



Mewsletter

For the friends of the Independent Cat Society, a no-kill cat shelter

Summer 2003

Need Luck(y) in your life?

by Sue O'Leary

I've always admired the unusual. I guess that explains why one of my favorite shelter cats is Lucky.

Now, we really don't have "favorites." How could we? Every shelter cat is beautiful and special. But, when I visit the shelter, I always say goodbye to a few cats before I leave. Lucky has always been one.

Lucky is a miniature puma. He is black, sleek and bony. His face is exotic, with high cheekbones and almond eyes. He looks like a cat who just stepped from the dark jungles of Africa.

He has an attitude to match. Whenever you see him, Lucky will demand to be let out of his room. To persuade you, he stretches his long, sinewy body up high on his room's screen door, as if he's reaching for the door handle. He looks you in the eye and emits a most pitiful, high-pitched cry. The look on his face makes you feel like you've just been given the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to set a circus animal free.

Once sprung from his room, Lucky's behavior is a crap shoot. If he's in a good mood, he'll swirl his shiny body around your legs. He might even raise his front paws to rest on your thighs, with hopes that you'll stroke his bony head for a spell.

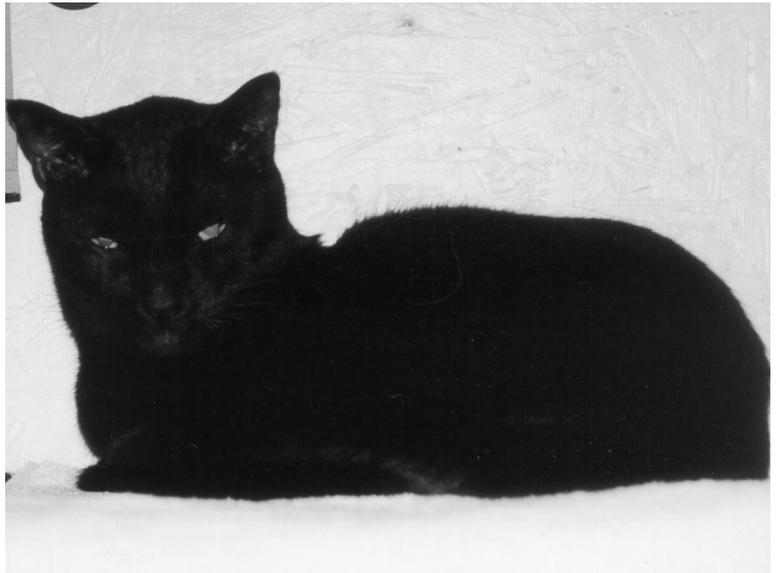
If he's cranky, he'll run off in a blur, ignore you, or maybe even snarl at you. (Some people don't like this. Hey, that's just Lucky being Lucky.)

One of Lucky's more notorious character traits? He likes to claim things for his own, in true cat fashion (if you know what I mean). Oh, well -- get out the disinfectant.

Once Lucky settles down, you'll find him high on the laundry room shelves, snuggling sweetly with his nose buried in a flannel sheet just out of the dryer.

When it's time to put Lucky back in his room, you must pretend this is not what you're doing. You must approach him casually, acting like you simply want to pet him. Only then can you gently, but firmly, lift him from his sleeping place and quickly carry him down the hall to his room. On the way, he'll act like he's going to bite you. (Lots of people don't like that, either.) But he never does.

If you're in a hurry, Lucky will make sure it takes you all day to catch him. His favorite hiding place is beneath



Lucky could bring good fortune to the right person.

the wash tub. If you make the mistake of letting him go there, forget it. You're done.

That's why Lucky frequently earns the run of the shelter at night. He's hard to fool, so many can't catch him.

We always wonder what Lucky does at night when he has the run of the place. Does he open the file cabinets, reading the cats' medical records? Does he get out the can opener and sample different flavors? Does he make a pot of coffee and settle down with a good book? Does he go from room to room, sticking out his tongue and teasing his other friends?

We don't know what Lucky does in the dark. But for all his bravado, he's really a "pussycat." How do we know? Because he's plastered to the door the following morning, waiting for pets and hugs from whomever is on the other side.

In a "Lucky" world . . . it's all good.

