

Happy Cats Haven

2017 Annual Report

538 Happy Stories



Last summer, a lady called about a cat she was feeding who had showed up in the yard, thin and hungry.

The lady was about to go away for a month and worried for the kitty. With our help, she tried putting food into a carrier. Surprisingly, the kitty walked right in. Within 3 days after coming into Happy Cats, Lilabelle was already blinking at us and making biscuits!



We quickly found her a loving family and now she's sleeping the deep sleep of a cat who knows she's finally safe again.

Support for all nine lives

We found forever homes for 538 cats and kittens in 2017, with another 16 returned to their guardians and another 77 in safe haven at the shelter or with our foster families at year's end. We had increased our percentage of shelter cat adoptions completed in the Pikes Peak Region to over 12% in 2016 and were on track to do the same in 2017.



Lilabelle is one of 288 adults adopted in 2017, including seniors and catolescents 5 months and older (per our State agency PACFA). With almost 54% of our adoptions adults, we stay as committed to rescuing them as we are the easy-to-adopt kittens.

They come from all walks of life: people unable to find housing that allows cats, people who have lost their homes or with allergies or whose cats don't mix, veterinarian referrals and wonderful cats like Lilabelle, abandoned on the street.

We completed over 20% of all shelter kitten adoptions in 2016 in the Pikes Peak region. We respond to daily calls for help rescuing them from the thousands and thousands who are homeless, born mostly from abandoned teen moms, not owner-surrenders.

Our foster families work very hard to rehabilitate these traumatized babies. They are very resource-intensive, and we support them with everything they need until they are adopted. They become loving, happy cats who do not add to the homeless population, breaking the chain of homelessness in our community.



Cat lives can span a human generation, 15–20 years. We are here to support the full life cycle of all cats, as many of their nine lives as they need.

changes our mobile families put them through. We walk our talk, devoting our precious resources to ensuring they stay in their homes long after they go out the door.

Since 2011, we have modeled and taught better ways to live with these often fragile, complex and close-to-the-wild creatures.

Keeping cat families together

We continued to keep friends and families together, with 41% of our adoptions going to pairs, triplets and 1 quadruple in 2017! Because cats take care of themselves in the wild without the help of a pack, they can be slow to make friends. A sibling will almost always be the best friend a cat can have, setting them up for life with confidence and flexibility.



Whenever cat friends come to us as adults, we try very hard to find them homes together too. That may mean a longer stay for them since most people already have more than one cat, but it usually pays off with an easier transition when they have a built-in buddy to help them settle in.



It's especially gratifying to watch cats make new friends in our comfy colonies, so we do everything we can to place them together too. Our Petco-sponsored **Buddy Discount** helps us get them home without giving them away, modeling our conviction that cats are a valuable, long-term companionship commitment, not just the equivalent of a curb alert on Craigslist.

Fear Free Handling

The Fear Free Pets movement is based on the fact that stress plays a huge part in the disease and behavior problems of our pets, especially our feline friends.

We have been committed to those values since we opened in 2011. Stress at shelters is proven to make perfectly wonderful house cats so scared they act like they're feral, dramatically increasing their chances for euthanasia in conventional shelters.



We are now Fear Free Certified, with 4 staff and volunteers having completed the course. More importantly, we are directly applying this knowledge to improve the techniques we pioneered that help ensure cats who come into the Haven are always treated with care and respect.

Happy & healthy



It takes a lot of people to keep this many animals healthy, especially when the shelter environment—even our gentle one!—can be so stressful. We have maintained our high standards for hygiene and pathogen control with the help of skilled staff members who have veterinary training and experience. Their expertise allowed us to do most of our own combo virus testing, fecals and parasite testing this year.

Since we had more kittens than our partner veterinarians could keep up with, we sought help from the Denver Dumb Friends League's Solutions Clinic, a feline-only clinic funded just for Colorado cats and kittens, saving us almost \$8,000 in spay/neuter costs.

This savings, and that from our in-house testing, helped offset other serious medical and dental issues for 27 special needs cats and kittens--like Fettuccine with his entropion and serious allergies, car victim Jagger with his tail amputation, two cats with echocardiograms and dentals for most of our seniors.

Our partner veterinarians also helped us with spays and neuters for 91 cats and kittens in 2017, at an average of \$60 per surgery. In total, we fixed 310 animals, continuing our commitment to stop them from adding to the region's serious cat overpopulation.



