

2017 Quarterly Issue: Vol 2 - Saving Lives Everyday

FREE

www.catwelfare.org

SAVING LIVES EVERYDAY

2017
Vol.2

Love Me Some Scratchies

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

When One Becomes Four | Sometimes They Just Need A Little Help | A Difference A Saturday Afternoon Makes | Sea Breeze and Crusty Faced Cat Uncles | Coffee With A Shot of Compassion? | Through Her Eyes | Catopia





LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Starting out as a mediator for the Cat Welfare Society from a completely different industry really opened my eyes to what it takes to make a positive difference to society. Many of us come in wide-eyed, ready to save the world. And then we find that before we get to see any real change, we see only the many examples of the unjust, the intolerance and the indifferent.

I have been lucky. In the last 2 years, I've been able to work alongside many passionate volunteers, rescuers, caregivers, even secretly sympathetic government officers who have given me the strength day after day to overcome every obstacle to save a cat through successful mediation.

As Cat Welfare Society's Executive Director, my hope and dream for all cat loving Singaporeans is for it to be legal to own a pet cat in HDB. While we await a successful outcome, I hope all cat owners will readily be responsible to further help society at large accept that cats are indeed lovable and great companions.

My most memorable case is definitely rescuing Whitey. She was severely neglected in a hoarder home. I learnt so much from fellow rescuers and was so happy to finally see her recovered and then adopted.

The experience has made me fully aware of the pressures that any cat caregiver face. They need the support of everyone to continue to do this tough job that they do looking after what is often discarded and abused by society.

Cat lovers can help in many ways by donating, by fostering, by volunteering. Your help supports this network of caregivers all over Singapore who make a difference everyday. It gives them more strength to know that there are others out there who care.

Laura Ann Meranda



CONTENT

02 Letter From The Executive Director

04 When One Becomes Four: A Fosterer's Furry Surprise

Vanessa recounts her fostering journey when her rescue unexpectedly left her a bundle of surprise.

06 Sometimes They Just Need A Little Help: A Hand For The Less Fortunate


09 A Difference A Saturday Afternoon Makes

10 Love Cats Celebrities Lend Their Voices

Theresa, Sandra, Shayna and Mike lend their voices in support of some of the most important ways we can love our cats.

12 Sea Breeze And Crusty Faced Cat Uncles: Where They Belong

14 Coffee With A Shot Of Compassion?



The Tipped Ear Scratcher is a specially designed scratcher for the Cat Welfare Society, in collaboration with cat furniture designer brand Kafbo from Bangkok. A sturdy 40cm tall scratcher of strong corrugated board with just the right cubby hole for a slightly over indulged pet cat, it is the ultimate feline heart winner. Find it on www.catwelfare.org/shopforcats. All proceeds go directly to saving more cat lives.

17 Through Her Eyes: A New Volunteer Gets In On The Action

18 Catopia Popping Up In A Neighbourhood Near You

The Cat Welfare Society's 4th CATOPIA pop-up at the spanking new Our Tampines Hub on 11 & 12 Feb rocked it once again!

WHEN ONE BECOMES FOUR

A Fosterer's Furry Surprise



By Vanessa Vanderstraaten

In early January, I spotted two new cats in my HDB estate who were so afraid of humans that when I began feeding them, I had to move out of arm's length before they would cautiously approach the food I had laid out. Neither the ginger male or calico female had tipped ears, so I had to assume that both were not sterilized and were likely abandoned in the estate together. Indeed, both cats appeared close to and non-aggressive with each other.



After almost two months of feeding them every night (and still not being able to touch them), I decided that I really had to do something before the female – I named her Bree – got pregnant. I contacted Richard, a humane trapper, who helped me get them into carriers and transfer them into my two-tier cage at home.

If I thought the hard part was over, I was in for a rude surprise.

Unlike my previous foster Bolt, a gorgeous black tom who was very confident and comfortable with humans, Bree and Sotong (due to his adorably blur face) hissed at me for weeks, afraid of their new surroundings and unsure of their fate. I continued to feed them daily and tried speaking to them each time, but it was an uphill struggle.

