



Funding Support for a Cat Café Adoption Event to Promote Adoptions and Social Engagement

Submitted on behalf of the The Kitty
Cat Café and Adoption Lounge
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1. STATEMENT OF NEED

In Boston alone there are over 70,000 stray cats. Massachusetts overall has more than 700,000 cats roaming the streets (“Community Cat Program”). These cats face danger from many corners: they can be injured or killed on busy streets, they can be exposed to toxic substances and rodent poisons, and they are at substantially higher risk of animal cruelty at human hands. Outside life is dangerous to the point that life expectancy for outdoor cats is five times lower than that of indoor cats (“Letting Your Cat Outside”). These cats also pose a danger to the local ecosystem: the damage they can wreak on local bird species alone through hunting is a major concern. Outdoor cats kill over two billion birds every year and are responsible for the extinction of 63 animal species (“Cats and Birds”). That's why cat shelters and rescues are such a vital resource in communities. These shelters can help curb overpopulation by removing cats from the horrendous cycle of breeding and repopulation.

A cat can give birth to around 20 kittens a year. A female cat can start having kittens at only four months old, when she's still only a kitten herself! This ties in to another vital

What is trap-neuter-return (TNR)?

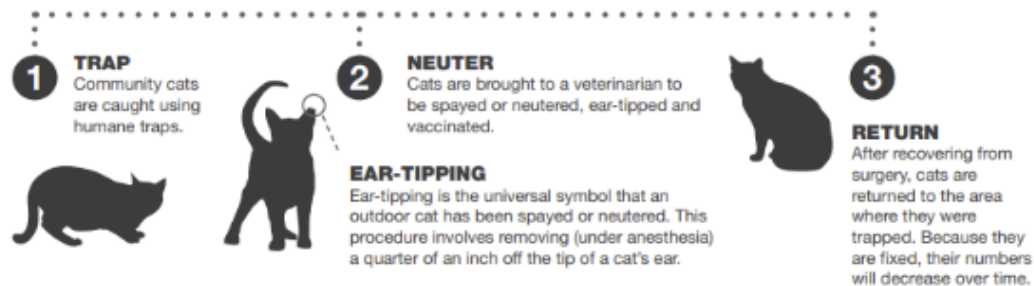


Figure 1. Infographic on the TNR program. Image taken from Best Friend's community cat infographic.

service that shelters provide: TNR. TNR stands for Trap-Neuter-Release, and it helps control cat populations by ensuring they get fixed, vaccinated, and if friendly enough, brought to a shelter. Shelters also provide vet care to local animals. Some shelters run free clinics to help animals belonging to the community receive the care they need. These organizations also help educate community members on pet care, animal welfare, and community outreach. And most importantly, shelters, rescues, and sanctuaries provide a secure place for unwanted or unsafe animals to go. These shelters help keep animals safe.

Running a cat shelter is expensive. It can cost between \$50,000 and \$150,000 a year to operate one. And despite the vital nature of the services provided by shelters, they often barely manage to keep the lights on. According to an article from the Canadian Veterinary Journal, "Funding shortfalls are common for many shelters" ("Raising the Bar"). Many shelters rely on public donations, which are limited and inconsistent. These donations fluctuate based on the financial conditions and priorities of the donors. Inconsistent funding also limits the ability of shelters to develop long term plans or projects that can better support animal welfare. Shelters also face unexpected costs caused by emergencies like natural disasters or sudden surges in surrendered cats. There are also seasonal emergencies like "kitten season" in the spring and summer, and the onset of winter when it becomes vital to get cats inside.

The operational costs of maintaining a shelter are significant. They have to maintain facilities and for shelters with paid staff, pay salaries. They must provide animals with food, supplies, and medical care. The veterinary costs are one of the largest expenses. Many shelter cats are sick, injured, or have special needs and therefore require medical treatment. These treatments can be extensive and in some cases, life long. When shelters

don't have the funds they need, their ability to continue helping animals plummets ("Make A resolution"). Overcrowding is a common problem and it is very detrimental to the wellbeing of the animals. It also limits their capacity: no-kill shelters begin to turn away animals and municipal shelters have to resort to euthanasia. Animals with behavioral or health issues that can be resolved with care and attention have to be put down because of the excessive demands. Veterinary expenses become overwhelming, which in turn leads to more overcrowding as shelters can't pay for spay and neuter surgeries.

Lack of funding also diverts shelters' focus away from their main priority: facilitating adoptions. When they are so overwhelmed with maintenance costs, veterinary expenses, and keeping cats off the streets, services like adoption counseling and community outreach fall to the wayside.