We also thank all our other veterinary partners who offered free initial exams to adopters to get our kitties off to a great start! Some of them also helped us save cats in their own practices from owner-requested euthanasias. This included sweet senior Dora, abused by her family and now ready for a new life.



Our priceless volunteers

We continued to add to our volunteer roster last year, up to 150+, including our foster families! Our volunteers devote thousands and thousands of work hours to keeping our shelter as loving, clean and healthy as possible. It's estimated the time our volunteers donate is worth an additional \$200,000+ in care for the cats, but of course, we know they are all priceless!

Our Foster Program saw an extremely busy 2017, managing an average of 70 cats and kittens

in care (with 112 in June alone!) and 34 foster families at the peak.

Our volunteers keep our personnel costs lean, so most of our funding can be channeled directly to the costs of feeding, housing and caring for our kitties.



Save still means stay



We have been around long enough to see the toll that human lifestyle changes can take on even the most adaptable cat. Our returns in 2017 increased 1%, probably from efforts to make sure all adopters know we are their safety net and will take our cats back at any time.

This is usually nobody's fault...least of all the cat's. Families have their own challenges and some cats—like those raised in loving, Fear Free foster homes like our happy kittens--can roll with the changes better than others.

We take all the time a cat and potential adopter needs to carefully craft each adoption, matching them to every member of the family. Each time a cat is adopted, we learn more about their needs and roles within the family. This helps us fine tune

their adoption if they need to find another home. We believe the right home for the right cat is out there and we keep trying until we find it.

We are also there to provide support when the cats need it most. We referred 46 cats to our behavior consultant, Melissa Shandley of Play & Treat Pet Services, who helped with 25 Happy Cats as well as 21 cats from community members who called us. She and Carole Galloway of Colorado Cats Boarding put their decades of experience to work with advice, home assessments and home installations to give each Happy Cat the best chance of living out their lives with their new families. It's not a **save** until they **stay**!



Kitty School

Part of our commitment to all cats is helping more people learn what makes them tick and how to help them survive—and thrive!—with us, as well as our other pets.

Since 2011, we have been supporting all cat lovers with classes to help them learn what their cats are trying to tell them, as well as how to communicate back.

Cats' two primary predators are larger carnivores and primates. So who do they live with? Dogs and people. It can be tough being a cat.

Tony Buffington, DVM



We continued our monthly Kitty Kindergarten, Click with Your Cat, Eat-Play-Love Cat Enrichment and Litterbox 101 classes for the public in 2017. We also continued to teach children at the Humane Society's Camp Whiskers & Wags by providing clicker training classes for cats.

Public owner-requested euthanasias in our region have gone down since we started and we intend to keep helping that trend with our educational support.

Purrs for the community

We shared the good work we do with lots of fun events in 2017. In February and October, we held our **Purr Me a Story** event with Pikes Peak Library District, with lots of excited children reading to lots of purring, happy cats. We also partnered with PPLD and Bristol Brewing for a

book club, as well as spotlighting ambassador cat Peaches and her clicker training skills in June for their **Pet Week**.



We once again partnered with Best Friends Animal Society and continued to share our feline perspective at the **Pet Expo** and **Pawtoberfest**.

Republic of Paws helped us with a **Kitten Shower** to go along with **Fosterfest**, our open house for new foster parents. Catagonia Cat Hotel sponsored **Every Cat Tells a Story** with Sky Heartsong, the animal communicator who has helped us with so many of our cats.



Our **Purrfectly Spoiled Spa Day** was a huge success, with support from vendors who got to showcase their wonderful products and services for 48 elegant cat ladies. We debuted our **Happy Cats Birthday Parties** last year and quietly held 5 of them in 2017, with cake, crafts and tours of the Haven. They are a great way to model compassion for kids on their special day!



Our cats got almost monthly adoption specials throughout the year to help them find their homes. In October, our foster cat Fettuccine represented us at the **Blessing of the Animals** at the Broadmoor Community Church, standing in for all our kitties who needed extra prayers for their health and healing.



We appreciate the local restaurants and bars who supported us sharing our Happy Cats family with them, including Smiling Toad for **St. Patrick's (St Catricks!) Day**, Cacao Chocolatier just in time for Easter, Panera, the Brass Tap, Pizzeria Rustica with their **Wine Tour** from Coaltrain Wine & Spirits, Bristol Brewing for **Karma Hour & Give Black Lager**, and the bars involved in our **Cat Cocktail Competition**.

