

A not-for-profit organization improving the lives of feral and abandoned cats.
BerkshireAnimalDREAMS.org

OUR MISSION:

to have all feral cat colonies in Berkshire County managed and stabilized, with healthy cats and a zero reproductive rate, with kittens and non-feral cats socialized and adopted out into loving homes. All cats are health-screened, spayed/neutered and vaccinated prior to release or adoption.



An ear tip identifies a feral cat that has been spayed or neutered and is part of a managed colony.

**THOUSANDS OF FERAL CATS LIVE AROUND US,
RIGHT HERE IN BERKSHIRE COUNTY.**

Nationally, it is estimated that there are over 70 million feral cats in the U.S. This means roughly one feral cat for each four people. Most people are not even aware of the feral cats living around them. Their wild nature and fear cause them to avoid humans. They are most often seen at night, moving through the shadows as they search for food, shelter, and mates.

Feral cats are found in affluent subdivisions, and in poverty-stricken inner-city neighborhoods. They live on farms, at marinas, in industrial parks. They seek shelter in abandoned buildings, under porches, in barns. Wherever they find a source of food—near schools, hospitals, restaurants, town dumps, they will be found.

Who has a harder time in the wild: uncared-for male or female cats? Both suffer tremendously and live short lives, just in very different ways.

Male cats are usually discarded because they start urine-marking, fighting and becoming aggressive. Once out there, they must endure territorial fights with the horrible injuries they bring (infected bite and scratch wounds, serious eye injuries, spread of diseases) and encounters with dogs and vehicles as they navigate unfamiliar neighborhoods seeking females and food. The simple procedure called neutering would end all those unpleasant behaviors.

A female cat, let out or abandoned, may give birth at 6-7 months old, long before adulthood. She must seek food and shelter while her health is taxed by the kittens growing inside her. Many have difficult deliveries and can die giving birth or from infection, or give birth to weak or stillborn kittens. They must try to protect and feed their kittens while trying to find food and remain safe themselves.

Animal D.R.E.A.M.S. is committed to helping this neglected population of cats. Without intervention, feral and abandoned cats will endure injuries, illness and hazards, cutting their lives short, while their offspring continue the breeding cycle. By providing food, insulated shelters and vet care for ferals, and finding homes for kittens and strays, we are making the difference between life and death for these dignified animals.

A Day In The Life

No two days are ever the same for Animal D.R.E.A.M.S. Every phone call can bring another rescue situation to our attention. Some of the many, many calls we have responded to this year: a stray cat panicked with her head stuck in a chain-link fence; a cat seen crossing route 7 dragging its leg; a feral cat trapped at the bottom of a 20 foot concrete flood control chute, with heavy rains expected; a feral cat with kittens inside a building about to be demolished...in addition to our many Trap-Neuter-Return (T-N-R) projects.

As the only organization working directly on the streets and in the field, animal shelters, police, animal control officers and veterinarians often refer people to us. We are the *only* chance for many cat's survival, going wherever we must go, in all weather, any time night or day, to rescue feral or stray cats in crisis. Some of the many happy endings are highlighted below:

Max's Story

We rescued Max as a feral cat, skinny and frightened. Max was surviving thanks to a concerned family who was leaving food out for him. They and other neighbors had tried, with no luck, to catch him in a trap used for garden animals. We went there and on our second attempt, had him.

Scared, wild, and unneutered, Max didn't hiss or growl—he just cowered. After a few hours he let me touch his head. After a few days, he was letting me pick him up, and even started purring. Slowly, he trusted.

Max is now living like a king with his new owner, who absolutely loves him. These two guys have really bonded, and Max has toys, beds, good food, a warm lap, and a great window view over the streets he once tried to survive on. For Max, and the thousands of cats we have rescued, walking into one of our humane traps was the beginning of the best years of his life!

Mama Kitty and her Little Dumpling

Why did this cat leave her newborn kitten on the upper landing of an apartment building, and not return? We may never know, but a mother cat's instincts are rarely wrong. In this case, we saved two lives, that of her and her kitten.

A tenant found the kitten squealing with hunger, its eyes still closed. We went to the site immediately. We started bottle-feeding the infant, keeping it warm with hot-water bottles and blankets in a carrier, and set out a trap nearby to catch the mother when (if) she reappeared. We returned every two hours to feed the kitten, but hours passed and still no sign of the mother. We searched and listened for other kittens as well, to no avail. Finally, at 10 pm (a full thirteen hours since the call came in), we caught the mother. She and her kitten were reunited, and fostered in the warmth of our director's home.