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Newsletter

*Published for the friends of the
Independent Cat Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 735, Westville, IN 46391
(219) 785-4936
www.catsociety.org*

The Independent Cat Society, Inc., founded in 1977, is a nonprofit, cageless, no-kill cat shelter on US Rt 6 at the Porter/La Porte County Line Rd in Westville, Indiana.

The Independent Cat Society mission is to promote the welfare of all animals, especially cats, through the reduction of pet overpopulation, the education of the public, the prevention of cruelties to animals, promotion of responsible pet ownership and by working for more humane legislation.

Adoption hours:

Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Sundays, 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Others by appointment.
Please call (219) 785-4936.

Adoption fee: \$65

Includes: Spay/neuter; vet exam; feline leukemia test and vaccination; FIV test; FVRCP vaccination; worm, flea & ear mite treatment; tattoo ID and temporary cat carrier.



Board of Directors

Susan O'Leary, President
Paulette Gonzalez, Vice President
Sandy Robelia, Recording Secretary
Becky Bolton, Corresponding Secretary
Carol Tomerlin, Treasurer
Board members:
Brenda Mikolajczak
Sue Ogg
James Granzow

The Board of Directors meets the fourth Monday of every month. Please call the shelter for meeting location.

Calendar of Events

The "Neuter Scooter" is coming to the Independent Cat Society! Saturday, June 28. \$40 for spay/neuter and vaccinations. Get those strays and barn cats fixed! Make an appointment at 465-9100 or theneuterscooter@yahoo.com.

New and Improved! Garden Tour, Sunday, July 13, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. Tour Wieggle Gardens, in nearby Springville, Indiana. Five acres of flowering trees, shrubs, summer blooming plants and wild areas. Tickets are \$10. Please see story on page 5.

Chesterton Feed and Garden Customer Appreciation Days Saturday, August 30, 10 am - 5 pm. Cat crafts, information, 50/50 raffle tickets, 400 Locust St., Chesterton.

50-50 Drawing, Sunday, August 31, 4 pm. \$1 each/6 for \$5; winner need not be present.

Popcorn Fest, Saturday, September 6, 7 am - 5 pm. Cat crafts and information. Downtown Valparaiso.

Look for our Independent Cat Society Yard Sale this fall! (We are not accepting items for the sale. We do not have storage for them. Please do not bring items to the shelter.)

We need volunteers! Please call the shelter if you can make crafts, bake, or help at events -- 785-4936.

The Independent Cat Society sells

Eagle Pack

dry cat food!

**This all-natural, high meat protein food contains no by-products or artificial preservatives.
Rated a "Top Pick" by *The Whole Cat Journal!***

Buy this wholesome, healthy food for your cats and support the shelter at the same time!

16.5 lb bag -- \$22.50

6.6 lb bag -- \$11.25

**Available for purchase at the shelter,
Saturdays, 10 am to 4 pm
and Sundays, 1 pm to 4 pm.**

President's Message

The "President's Message" in the last edition of the *Mewsletter* made one of our readers very unhappy.

She said we were "lamenting" the fact that we can't accept all homeless cats, and she was angry that we accepted Darby, who was featured on the front cover, from our recording secretary.

If you recall, our recording secretary found Darby starving and wandering Main Street in Hobart. We're happy to say that from that story, Darby found a permanent foster home. Yet, also from this one story, the reader who wrote the complaint letter concluded that we accept cats only from our board members and employees.

Nothing could be further from the truth. We receive many requests for admission, and we evaluate each request separately. No, we can't approve all admissions requests. But, we can assure you, most of the cats at the shelter ARE NOT from employees, volunteers and board members.

Nevertheless, we have no apologies for accepting cats from our volunteers, employees and board members once in a while. After all, they put in a lot of blood, sweat and tears -- literally -- for the shelter.

Our board members don't just attend a two hour meeting once a month. They, and all our volunteers, work hard for our shelter cats. Most of them have several "jobs" at the shelter in addition to their 40 hour-a-week jobs. They transport cats to the vet, bake and make crafts for our fundraisers, clean the shelter, give medications and vaccinations, do laundry and make unending phone calls, to name just a few.

They also spend a lot of sleepless nights worrying about our sick cats and thinking about how to make life better for our shelter cats.

I don't know why sometimes people choose to send these kinds of let-

ters. It's not fair for them to jump to conclusions before they know all the facts. When they do, it's unfortunate, because only the animals suffer. It's sad that sometimes people who profess to be animal lovers end up hurting the animals they profess to love by withdrawing their support.