When the day came to place them in carriers to bring them to the vet to be sterilised, Bree reacted violently, hissing and spitting and clawing to stay inside the cage. Thank goodness for long-sleeve jackets and gloves! In the end, only Sotong went to the vet for his check up (the vet estimated that he was only 8 months old), and we left Bree to calm down by herself. I resolved to get her used to the carrier, and placed a soft, fabric carrier inside the cage for her to sniff and get comfortable with.

It wasn't till a month later that I had an inkling as to why Bree was so anxious. Her abdomen was getting larger, and I noticed her nipples getting pinker and pronounced. My worry increased... and then it happened. One night, I looked into Bree's cage but could not spot her easily. Surprised, I realized she was inside the soft carrier and when I peeked in... a little head was visible! No, wait, that's two heads!

That night, Bree gave birth to a total of 3 kittens, and she was a real champ from the start. Not only did she birth them and clean them up all by herself, she was an attentive and protective mother who nursed almost 24 hours a day, stopping only to eat and take a quick power nap away from her babies. Because I did not want her to reject her babies, I stayed away as much as I could and did not handle the kittens at all. Instead I took the chance to do as much reading as I could, from everything about kitten growth, nutritious food for mama cats and Fading Kitten Syndrome.

After the babies reached two weeks of age, I knew they would be walking soon and having them all cooped up inside a cage wouldn't be the best idea. I enlisted the help of my



dad, and together we converted a spare room into a kitten playpen! This would be where the kittens (named Squid, Cow and Dog – don't ask) would grow up under mama Bree's watchful eye.

We built a mesh grill with inexpensive, store-bought mesh and some pieces of wood, and used nails, wood glue and staple guns to hold it in place. Cardboard boxes became a litter box holder, and an old pillow and shirt turned an existing table's underside into a new nesting area. All potential hidey holes were plugged or boarded up and mesh was liberally used to prevent kittens from getting outside. And while I may have gone a little crazy buying soft cushions and toys, I can safely say that while the kittens are still getting used to their new legs, Sotong is enjoying them immensely!



After Sotong was sterilized, I managed to begin actually stroking and cuddling him. He's turned into a confident and handsome boy who loves to play. He has a voracious appetite and has an active, curious and sweet personality. Sometimes, I look at him and feel so proud of how far he's come and how brave he's gotten in the last few months. He will be going to his forever home soon, and while I will miss his blur sotong face, I know he will be loved dearly. I am hoping to make progress with Bree eventually too, and show her that not all humans are cruel and mean.

Make no joke about it; fostering is a commitment that takes time, money, support, patience and energy. There have been many days that I crawl into bed exhausted after work, housework, and feeding and spending time with the foster cats and my own two furkids. I get up an hour earlier than I have to to make sure everyone is fed and the poop is cleared before I can begin my day. But the joy it brings puts everything else in perspective. Knowing that I have made a difference to the life of even one cat, brings a happiness and peace deep inside my soul. Fostering puts one less cat at risk, and can give it the necessary time it takes to find a loving family for life. What's a little less sleep, right?

Be a fosterer, visit www.catwelfare.org/fosteracat.

SOMETIMES THEY JUST NEED A LITTLE HELP

A Hand For The Less Fortunate

When she started volunteering with Cat Welfare Society, it was a Tampines hoarding case in 2010 that truly shocked her. The filth, the extreme conditions of the cats and the level of emotional dysfunction in the humans took her aback and made Thenuga wonder if there were not more families in Singapore like this quietly imploding in our congenial neighbourhoods.

In the course of their work, volunteers have come across many families that are often caught off guard when their cats start to breed. Cute and exciting at first, they suddenly find themselves at a loss when the numbers fly off the handle and they cannot find enough friends or family to take their kittens. The disastrous outcomes are either hoarding or abandonment.

Since 2009, the Cat Welfare Society has started to help underprivileged families sterilise their cats as and when they became known to volunteers through case referrals or when they connect with the Society directly, precisely to help them avoid a bad situation. It started with a small subsidy but gradually as the Society grew, it was able to provide families with more financial help with the sterilisations and transport to and from vets.



hitting a stride, we felt it was necessary to move in a far more structured manner into helping more low income families.” Thenuga now heads the Society’s Low Income Pet Cat Sterilisation Scheme. Since 2016, 1200 pet cats have been sterilised under the scheme. This year, the Society targets to help 1500 pet cats from low income households.