The mother was quickly tame, but because we had seen blood near the rescue site, we took her to the vet immediately. She was able to nurse her kitten until it was weaned, and we were thrilled to witness the way the mother cat lovingly raised her kitten and taught her all she needed to know. To complete this happy ending, they were adopted together, and now live a wonderful indoor life as they bring joy and humor to their new owner.

www.BerkshireAnimalDREAMS.org

Our deep thanks to Susan Buchholz (SB Ink) who designed our new logo, and to Leh-Wen Yau (WSI Intelligent Solutions) who donated his time and expertise for our new website.



Animal D.R.E.A.M.S. Board of Directors:

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MOXIE's RESCUE

Our managed feral cat colonies are cared for by dedicated volunteers, who go out every day, 365 days a year, regardless of the weather, holidays, etc. to feed, water and check on the feral cats in their care. Occasionally, a new cat will appear, and if accepted by the cats in that territory, will join that colony, where we can then do T-N-R (Trap-Neuter-Return.)

Janice, a dedicated volunteer who cares for three colonies in Great Barrington, noticed a new cat lurking near a feeding station. She started to feed the newcomer separately, hoping to capture her for T-N-R. But the new cat disappeared. When she reappeared three weeks later, she was thin, dehydrated, and limping badly. She held her front leg up; a large flap of fur and skin hung from her bloody wound.

It took Janice and me over three hours to catch her in the large, full parking lot. She was very scared, moving from under one car to another. It was cold, dark, and rainy (typical rescue weather!), but we vowed not to leave until we had her, even if it took all night. Crawling around with our flashlights, we eventually herded her under a truck and set up a live trap and bowls of food. She'd started to meow, very weakly, as we called out and tried to coax her closer. Yet each time she got within reach, she would get frightened and limp away. We kept talking to her, tossing bits of canned tuna her way, and trying to build trust in this hurt cat. Finally, after several attempts, she ventured into our trap for food, and we had her! She seemed almost as relieved as we were. She had a complete de-gloving injury, exposing her raw flesh and tendons. Her injury was treated at the Animal ER in Pittsfield, where it was determined that she was a declawed, spayed cat.

Moxie was not a feral cat, she was a pet! Declawed cats should never, ever be outdoors. Was she lost, or thrown away? We may never know.

Moxie has had a long road to recovery, with bandage changes every day for months, as new skin grows over her injury. A generous sponsor has underwritten Moxie's special care, and she is happy in a foster home. If an owner doesn't step forward, Moxie will be placed for adoption into a loving, indoor home.

Wish List

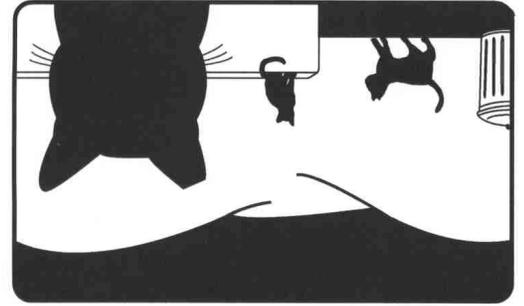
Animal D.R.E.A.M.S, Inc. is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law. We are a grass-roots organization receiving no public funding, and are wholly dependent on private donations to continue our important mission. Your donation stays in Berkshire County, helping local animals who live among us.

- ◆ DONATIONS
- ◆ FOOD, FOOD, FOOD! Always in need of food, dry and canned, for the many feral cats we feed and for those in foster care.
- ◆ INDIVIDUALS TO BUILD SHELTERS FOR FERAL CATS. (We'll provide the materials.) A great project for the backyard hobbyist, a school woodworking class, or club.
- ◆ TOWELS OR SMALL FLEECE BLANKETS
- ◆ CAT LITTER
- ◆ MOTION-ACTIVATED DIGITAL SCOUTING CAMERA
- ◆ POLAROID FILM for ID photos
- ◆ DIGITAL CAMERA
- ◆ BALES OF HAY
- ◆ A NEW VEHICLE to replace our current Catmobile, which is failing fast after constant use
- ◆ VOLUNTEERS to train for trapping/transport of feral cats for TNR program, and to feed cats at feeding stations.
- ◆ BLEACH, PAPER TOWELS AND DISPOSABLE GLOVES (MEDIUM AND LARGE)

Need a gift for someone?

Consider making a donation in his or her name to Animal D.R.E.A.M.S. Consider sponsoring a feral cat — \$100 will pay for all the veterinary care for one feral cat, as well as its food for one month.

ANIMAL D.R.E.A.M.S.



B E R K S H I R E



Animal D.R.E.A.M.S., Inc.
PO Box 1073
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Butterball and Pippi are 2-month-old kittens rescued just before Thanksgiving from under a shed in Pittsfield. After some Animal DREAMS' detective work, their hiding place was found and they were reunited with their newly-spayed mother (one of a group of seven feral cats.) Many kittens born in the wild do not survive their first winter, succumbing to disease, cold, predators, and starvation. Now this brother and sister are happy and healthy, and looking forward to their new life, together in a safe, indoor home. They are almost tame already.

Winter 2006-07