We're probably always going to get a few letters like this one. I'm sure all shelters do. And, we try to address those as best we can. But, most of the letters and comments we receive are positive. Most people recognize that the "business" of animal welfare is very challenging. Most people understand the constraints of budget, time and space animal welfare workers face every day. Thank you for your understanding and compassion.

This summer, we have a "new and improved" Garden Tour that you won't want to miss. It's Sunday, July 13, in nearby Springville, Indiana. Details are on page 5.

There's still time to get your 50/50 raffle tickets -- the drawing is August 31.

You'll enjoy Sandy Robelia's touching tribute to Tony, on page 4. Tony won our hearts when he was at the shelter, then stole the hearts of Sandy and her husband, Art, when he went to live at their house after being diagnosed with kidney disease.

On page 5, you'll be enlightened when you read about the trials and tribulations of our Sponsor-A-Cat spokescat, Nikki. Nikki is also the shelter resident with the most seniority. You'll never see him the same way again.

We wish all of you a safe, happy and restful summer. Please don't forget our homeless cats and kittens, and spay and neuter your pets and strays - and, to borrow a phrase from a friend -- anyone else you can get ahold of!

Wish List

Our "Wish List" always changes.

Please help us make the cats wishes come true!



We do not use litter pan liners, hooded litter pans, newspapers, or Pine Sol and other pine cleaners.

Special needs:

- Large storage garage
- Small fire extinguisher
- Pet Temp ear thermometer for pets (from Revival Animal Health: 1-800-786-4751)
- Copy machine
- Wagon
- Shepherd hooks & bird feeders
- Utility trailer

Supplies:

- Cat litter
- Paper towels
- 6" & 9" paper plates
- Bleach
- Laundry detergent
- Large and x-large trash bags

Food:

- Fancy Feast: ground variety, not chunks or sliced

Office:

- Postage stamps
- 35mm color film
- 3-hole clear report covers
- 9x12 envelopes

. . . and loving, responsible homes for our cats!

Thank you for your gifts to us!
All donations are tax-deductible.

Tribute to Tony

by Sandy Robelia

Tony passed from life April 4, leaving me with memories that weave through my thoughts like scenes from a video, some more clear and poignant than others:

- Tony at the shelter, huddled in a little round bed, sick and miserable. I think, "this cat is dying". A vet does blood tests the next day and confirms his kidneys are failing and that's how our saga begins.
- Four Independent Cat Society volunteers surround Tony as Sue teaches us to inject fluids under his skin. I'm nervous, but know I have to do this. It will help his kidneys flush deadly toxins from his body. I stick a needle into him for the first time and think, "His fur is like velvet and his skin's soft like butter!"
- I bring Tony home for foster care. A very sick, unhappy cat goes into the carrier at the shelter, but the cat who comes out when we get home flings himself down on the carpet, wiggles with joy, and then dashes from room to room checking out his new home, purring so loudly we can hear him all over the house. My husband turns to me and says, "I thought you said this cat was dying!"
- Days turn into years watching Tony enjoy life, carefree and joyous. Nightly fluid injections are a constant reminder that all is not well, but it's easy to forget the end must come.
- Tony, first in line for catnip, keeps me company as I make cat toys for the shelter. He's my shadow, following me everywhere.
- Always the greeter, Tony hustles to welcome Claudia as she visits our new home in the country. I think he believes we bought this house for him!
- I look directly into his eyes and ask, "Do you know how much I love you?" He returns my gaze and slowly, deliberately blinks twice. He has never done this before. I choose to believe he answered, "Yes, I do."



Tony, as we remember him.

- For the first time ever, Tony does not meet me at the door when I come home. I realize the end is near and pray that I'll know when it's time to help him leave.
- I see his labored breathing the next morning and the pleading, "Help me" look in his eyes. The time is now and we rush to the vet.
- Kissing his forehead, I tell him goodbye as his body goes limp and his spirit slips away.
- The lone grave under a huge tree in our back yard is marked with a stack of stones topped by a concrete cat, curled up and sleeping like Tony is.

The picture you see next to these words sits on my desk at home, a constant reminder of a loving friend and companion. Gone, but never forgotten, as long as I have my memories . . .

