat.

Relief for Whitey's silent agony

Whitey was discovered in the home of two sisters who ran into financial difficulties when their mother suffered a stroke.

Whitey had acute dermatitis due to a flea infestation. It was so severe that she was tugging and biting her skin.

Laura, the case mediator says, "To be honest when I saw the cat, I almost wished it gave up living. But I saw a spark of hope in her eyes." She quickly found people in the cat community who made sure Whitey could get the treatment she needed. A fosterer also came forward who now has the daily task of administering her medication and cleaning her wound.

Whitey never once made a sound of complaint as she quietly carried her affliction. With her fur cleaned up and wound finally dressed, her eyes says it all. Thank you.



We Have Years

to show Singapore that HDB cat owners can live harmoniously with other neighbours

The Love Cats two-year pilot project is a CWS initiative where Chong Pang owners are legally allowed to have cats in their HDB flats.

Cat owners who have registered with the Cat Welfare Society must heed the Code of Responsible Behavior for Cat Owners:

Owners must get their cat sterilised, micro-chipped and registered with CWS.

Owners must confine their cat indoors, taking care to cat-proof the house.

Cat must be toilet trained.

Owners are to be proactive in addressing concerns raised by neighbours.

Cat Ownership Practices

Ensure your cat is sterilised and micro-chipped

Sterilisation will make your cat less aggressive and prevent unwanted pets.

Confine your cat indoors

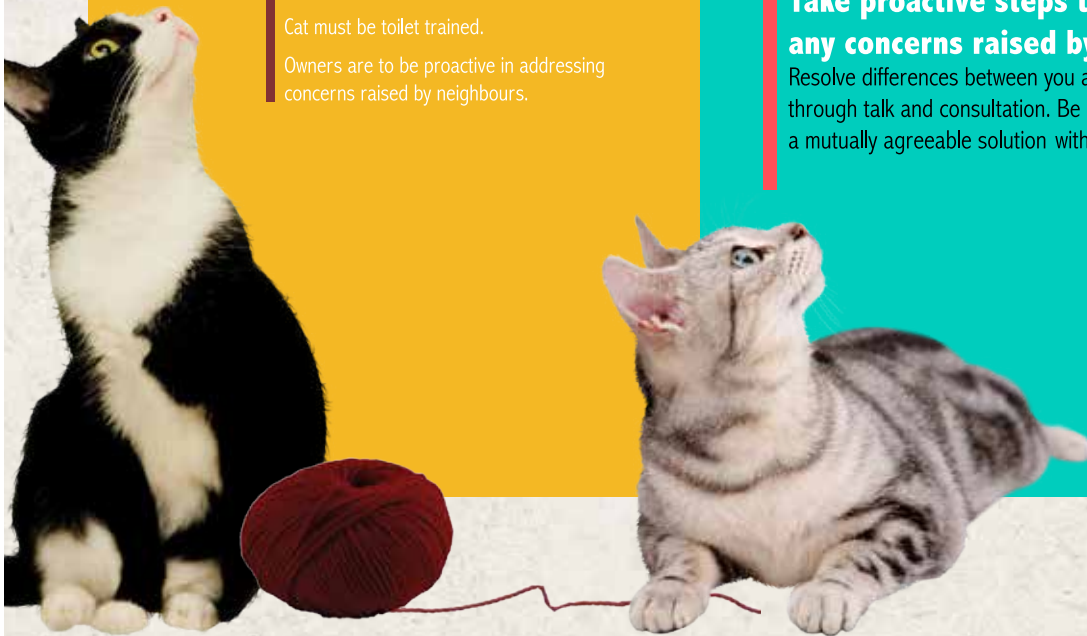
Ensure your house is cat-proofed. Do not allow your cat to stray as they may intrude into neighbouring properties and cause damage.

Toilet train your cat

Train your cat to use the litter box. The litter box must be housed within the flat and cleaned daily.

Take proactive steps to address any concerns raised by neighbours

Resolve differences between you and your neighbours through talk and consultation. Be sincere in finding a mutually agreeable solution with your neighbour.



To find out more about the LOVE CATS • Pilot Cat Ownership Project, please visit:

<http://www.catwelfare.org/lovecatspilot>

Love Cats posters that launched a seminal pilot programme in 2012. The pilot was eventually extended and is set to be expanded to more areas in Singapore.