“Besides listing this as a service on our website, we decided to take a proactive approach by reaching out to low income families in rental flats, 2 and 3 room flats through student groups and volunteers,” says Thenuga. “Eventually with more funding we hope to be able to microchip as well as sterilize these cats under the scheme.”



“Through the last 7 years, we saw the issues that the Cat Welfare Society handled morph from community cat related issues to more pet related issues,” said Thenuga Vijakumar, who has assumed the role of the President of the Cat Welfare Society since. “With community cat sterilisation already

Sarah who lives in a 2-room flat with 5 cats faced complaints from her neighbours for odour and noise issues. “I wanted to sterilise my cats but it was so expensive and didn’t know who to turn to. I have friends who had 2 cats, then 5 cats then 20. I really didn’t want to end up like that. When a CWS mediator came to handle my case, it was the first thing they helped me with. The cats are so much more manageable now and my neighbours do not complain anymore. Now I want to help others.”

Sarah is a beneficiary turned advocate. She now helps the Cat Welfare Society connect with other low income families with cats. “It’s a great feeling to be able to help others facing the same situation as me. I feel happy that I am able to give back in this way.”

For more information on the Low Income Pet Cat Sterilisation Scheme, visit <http://www.catwelfare.org/catsnip>.



CAD ASSOCIATES

Optimise your interior spaces for you and your feline friends. Catification regards creating a feline-friendly environment catering to a cat's natural instinct to climb, perch, rest, play and also own their space.

At CAD Associates, we strive on creating a chic and conducive environment where cats and humans co-exist in perfect harmony. Call us today for a purr-fect home for kitty and you.



CHARACTER

•

ARTISTIC

•

DYNAMIC

No. 6 Genting Road #01-00, Jubilee Industrial Building, Singapore 349471
T: 6743 8488 | **E:** enquiry@cadassociates.com.sg | **W:** www.cadassociates.com.sg

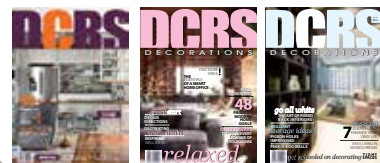
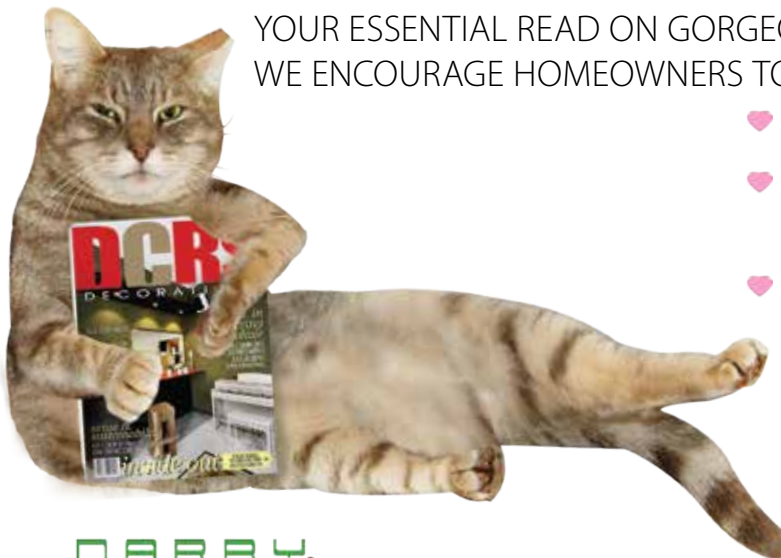
adopt an attitude of compassion & love



DCRS-DECORATIONS IS

YOUR ESSENTIAL READ ON GORGEOUS INTERIORS.
WE ENCOURAGE HOMEOWNERS TO:

- ♥ Design cat-friendly spaces
- ♥ Catify your home for happy cat and human interactions
- ♥ Choose adoption of pets as a more humane option



Blk 1008 Toa Payoh North #07-06, Singapore 318996
T: (65) 6255 4463 | E: askdarby@darbymedia.com.sg
www.dcrsinteriors.com

available
at all major bookstores
and newsstands

A DIFFERENCE A SATURDAY AFTERNOON MAKES

It is always a great feeling to hear of instances when cats are rescued from dire situations and are finally in safe hands. It is a breathe of fresh air in a climate of bad news. We heave a sigh of relief that humanity is restored.