Kitten Haiku

Small kitten climbs stairs
pretending to be big cat.
Mew! Mew! Help me down!

by Sandy Robelia, inspired by her foster kitten, Solo

I see by his coat he must
be a stray, the untidy
look gives him away.
He's lost his will and is
so thin, hasn't eaten,
since God knows when.
I know as I coax him
through the door,
There's always room for one more.



The other night in the freezing rain,
That little female came again.
Matted and soaked, crying in need,
Lost and alone with babies to feed.
Her pleading eyes I couldn't ignore,
There's always room for one more.

There's a new face on the docks today,
Hungry but clean, to our dismay,
I stroked her head, her body rippled
When she got up I saw she was crippled
She started to go, but fell on the floor.
There's always room for one more.

There's the poor doggy in the rain,
I've tried to entice him time and again.
One ears lopsided, the other's been torn,
Blind in one eye, lost and forlorn.
He's coming now, so I'll open the door.
There's always room for one more.

These stories are true,
As I've said before,
There's always room for one more."
- Anonymous (*Thanks, Cheri*)

Who is Nikki, anyway?

by Claudia Nay

You've met him. Look closer and you'll recognize him as Nikki, Spokescat for our Sponsor-A-Cat program. He is intelligent, friendly, inquisitive, playful, and last but not least, extremely handsome!

In fact, he seems almost human. He can carry on a conversation for hours. He has a wonderfully unique voice that sounds quite like a parrot. He seems to understand what you are saying and doesn't hesitate to answer back. But you know what? There is even more to Nikki than most people know. He hasn't had an easy life, but still, through many obstacles, he's remained a cat that you'd love to know.

Nikki is 14 years old. He has lived at the shelter longer than any other resident. He came to live here, along with a sibling, when he was just seven weeks old. Nikki was soon adopted, but later returned because his family said they "didn't have time for him." Again, he was adopted but was returned because he ate the house plants! A third adoption ended in disaster because Nikki decided to mark THIS home as his own. Maybe he thought it was a sure way to have a PERMANENT home, but this practice became a habit, and sadly, no one ever wanted Nikki to share their home again.

If adoption problems aren't enough, Nikki suffers from allergies, which, at various times, have caused severe mouth infections and irritable bowel disease. All of Nikki's teeth have been extracted except two canines. His recent bout involved several ulcers on his nose. After medication failed, Nikki endured two laser surgeries to restore his



Young-at-heart Nikki, being silly

handsome face back to normal.

But through it all, Nikki perseveres! He never gives up! He actually seems to enjoy his trips to the vet, as if he knows he'll soon feel better. He likes meeting new people. He gets a chance to see the outside world and shows his appreciation with loud purrs.

And we will never give up on him. I sometimes think Nikki was put on earth just to bring joy to people who know him. But there's a lot more to it. Nikki is a survivor -- the age-old "triumph over adversity" story that we all strive to achieve, but usually fall short of.

I'm fortunate to have met Nikki. He adds joy to my life, makes me laugh. And when I hit the adversities, I think of Nikki and how he perseveres. A lesson learned from a cat -- well, why not?

New site for 2003 Garden Tour

Wiegles Gardens, in Springville, Indiana, is the site of the society's 2003 Garden Tour Sunday, July 13. The tour is 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., rain or shine, and tickets are \$10 each. The gardens are owned and lovingly tended to by Dan Wiegles.

Five acres of flowering trees, shrubs, spring and summer blooming plants and wild areas. Uneven terrain lends itself to bloodroot, forget-me-nots and lillies. The gardens are decorated with fountains for the birds and Wiegles's own charming painting of birds on wood panels. Refreshments will be served.

Directions: Springville is approximately seven miles east of Michigan City and five miles north of LaPorte. Take Rt. 20 to Rt. 39. Turn south on 39. First cross road, one city block south of 20, is Springville Road. Turn east on Springville Road to tan duplex. Take gravel road next to duplex to gardens. Watch for signs. For tickets, mail a check or money order to Leah Balsham, Box 349, Beverly Shores, IN, 46301. For more information, contact Leah at (219) 872-3033, or call the shelter at (219) 785-4936.

2003 Garden Tour Tickets - Sunday, July 13, 2003

Tickets are \$10 each. Send me _____ tickets. I have enclosed a check or money order made out to the Independent Cat Society for \$ _____.