LOVING OUR HDB CATS

Past, present and future

A letter a cat owner received from HDB went viral recently, made the news, garnered more than over 500,000 views online, rekindling an interest in the topic of HDB cat ownership.

The letter informed the owner that HDB “received feedback that you have kept a cat in your flat. Under the HDB’s policy, keeping of cat in HDB flats is strictly prohibited. Cats are not allowed to be kept in HDB flats as they are difficult to be confined within flats. Cat-related nuisance such as shedding of fur, defecation in public areas and noise disturbance can spoil the estate’s living environment and disrupt good neighbourliness.”

The Cat Welfare Society, an advocate for allowing HDB cat ownership, noticed a significant difference to the public’s response to the letter this time. They were overwhelmingly for HDB to overturn the ban.

Many were vexed that the same arguments, deemed obsolete, were used to rationalise the ban.

Christopher Lim commented, “I think that while owners are at times at fault, the HDB should realize that their reasons for this rule are misguided and misinformed.” Amelia Chen added, “Why would cats be difficult to confine in the flat? Grill and mesh all doors/gates/windows...”

Many were also alarmed to learn for the first time that there was a HDB ban on cats and sought CWS’ advice on their cats. “Cat ownership is already widespread and mainstream. Many cat owners are already keeping their cats responsibly with no issues. HDB cat owners should not panic. As long as they are abiding by good ownership practices, there are grounds to challenge unreasonable complaints,” says Laura Ann Meranda, CWS’ Senior Outreach Manager.

Moreover, the cat ownership pilot started in Chong Pang in 2012 is set to be expanded to other areas of Singapore. The pilot was deemed a success when over 105 owners were identified and registered. Through the exercise, CWS was able to confirm that over 90% of the cat owners were already responsible. Their cats are sterilised and kept indoors.



Inspire love for our cats

“My neighbours’ kids always stop by outside our meshed gate to say hi to our cats. Our cats put on a show for them by rolling and stretching around in glee!” says Tricia Tan. “We keep them indoors, clean their litter boxes regularly. It is what we must do to make sure our cats and our neighbours are happy.”

Unfortunately, the cat owner who received the HDB letter was an owner that reinforced the notion that cats are hard to keep indoors and defecate in public areas because they let their cat roam.

Despite CWS mediator’s advice, they had remained uncooperative. “These owners are often the direct cause of their cat being taken away by authorities to be culled and should face penalties that are specific to their irresponsible behaviour,” says Laura.

“Our network of volunteers and fosterer are so drained and bogged down by the many cats that have to be saved from neglectful owners who disown their cats when the going gets tough”, added Laura. “It is time that they are made to pay for the consequences, not their cat.”

I Adopt



Adopt. Don't ever shop.

www.catwelfare.org/adoptions

I Foster



Open your home to a cat in need.

www.catwelfare.org/fosteracat

Sezairi Sezali

Sony Music Artiste

"Whatever breed there are of cats out there, does it matter? The first cat that touched my heart was a mangy community stray. She opened my eyes to the world of cats. When I saw how cats were bred and kittens sold, it's pretty inhumane and I don't wish that on anyone, especially an innocent cat. Now I am their voice. How about you?"

LOVE

Sezairi, Vanessa, Aman... their voices in support of... important ways we can... cat owners in Singapore... more acceptance for our... know that we also need... people see our cats ve... on us. So spread

Vanessa Vanderstraaten

Fly Entertainment Artiste

"My first foster cat was Bolt whose sweet, unassuming personality eventually made his new family so happy. It was through him I came to know a network of amazing people who have dedicated their lives to saving and rehoming cats. It's been the most rewarding experience to see a cat get a new lease of life. Now I am their voice. How about you?"

Amanda Lim

National Swimmer

"In the water, I do not let much get to me. I am in control all the way to the finish line. That feeling I got the first time I met a neglected backyard breeding cat and heard its story, it shook me to the core. I see the work that must be done to stop this. Now I am their voice. How about you?"

I Sterilise



Do right by our pets. Neuter them.

<http://www.catwelfare.org/catsnip>

Photo of Amanda: Ang Choo Wee

WE CATS

Amanda and Su Ann lend support of some of the most people who can love our cats. As Singapore look forward to a better future for our beloved felines, we need to do our part. How much of this very much depends on us. Let's spread the love!