What if we find out that that that is not where the story ends but where the real work starts?



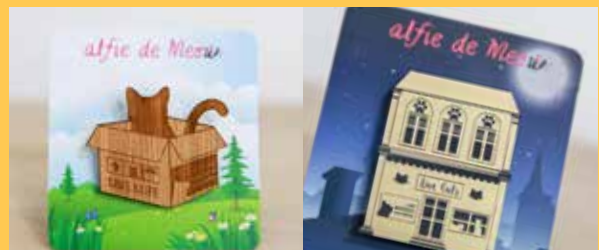
After their harrowing escape from the Yishun hoarder last year, 10 cats have found a place in someone's heart through the work of rehoming volunteers. 17 remain in a shelter space rented by the Cat Welfare Society awaiting their turn where nevertheless, under the watchful eyes of shelter owner Tay Sia Ping of Kittycare Haven, they have transformed from bags of bones to the chubby huggies they are today.



Volunteers from Credit Suisse who were touched by their story spent a Saturday afternoon in April grooming and socialising the cats who were genuinely happy to receive so much attention that day. "I am scared of animals but also love them. People tell me it's a rare thing. It's so nice to be able to interact with these cats and try to get over my fear. They are so friendly I'm almost cured," says Zou Yuan with a laugh.

Lou Qian added, "I hope more people can come to give them the attention they deserve. They are so loving they belong in a home with a family!"

The Cat Welfare Society organises these outings whenever there are willing volunteers. Not only do these city folks get to see a different side of Singapore in the Lim Chu Kang countryside, they walk away with a lighter step to have brightened the lives of some under appreciated cats.



Be a Cat Superhero and receive a specially designed thank you gift from Alfie de Meow. With a one year GIRO of \$30 per month, you will receive the "Save a Life" brooch. With a one year GIRO of \$50 and above per month, you will receive the 'Love Cats' brooch. What better time than now to don a cape for cats!

I Take Action



We are it's best hope.

www.catwelfare.org/resourcesforrescue

Theresa Goh Singapore Paralympian

"My life has been all about overcoming the odds. Life gave me that chance and I made the very best of it. When I see those that never got their chance, even if it is a mere animal, I get mad. We all have the power to uplift a life, especially one as vulnerable as a street cat. Now I am their voice. How about you?"

LOVE

Theresa, Shayna, Mike... their voices in support... most important ways we... around us. When we s... reaching out changes tw... ours. There is no great... made a difference to so... and so vulnerable as a... need to do, is answer

I Connect



We stand stronger together.

www.catwelfare.org/trapneuterreturnmanage

Sandra Riley Tang The Sam Willows

"The power of social media has brought us closer together over so many things – music, art, cats. It has also brought people together to save, to act, to support each other and to be a force for good in their own community. Who will fight for our community cats if we don't. Now I am their voice. How about you?"

Shayna Ng

National Bowler

"When I believe in something, I absolutely want to do my best to see it through. I believe in animal welfare. I believe that all cats deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. Now I am their voice. How about you?"

I Volunteer



We all make time for what is important to us.

www.catwelfare.org/volunteer

Photo of Shayna: Ang Choo Wee | Location: Cat Safari

E CATS

Mike & Sandra lend support of some of the ways we can help the cats we see a cat in need, gives two lives, theirs and a greater feeling to have to something so small as a mere cat. All we answer when they call.

Mike Kasem

Radio DJ

"I get to talk to a lot of people everyday, share a good story, share a laugh and make someone's day. Everyone has that power in our own lives to reach out and share an idea that brings people together to do something. To turn pain into strength and tears into joy. For a cat, it can mean life or death. I am their voice. How about you?"