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____ email address _____

Mail to: Leah Balsham, Box 349, Beverly Shores, IN 46301. For information, call Leah, 872-3033, or the shelter, (219) 785-4936.

Room for one more

From across a crowded room you see him looking at you. A handsome, intelligent face, you smile. He seems interested in you. As if in an old movie, you seem drawn to each other. Finally meeting in the middle of the room, you decide this is the one. Your search has ended. The emptiness of your heart and home has been filled.

This loving scene happens frequently at the Independent Cat Society and other animal shelters across this country. Many adoptions end in long-term, mutually satisfying relationships. Many others end in sadness. What began with such promise ends in anger, frustration, and neglect. The relationship is destroyed by financial responsibilities, incompatibility, and unmet needs.

Our society faces many challenges requiring changes in the care and protection of animals. Finding homes for the growing number of pets made homeless in an aging and mobile society is just one of the challenges. The last century saw legislative strides protecting children from exploitation and cruelty and gave women more rights to be responsible for their own lives. This new century gives us the opportunity and responsibility to reassess our views on the animals that share our world.

Some issues are difficult to legislate and cause a debate over whether they should fall under the jurisdiction of the government or be personal freedoms. I'm referring to the proposal by the LaPorte City Council limiting pet ownership.

Mewsings

By *Becky Zurawski*



As a volunteer at the Independent Cat Society for more than three years, I've seen what comes from the irresponsibility of some pet owners and other members of society. It's unfortunate we can't legislate things like common sense, priorities, commitment, and compassion for others. If we could, we wouldn't have to have so many other laws.

We need to consider where our concern lies. Is it that as a neighbor we might have to smell the consequences of the pet owner who doesn't clean up after their pet? Or do we feel sorry for the poor animal who has to sit or sleep in its own excrement? Which of you would like to spend your entire life at the end of a two- or three-foot chain, or in a cage? I wouldn't!

I agree we must make laws to enforce codes that make life with pets enjoyable for both animals and humans. In my opinion, to stop loving, responsible people from adopting one more "over the limit" misses the point.

As an adoption volunteer at the Independent Cat Society, one of my favorite sayings to prospective adopters is, "There's always room for one more." Let me add this disclaimer: first consider your finances, living situation, and time commitments. Every individual who has made the decision to become a pet owner has a responsibility to take these factors into account. If you have considered them and still want to adopt a pet, then by all means follow your heart.

Be the home that has room for one more!

*Can't have pets?
Have a full house?
Would you like to
SPONSOR-A-CAT?*



YES! I want to sponsor a cat from the Independent Cat Society.

I pledge to send \$10 or more each month to the Independent Cat Society for my personal sponsor cat. I will receive a photo and biography of my special cat. If I cannot continue to sponsor, I will promptly contact the shelter. **I have enclosed my check or money order for the first month.**

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Telephone _____

Month of your birthday _____ email address _____

Thank you . . .

Thank you all for your donations, letters, visits and volunteer time. Each of you is special, and we are grateful for your loyal support.

Rick Carriveau and Toni Ford, Bus and Truck Service, Westville, for cases of Friskies canned cat food.

Mario Alvarez, for providing a booth for us at Valpofest.

Elaine McDonald, for making comfy cat beds for our fundraisers.

In Loving Memory of . . .

Joan Bolen, Seth and Marge Beville, Jean Gerometta, Betty Hatfield, Jane and Ed Kingma, Cordie Swanson, Mildred Tracht.

Brandy & Sy Candiano, from Louise Vale

Carol Davis, from Jean Gerometta

Jack Czarny and Bud, from Joan Czarny

Bill/Virginia Jaspersen, from Evelyn Nickovich, Sharon Salava

Richard Keane, from Patricia Keane

Carlo Klar, from Linda Ferguson

Margaret Lundin, from Marion Lundin

Michael Minard, from Mattie Minard

Helen Meyne, from Joe/Hazel Petermen, Theresa Mangine, LaVerne

and Ruth Schrader, Judy and Ken Hartford

Edna Pennington, from Arlene Miller, Nancy Beam, Mary Medema, Jody/Jack Allen, Susan Corbett, Keystone Ridge, Marilyn Lembke, Linda McMillan