Su Ann Heng

Ex-Pro Golfer,
Broadcaster

"When I hear of cats left behind by their owners, left to roam and suffer a fall, my heart breaks. My cats have a home. We make sure they have what they need - food, fun, conversation, love. It is up to me to ensure that I keep it that way for them forever after. Now I am their voice. How about you?"

I Keep For Life



Keep your cat indoors. Keep your cat for life.

www.catwelfare.org/indoorcat

Photo of Su Ann: Vincent Ng

IT'S AN OFFICE TAKEOVER

And it's got fur!

Mao came into the lives of the good people of GOODSTUPH when staffers Arista and Janice chanced upon a tiny kitten stumbling outside Outram Park station. A text to the GOODSTUPH group chat was what it took for other colleagues to agree to care for her and to have a room specially prepared for their first office cat.

Because Mao was so young, they quickly had to work out a schedule of feeding her 6 times a day and to always have someone take her home overnight and in the weekend. We talk to CEO Pat and Art Director Janice to find out just what it takes to care for an office cat.

What made you agree to keep Mao as an office pet?

Pat: Mao came quite accidentally. It was between letting her try to survive on her own as an abandoned new kitten, or take her in as one of us. To me, there wasn't an option to consider. A pet is a living thing however, not a novelty item, so I'm strict on responsibility and accountability when it comes to her care.

Taking care of a small kitten is not easy! What's the distribution of responsibility like in the office?

Janice: Everyone who loves animals in the office would take turns to clean the poop tray and feed her. We don't have a fixed roster, everyone just takes the initiative to do it when they know it's time.

Is this your first time taking care of a kitten? What has the experience been like?

Pat: You've heard about the useless husband who sleeps through the night, leaving the poor mother to nurse on her own right? I'm that useless husband. I set 3 alarms for the 4am shift only to wake up at 4:18am to my girlfriend going "I'm done feeding her already". The experience gave me newfound respect for mothers, as funny as that sounds.

So now that Mao is a bit older, have you noticed any changes to her personality?

Janice: She's about 3 months old now and she's still as playful and hyper, crazy hyper. She enjoys the company of humans, if we leave her alone, she'll start meowing at us for attention, or she'll grab our legs to play chase with her. Even when she's tired and wants to take a nap, she'll sleep on one of our chairs beside us.

How has Mao changed the work environment?

Janice: Having an office pet helps release stress, we look for her whenever we need a break from work, and I think she brings energy to the office with her crazy hyper personality.

Pat: We turned a meeting room into her den and we find all sorts of excuses to host meetings there. Caring for a kitten is serious work and it's beautiful to see the team put in the effort to do so.

Are there any plans on getting Mao rehomed? Or is she now an official GOODSTUPH citizen?

Pat: Yes, she is a GOODSTUPH citizen. In fact, I think she's the newly appointed CEO.



Terrorising the boss



Morning coffee with a shot of Mao

How to be a kitten mama, GOODSTUPH style

- 01** Make and heat kitten formula milk
- 02** Feed milk through a bottle with a nip
- 03** Stroke the back to help the kitten burp after it is done with its milk
- 04** Stimulate its abdomen and anal region with a warm cotton pad to help it pee and poop
- 05** Feed supplements which help strengthen its immune system. Consult your vet for ones beneficial to your kitten's condition.
- 06** Play with her for about 10-15mins (because she becomes very active right after her meal) to tire her out.
- 07** Repeat every 4 hours, 6 times a day!
- 08** Wrap her up with a blanket with heat pad hidden within to keep her warm when she sleeps
- 09** Wean off milk to good quality wet food at around 4 weeks.
- 10** Be a cat mama to your kitten for life!



This was Dahlina's Andy when his brother Ferry lost the fight against cancer in December last year. He didn't want to leave his brother's side. When he did, it was to burrow his head into Dahlina's lap.

Dahlina says that he does that for all the cats in the family who have passed on and cannot attribute this behaviour to anything but a deep sense of grief and loss.

Marla also noticed an out of the ordinary behaviour in her cat Mei when her other cat Boy Boy was suddenly taken to the vet for seizures and died at the vet clinic. She was distraught when she came home and only noticed a day after that Mei was frantically walking around the house, looking for her missing companion. She would flop down on her side when her attempts were unsuccessful.

Cats may not always outwardly show their emotions like Andy and Mei, but science already agrees that they are fully capable of having strong feelings of attachment and loss.

How can we help?

Spend time with your cat stroking, grooming and playing. Minimizing change gives the cat time to come to terms with the loss, so keep their routine unchanged.