I Influence



Bring people together to educate or raise some funds. www.catwelfare.org/actionforcats

Photo of Mike: Vincent Ng



SEA BREEZE AND CRUSTY FACED CAT UNCLES

Where They Belong

55 cats in 3 days. That is how many cats humane cat trapper Richard Ng trapped for sterilisation in a shipyard recently. Entering a job this big can be a little daunting. And in scorching conditions. But what Richard found in the massive compound were unexpected pockets of humanity. An uncle with a towel around his head and cigarette in hand is the resident cat man.

“Temple uncle and so many of the staff came out to help. They recognised that a growing cat population isn’t good for anyone and sought help with the support of the management to start this sterilisation exercise,” says Richard.

It is his first time in a shipyard with its rules about safety equipment. “Imagine standing in the sun under the safety helmet trapping a cat at three in the afternoon! All for the cats!”

Richard is one of the humane cat trappers that the Cat Welfare Society works closely with. The shipyard cats are sterilised under its islandwide Stray Cat Sterilisation Programme that is co-funded between CWS and AVA. The programme has made it possible to sterilise many more cats in these previously neglected far flung places around Singapore.



Cat culling rates in Singapore steadily falling

The number of cats impounded to be culled in Singapore has dropped to another all time low last year. It has dropped to around 700, down from the previous year of 900 and far down from the senseless dark ages of over 10,000 cats in the last decade.

It is massive projects like these that is sending a rippling effect that has resulted in fewer cat culling exercises and trap loans from the Agri-food & Veterinary Authority being deployed. CWS mediators however, still get calls from companies for cats to be removed instead of sterilised. This solution however, is only temporary and these compounds

often face the same issues a few months down the road when the ones left behind breed or new cats come to occupy the vacated space.

While CWS mediators work to convince more companies in industrial and commercial areas to adopt an effective humane approach, concerned staff can play a big part by connecting CWS mediators to their management.

As for these shipyard cats who are safely back where they belong after sterilisation, enjoy the breeze in your faces and kibbles from crusty faced cat uncles. You are loved.

For more information, visit www.catwelfare.org/catsnip.



COFFEE WITH A SHOT OF COMPASSION?

Ji Ki Goot was first spotted way back in early 2014 when the folks at The Tiramisu Hero were feeding another community cat named Racer who always came around to their newly opened café.

They had their eye out for Ji Ki Goot but it took a good part of a year for the elusive feral to become slightly more accustomed to the café folks. They noticed that his tail was constantly bleeding and tried to trap him with a box then with a carrier but he was too smart. His condition worsened and his toes began to look crooked.

By this time, all the staff of TTH were rooting for him to be well. They collectively decided to use their tip box to hire a trapper. "My entire crew was motivated to help Ji Ki Goot. His name means 'one bone' which was how emaciated he looked at that time. We took turns to tail him nightly to see where he goes before calling the trapper," says Aileen Koh, one half of The Tiramisu Hero. "Finally when the trapper came, he had to net the crafty fella and whisk him off to a vet."

Ji Ki Goot had both FIV and FELV which explained why he wouldn't heal. The vet thought that he might still recover

without an amputation so Aileen took him home. He was still feral and she spent as much as four hours a day for almost 3 months before he finally let her touch him. His tail was finally amputated when it simply wouldn't heal and unexpectedly, his personality blossomed.

Ji Ki Goot lived with the TTH owners for 10 months. It was a good 10 months after a difficult life on the street with a bleeding wound. The staff visited regularly and everyone split his expenses between them.

"Ji Ki Goot really brought everyone together. He really made all of us think of how much we can do as individuals and so much more as a team to touch someone's life, even if it is a cat," says Aileen.

Saying goodbye however is the hardest thing. In his final month, Ji Ki Goot began spontaneously bleeding from his gums and nose and despite near daily treatment, succumbed to FELV. "Imagine if he was never trapped and died quietly and painfully on the street, we are glad we made sure this didn't happen."



Spring Blossoms



Oriental Flair

Atrio Lifestyle

Retail & Showroom

105 Sims Ave Chancerlodge Complex

#08-12 Singapore 387429

Tel: 67448955

Outlets

Tangs at Tang Plaza

Choosing to live more sustainably is not difficult, but makes a big difference in the long run. You'll be cutting your exposure to toxic chemicals while leaving fewer ecological footprints.