Overwhelmed staff cannot advise potential adopters on what animal would best fit their lifestyles or explain what needs an animal has. They also can't provide support after the adoption, which is crucial to make sure that an adoption is successful and that human and animal are safe and cohabitating well. Adoption events are restricted as well. These events, which are often arranged in partnership with organizations or the community, can increase visibility and boost adoption rates ("Adoption Events"). They also have indirect benefits. Socializing animals and getting them used to interacting with humans is crucial to their wellbeing and makes them more adoptable. And these events are good not just for the animals, but for the people too. They bring attention to the shelter and its programs and

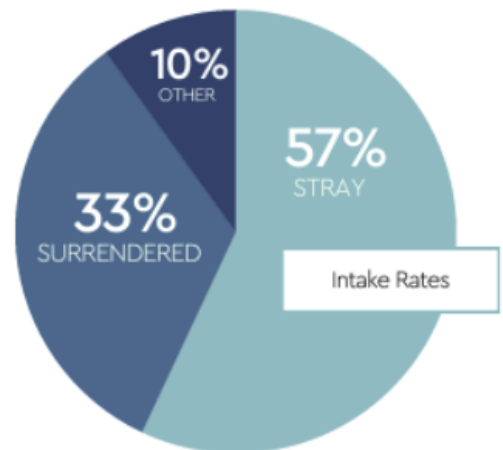


Fig. 2. Graphic of national shelter intake rates. The total number of cat intakes decreased by 5% compared to 2023. The number of stray intakes declined by 7% and the number of owner surrenders increased by 2%. Taken from Shelter Animals count 2024 Mid-Year Report.

foster a sense of connection between the shelter and the community it serves. Supporting animal welfare often raises a joyful mood for everyone involved.

2. STATEMENT OF REQUEST

This proposal is organized on behalf of the Kitty Cat Café and Adoption Lounge in cooperation with Protection of Animals in Wakefield Society (PAWS) and PALS Animal Life Savers. The primary objective of this proposal is to secure funding from Maddie's Fund® in the amount of \$10,000 to support the organization of a cat café adoption event. This grant will go to covering the costs of the event, including covering the operating revenue for the Café, advertising, supplies and refreshments, transportation, and adoption fees.



Figure 3. Image of feline veterinary care provided by many shelters across the US. Image taken from Maddie's Fund® Admissions & Intake page

Such an event will boost adoption rates and help bring the community's attention to the organizations. Attendees will be able to enjoy refreshments, hear about the efforts of the volunteers, and learn about the services that the Café and our partners provide. Additionally, they will be able to interact with the cats and begin the adoption process as desired. As an adoption event, this project seeks to improve the welfare of the cats by bringing attention to them and facilitating their adoptions in an exciting,

community-oriented way. Pet adoption rates have declined significantly since the adoption boom in 2020 but shelter intake rates have only increased (“Pandemic Adoption Boom Cools”, “Killing in Shelters”). As a result, increasing adoption rates is more crucial than ever and an event like this can be part of the solution.

We are requesting funding from Maddie’s Fund® specifically because we believe the goal of our proposed event matches the promise of Maddie’s fund, “to help companion animals and the people who love them” (Maddie’s Story), to a T. The Café is a 501(c)(3) Public Charity devoted to helping cats and sharing the joy of the cat café experience to the community (“About Us”). Maddie’s Fund® has sponsored similar adoption events from 2010 to 2015 (“Maddie’s Fund Purpose”). If Maddie’s Fund® chooses to support this mission, they will continue supporting the effort of helping cats find safe and loving forever homes.

3. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WORK

This event will occur during the Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of the 2025 Halloween weekend. We plan to market it as a “Whiskers & Witches Adoption Weekend at Kitty Cat Café and Adoption Lounge”. There will be Halloween-themed decorations, snacks and beverages, and informational tables, among other activities. Guests will be able to book time slots through the Café’s website, where the fee will be waived using grant funding.

i. Objectives of the Event

Our objective with this event is to highlight our nonprofit as a community resource and a supporter of animal welfare. A limited-time, holiday event that