This was a fun contest we added to our signature event, the **Academy Awards**. Bartenders from 502 W, Bar-K, Axe & the Oak, Brooklyn's on Boulder and the Principal's Office competed in several categories, judged by Claire Swinford, Stephen Winchell and Griffin Swartzell. We also offered lots of fun live and silent auctions.

The winning award (real catuettes this year, thanks to the Manitou Art Center's Maker Space!) went to our hard-working TNR Coordinator Barb Jones. For their part in promoting the welfare of all cats, we also awarded catuettes to businesses Catagonia Cat Hotel, who regularly provides foster space for several adults, and to Chuck & Don's of Castle Rock, who helped us find homes for 32 cats and kittens in 2017!



The holidays brought craft events at Painting with a Twist on Garden of the Gods and Art@Altitude, giving everyone a fun way to help the kitties as well as go home with paintings and ornaments for the holidays.

We ended the year with a packed house for our **Trivial Pursuit** event for Indy Give! with MC Emily Roehler from KKTU at Bar-K Lounge on Veteran's Day, with the winning Team America cleaning up in both cat and military trivia!



We are also again very grateful to our media partners. The Pikes Peak Bulletin has been supporting us since we opened with a free weekly ad to get out the word for our kitties, as did Life After 50 in 2017. We supported both papers with ads, as well as the Colorado Springs Independent and the Gazette. We especially appreciate the support of the Independent through **Indy Gives!** and the great article that the Gazette ran on our new building.

Fox21 News, in partnership with **Indy Give!**, ran a great story on us in December, including a spot starring kitten Acorn who decided to help out with the morning weather report! KRDO News also helped us out with December coverage of our new building.

Lending a Paw

Besides our generous donors, grants were our only other source of funding, totaling over \$38,000 last year. These grants help us pay for the care of adopted seniors and special needs cats through our **Love Knows No Age** grant from the Laretta Boyd Charitable Trust Foundation, TNR spays and neuters from Best Friends Animal Society and regular spays/



neuters from the Colorado Pet Overpopulation Fund, keeping cat families together with our **Buddy Discount** through the Petco Foundation, condos for our new space from the Alice Jenkins Fund and our **Ask Ms Kitty Helpline** from Maddie's *fund*, in the process of being created now.

We once again qualified for Indy Give!, our hometown fundraising campaign supported by the Colorado Springs Independent. We raised

almost \$28,000 for our operations, including donations from our beer-loving cat fans who again contributed with their love of Bristol Brewing's Give Black Lager. We are very grateful to all our generous supporters through Give!, especially to our Matching Donors: Adam's Mountain Café, Arthur L. Borgersen, Catagonia Cat Hotel, Betsy & Chris Miller, Lana Rollins, the Happy Cats Board, Red Dog Coffee & Café, and Kenton R. Fickes, DVM, in honor.



We are very excited to be one of the few Colorado Springs organizations to join Community Shares of Colorado. This is a workplace giving program that also encompasses state and federal employers.

Caring for our community cats



Based on the volume of calls we got from people asking for help with homeless outside cats and kittens in 2017, the number of unfixed cats increased dramatically in the Pikes Peak Region.

So many of these teen moms were once someone's cute little kitten who quickly turned into an unfixed catolescent,

pregnant and struggling to keep themselves and their babies alive on the street. Under the direction of our TNR Coordinator Barb Jones, we always take care of the mother cats first, ensuring they are fixed and their kittens are safe,

Almost singlehandedly, Barb was responsible for 426 spays and neuters, contributing at least a third of the total TNR surgeries in our region, if numbers hold from last year. It's no wonder she's our Community Cat Hero!

then evaluating whether they can be brought in. We give them all a second chance, turning terrified cats and kittens into loving companions.

Combined with the 310 spays and neuters we contributed for adoptable cats, that's 736 surgeries (282 of them through the Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region) that prevented literally thousands and thousands of needless deaths and untold suffering in the Pikes Peak Region.

We received funding for this through Best Friends Animal Society as well as assistance with their surgeries through Solutions Clinic of Denver Dumb Friends League and the Humane Society.