Striving to support others who work to live and produce eco-friendly and sustainable communities.

Make an appointment to find out more at **8187 4933** or e: **Switchingbrands@gmail.com**



THROUGH HER EYES

A New Volunteer Gets In On The Action

By Sunny Johar

"What greater gift than the love of a cat?" – Charles Dickens

Having never been allowed the privilege of adopting a kitty of my own due to an allergy that surfaces with prolonged exposure to animal hair, I previously restrained my kitty loving ways to sharing infinite cat memes, feeding strays and visiting cat cafes for my furry fix. It was not until quite recently that I had a belated realization that I didn't need to actually own a cat of my own to be able to help our furry friends.

Within a week of my reaching out to the Cat Welfare Society to express my interest in stepping up to do more, I was having a Sunday lunch with a group of warm hearted cat lovers. Thirty minutes in, I felt like I'd been a part of the team forever.

In one of my early volunteering sessions, I got to witness just how deep the love for cats and desire to make a difference runs within this community. Kicking off at SPCA, volunteers and humane trapper Felicia Peck picked up several strays recently sterilised in a joint sterilisation exercise between CWS and SPCA. With a car full of meowing kitties, we set off to all the outlying neighborhoods around our island to make sure each and every kitty was returned to exactly where we found them.

After nearly three hours of driving from end to end, seeing our furry friends make it back safely to their homes, and even picking up another kitty that needed to be sterilised along the way, I was filled with a sense of wonder. Instead of looking indifferent at this relatively mundane task, each and every volunteer looked fulfilled.

As I went back home that day, I realized something critical about what it's really like to volunteer with animals. It is easier to do kind deeds for people in need and receive thanks, but it takes real love and determination to do a kind deed for someone and have it go relatively unacknowledged.

I'd joined this community to spend my weekends playing around with a group of new furry friends, but I walked away with so much more. Still relatively a rookie, every time I volunteer, I examine the 'veterans', and I find in them a drive so inspiring that it pushes me to want to do more, to make a difference and to be selfless. To walk away knowing that sometimes a cat looking back at you as it pads back home on furry paws can be just as heartwarming as a verbal "thank you".

To volunteer too, visit www.catwelfare.org/volunteer.



CATOPIA

Popping Up In A Neighbourhood Near You



The Cat Welfare Society's 4th CATOPIA pop-up at the spanking new Our Tampines Hub on 11 & 12 Feb rocked it once again! We thank everyone who came to support our beautiful rescued cats and our amazing event partners Goood Pet Collars, MyltchyFingers, Purrballs, Sloth Studio and Sneaky Whiskers who collectively raised a tidy sum to help more cats in Singapore.

A visit by Singapore's Largest Local Cat Handsome didn't disappoint. A larger than life story to match a larger than life cat. Nothing warms the heart more than to see a former hoarder cat blossom the way Handsome has.

Follow our Facebook page for news about our next Catopia pop-up!





All we need is love!

You met our Celeb Ambassadors, now meet the pet owners who turned up on mass at CATOPIA to be a part of our LOVE CATS Campaign.

Do you believe in the right of cats to be a part of our homes and to live without fear on our streets? Be our LOVE CATS Ambassador too by sending us a picture of you and your cat to mews@catwelfare.org and how you fell in love with your special feline.

MEOW!!



CHARMED LIFE

The minute he was saved from a home facing eviction for having 45 cats, Milo became the furry star of Warner Music's Bruno Mars promo music video "Versace On the Floor" as the face of cat rescue and adoption. Continuing his stroke of luck, he met Karen Ang and her son Matthew and the rest, as they say, is history. All the best with your new family, Milo. You are a champ!



Subscribe to MEWS to be kept up-to-date on the latest Singaporean feline adventures at mews@catwelfare.org.

Donate. www.catwelfare.org/donation

Volunteer. www.catwelfare.org/volunteer

Front Cover Photo: Tan Si Yan

Editor: Veron Lau

Contributors: Vanessa Vanderstraaten, Sunny Johar and Thenuga Vijakumar

Designer: Pearlyn Sim and Lim Ting

Publishing Consultant: Darby Media Pte Ltd

MCI 131/01/2017