Joyce Spiess, from Boone Grove Elementary School

Jorjean Tedesco, from Judith Barnhart

LeRoy/Dorothy Wienke, from Sharon Brooks, Mary Morales, Barb Weissenfels

Norman Wolford, from Marilyn Muniz

Theresa Wyller, from Mary Lynn Williams, Michelle Wyller, Carolyn Wyller

Wilma Young, from James/Frances Young, James/Cindy Young, John Young, Alyson/Shelby Tomlinson, Amy Young

Jingle Bells, from Fran and Roger Hill

Spotty, from Gayle Holdosh

Andy and Barney , from Ralph/Lorraine Heavlin

Oliver Hugglebears, from Michelle Negro

Little One, aka Harley, from Barbara Price

Maui, from Lois Mayer

Bentley - I miss you and wish you could have lived forever, my precious boy, from Eddie Fournier

Misty, from Mr & Mrs. J. Donald Fanning

Chi-Chi, from Lorraine Klosinski

All items were received 3/1/03 - 5/17/03. Please limit your memorials/honorariums to 20 words or less, or they will be subject to editing. If we have inadvertently omitted your thank you, memorial or honorary, please call us, (219) 785-4936, so that we may correct our error.

Donate to the Independent Cat Society, at no extra cost to you!

Metro Metals recycling

Metro Metals is accepting donations of recyclable materials for the shelter, including aluminum, brass, copper, auto parts, radiators, stainless steel, alloys, paper, glass, plastic, computers, circuit boards, electric motors, scrap iron and steel.

Mention that you are recycling on behalf of the Independent Cat Society and we will receive 3 cents more per pound. Metro Metals is at 2155 W. Lincolnway, Valparaiso, 465-1459, and 1501 E. Main Street, Griffith, 922-1830. Hours are Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday, 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.

On-line shopping with iGive.com

When you register with the iGive site (www.igive.com)

and choose the Independent Cat Society as your charity, a percentage of every purchase from the 250+ web retailers -- like Amazon.com and J.C. Penney -- will be donated to the shelter. There's even a downloadable window so that you can save all your favorite iGive retailers!

Do you use a credit card for purchases?

By applying for and using an Action for Animals or Morris MasterCard, you'll earn additional income for the Independent Cat Society at no extra cost to you.

Designate the Independent Cat Society (#0147) as your charity when you apply for this credit card and a percentage of every purchase is donated to the shelter. To request an application, call 1-800-545-5885, or log on to www.animalsafe.org.

50/50 Cash Raffle Tickets

\$1 each or 6 tickets for \$5 -- Drawing August 31, 2003

Send me _____ tickets. I have enclosed _____.

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____ email address _____

Mail to: 50/50 Raffle, Independent Cat Society, P.O. Box 735, Westville, IN 46391.

Tickets are also available at the shelter, Saturday, 10 am - 4 pm, and Sundays, 1 pm - 4 pm, or call the shelter, (219) 785-4936.

INDEPENDENT CAT SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 735
WESTVILLE, IN 46391

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage Paid
Valparaiso, IN
Permit No. 134

**DON'T MISS THESE
EVENTS!**

**June is
Adopt-A-Cat Month!**



Garden Tour, Sunday, July 13

**50-50 raffle
August 31
Get your tickets now!**

**Visit us on the Web,
at www.catsociety.org**

Will you help the Independent Cat Society cats?



Become a Member!

Annual Dues:

- _____ \$500 Sustaining
- _____ \$100 Life
- _____ \$ 50 Gold Star
- _____ \$ 25 Family
- _____ \$ 15 Single
- _____ \$ 5 Student
- _____ \$ 5 Senior

Donate or Volunteer!

- _____ I am donating \$_____ for the care of the cats and kittens.
- _____ I am donating \$_____ to the Building Fund.
- _____ I will help groom cats at the shelter.
- _____ I will help give cats their medications.
- _____ I will help at fundraising events.
- _____ I will be a foster parent.
- _____ I will donate my cat-themed artwork or crafts for fundraising events.
- _____ I will bake for fundraising events.
- _____ I will make adoption follow-up telephone calls
- _____ I will help cats get good homes by becoming an adoption counselor.
- _____ I will help take care of the grounds and maintain the shelter.
- _____ I will distribute flyers for fundraisers.

Name _____ Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

_____ This is a new address. _____ Do not send a "thank you" note. Telephone _____ email _____

Clip and send to: Independent Cat Society, Inc., P.O. Box 735, Westville, IN 46391