We once again gathered food for community cats from St. Paws Thrift Store & Rescue Bank, PetSmart Castle Rock, Chuck and Don's, Ft. Carson Commissary, Wag 'n Wash and Walmart to distribute to Colony Managers, including our annual food drive for **National Feral Cat Month** in October. Again, almost by herself, Barb delivers food that feeds 1,200-1,500 needy community cats per day, cats who are either fixed or on the radar to get spayed or neutered.

TNR is not our mission, but remains a part of our commitment to spaying and neutering all cats in order to help lower feline overpopulation. Please call us at 719-362-4600 if you can help Barb with this program by trapping, transporting or delivering food to those in need.

Every little bit helps

As always, we are overwhelmed by the generosity of our Happy Cats Family! Along with the hundreds of people who contributed to our operations financially, we so appreciate all the kind in-kind donations we received last year. These came from individuals as well as entities like the East Library and the Chuck & Don's in Centennial.

Another generous Eagle Scout, Robert Timmons, donated his time and expertise for a project for disinfectable cat



trees that we are storing to use in our new building, Planet Happy Cat.

We continue to be very grateful to Rory Wagner of the Citadel Crossing Petsmart, for his unwavering support of Happy Cats.



Fair weather

2017 was a banner year for kittens, probably because of the mild weather, with foster kittens available well

into December! We carefully selected only the most confident

ones for **Kitten Adoption Fairs**, as the

commotion can be stressful. We held two fairs at Chuck & Don's, fairs at Wag 'n' Wash and Catagonia Cat Hotel on the Westside and with both PetSmart and Petco as we brought the year to a close. We appreciate these partnerships that allowed us to reach even more Happy Cat adopters!



Happy Cats Shop

We have reached the limits of space in our Happy Cats Shop, but continued to add a few cat-tested products to support keeping both cats and their people happy, including a new design of Happy Cats t-shirts.

Our partner Michael Chudzinski of Feline Furnishings produced 61 trees and scratchers for our happy cats and kittens in 2017. He is as committed as we are to keeping our cats with paws and claws intact. His locally produced, sustainable products continue to help us save cats and kittens from the pain and trauma that are proven to result from declawing.

Planet Happy Cat

friends





Our new building became a reality in 2017! We had our **Groundscooping** in July, after our plans were finally approved by the Regional Building Department of Colorado Springs.

Our construction crew, DLM Enterprises, wasted no time diving in, cat ears and all! Our initial nest egg will allow us to take the building through Phase 1 to finishing the base shell, with roof, doors and windows intact.

Phase 2 will see us completing the first floor so that we can move in with the population we currently house, we hope by May of 2018.

Phase 3 will see us focusing on the second floor, where we will finish 6 colonies and eventually double the number of homeless cats and kittens we can save. Most of these sunny and spacious colony rooms will have their own secure outside catios. We will also have dedicated rooms for kittens and singles, plus a sanctuary for seniors to soak up the sun.

A modern medical wing will provide even better disease control and our garden will offer quiet space for purrflection for our community as well as our staff and volunteers. Two attached apartments will help stabilize our rent to an estimated 25% of current rates.



We have recycled and repurposed much of the old building, as the patchwork of plywood shows on the exterior, used also for the roof. Old concrete sidewalks have been broken up to be used in our garden walls, and old doors and windows will be re-used in the interior. Excess plywood is going to Feline Furnishings to make more cat trees and scratchers for our

community, a full circle of sustainability!

Thanks to everyone in our extended Happy Cats Family, we will be doing even more to help homeless cats and kittens in the Pikes Peak Region for 2018 and beyond! Purrs and headbonks to you all from the volunteers & staff of Happy Cats...and all our cats & kittens!

2017 by the numbers:

538 cats & kittens were adopted at HCH in 2017, including –

288 adults, catolescents & seniors = **54% of adoptions**

250 kittens = **46% of adoptions**

615 total cats & kittens found safe haven at HCH in 2017, including fosters (**up 10%**)

12% of all shelter cat adoptions in the Pikes Peak Region were completed by HCH alone

224 bonded cat friends & family adopted together = **41% of adoptions**

150+ volunteers gave their time & love (**up 14%**)

426 community cats spayed or neutered in 2017 (**up over 50%**)

736 total spays & neuters, preventing **thousands** of needless cat & kitten deaths

Total veterinary costs for cats & kittens in 2017: **\$50,000+ (down 26%)**

Total cost for food & litter: **\$19,800+ (up 18%)**

Average cost for a spay or neuter: **\$60 (up 17%)**

91 fabulous community partners supporting Happy Cats!