If they display a loss of appetite, encourage eating by sitting with your cat during meal times to provide reassurance.

Don't attempt to replace their companion with a new cat immediately. They are unlikely to welcome a stranger when they are still getting over the loss.

If dramatic changes in behaviour occur, get your cat checked by a vet for any underlying physical problem.



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BE AN OBSERVANT PURR PARENT!

How can we tell if our cat is in the pink of health? Outward appearance of our cat can give first indicative sign of anything amiss.

Cat eyes should be bright and not have any discharge.

The showing of the 3rd eyelid can indicate that your cat is ill – if the 3rd eyelid is persistently showing coupled with other changes in behaviour, please seek veterinary attention.

Nose should be clean, slightly cool to the touch.

Any discharge from the nose can indicate a possible respiratory infection and will require medical attention.

Ears should be free from wax build up.

Cats should not be scratching their ears often and with force. If they do, it is likely that an infection has set in or ear mites are present.

A healthy cat's coat should be shiny and full.

With good and healthy diet, a cat's coat should gleam with health! Several factors can cause a cat to shed more

fur than usual - a change in diet or a diet that is high in sodium will cause fur to shed excessively. Feed good quality food at all times. Hot weather can also contribute to excessive shedding.

Balding on a cat sometimes mysteriously appear. Pay attention to what has changed in the environment, new addition to the family? A move? Any particularly stressful incidents? Stress can cause a cat to excessively groom themselves. Some cases do require medical attention. Other possible reasons could be a food allergies or the dreaded FUR MITES!

Gums should be pale pink, breath should not be bad. No drooling.

Cats do suffer from tooth decay and gum disease. It is painful and uncomfortable for them. Notice if they are scratching at their mouth or having difficulty eating. Gingivitis and tooth decay is quite common and very painful for cats – seek medical attention to arrest the problem early

before infection spreads.

Cats are creatures of habit and they do not usually break their routine.

Take note of your cat's daily behaviour, its antics and schedules. If your usually active cat is all of a sudden sullen and quiet – take note! Cats hide when they are unwell or in pain as it is instinctive to hide from predators when they are weak.

Poo colour and consistency should be brown and formed.

If poop is pale or of a strange colour (other than dark brown) or stained with blood lasting more than a day, please bring kitty to the vet. Gut issues can get serious quickly, it is best to get help at the onset.

A cat is an expressive creature, we just have to understand them better.

Small signs when noticed early can save your cat's life. Be vigilant. They might be trying to tell you something – in their own way.

ALL ABOARD THE CAT BUS



Kicking off at the HomeTeamNS Sembawang Clubhouse on 26 November 2016, our cat bus took 80 participants to 3 unique cat welfare locations in Singapore! The purpose of the tour was to let one and all see for themselves what often happens behind the scenes when rescuers and volunteers deal with abandonment, abused and sick cats. We are honoured to have the HomeTeamNS Sembawang Chairman Mr Frederick Tan join us on our tour.



First stop, Kittycare Haven, where we visited the 18 Yishun Hoarder cats who have taken months to recover and really loved all the affection they got that day. The participants had a long hard look at shelter life for cats as they await adoption to good homes.



We then visited Su and Lilian, Yishun feeders, and their community cats to see how they are responsibly cared for in our neighbourhoods. Sterilisation and good caregiving have improved the lives of so many cats while reducing the population. This means more cats are getting the help they need.



Finally we stop by a Cat Home that cares for 100 cats, one of the many private catteries run by dedicated individuals like Mdm Goh who provide palliative care to senior cats.

We thank HomeTeamNS Sembawang for making this cat bus tour possible. We also thank SPH Foundation and Animal Human Alliance for organising the cat food donation drive that made it possible to help caregivers like Su, Lilian and Mdm Goh with cruelty-free Gold D cat food!

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SAVING LIVES EVERYDAY

Adopt a Cat

Locations	Dates
The Pet Safari Waterway Point	♥ 8 Jan ♥ 2 Jul ♥ 5 Mar ♥ 3 Sep
The Pet Safari VivoCity	♥ 5 Feb ♥ 6 Aug ♥ 4 Jun ♥ 3 Dec
United Square Shopping Mall	♥ 9 Apr ♥ 5 Nov
Pet Lovers Centre One KM	♥ 7 May ♥ 1 Oct
Time: 1:00pm – 6:00pm	



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