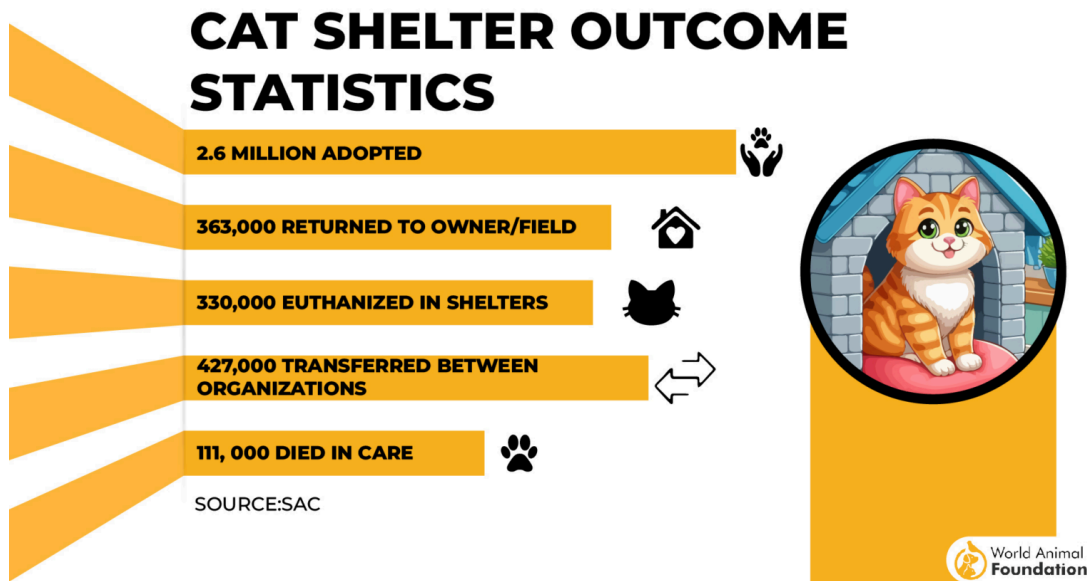


Figure 4. Graphic of national cat shelter outcome statistics in 2023. Image taken from the World Animal Foundation’s website.

removes some of the financial barriers to pet adoption reflects our primary long-term goal of helping to place shelter cats with permanent homes. We seek to forge connections with members of the local community by inviting them to see our operation and learn about how we and our shelter partners care for cats without a home. This event will also illuminate our shelter partners; our position as a cat café in a region where there are not many establishments like us means that we are recognizable, but our shelter partners don't receive that same spotlight.

ii. Activities

During the event, guests will be able to engage in a variety of activities. As detailed in Section 6 (Budget), part of the grant funds will be put towards supplies for these activities. The Café sells pre-packaged baked goods and a selection of non-alcoholic beverages; grant funds will be used to make available at no cost to guests. To encourage animal welfare, adoptions, and return visitors, there will also be a raffle. Guests will receive a raffle ticket with their booking confirmation that they can use to enter a raffle, with several prizes available that will be purchased with the grant funds. The items for raffle will be primarily selected from the Café's Amazon wishlist page ("Cat Café Items") ; items of interest include cat toys, cat treats, and a self-cleaning 'robot' litter box. In addition to these activities, we will also approach local art- and creativity-oriented community organizations to coordinate a pop-up art exhibit, where proceeds will go to the community organizations and the Café and its associated nonprofit shelters. We will use the

Peabody Area Chamber of Commerce website to facilitate these partnerships.

Finally, we will have volunteer shelter staff available to talk to guests about animal welfare, the services they provide, and adoption.

iii. Proposed Schedule

This event will occur during the Café's normal operating hours of 10am to 3pm on Thursday, October 30th, Friday, October 31st, and Saturday, November 1st of 2025. Cats and Halloween are a classic pairing, so we can think of no better holiday to center this event around. But the timing of this event is more than just festive: winter is one of the most dangerous times for outdoor cats and the busiest for shelters ("A Beautiful World"). By adopting out as many cats as possible before temperatures drop, we will be able to take in a maximum capacity of cats and keep them safe and warm. We will begin preparation for the event as soon as the grant funds are available; our hope is to have the funds available by the beginning of summer so that we can begin contacting potential community partners and announcing the event on social media. Then we will use the early fall period to purchase supplies and decorations in preparation for the event weekend.

iv. Outreach

For this event, we will primarily be working with our nonprofit shelter partners, PAWS Wakefield and PALS Animal Life Savers. However, we also plan to contact other organizations through the Peabody Area Chamber of Commerce to further promote a sense of community. Our focus would be on artistic organization

as we would like to host a pop-up community art gallery. We will also contact our mentors at the Lucky Cat Café in Louisville, Kentucky, and Mew Haven Cat Café in Newhaven, Connecticut to boost our reach with social media advertising.

v. Measure of Project Success

The primary goal of any shelter is to facilitate adoptions and get pets into good homes. Therefore, the ultimate measure of success for this project would be a 100% adoption rate for all available shelter cats (of which there are currently 20) by the end of the three event days. However, we are aware that such a feat is unlikely; even if every guest to the event wanted to adopt a cat that day, the vetting process for adopters and the health screening and veterinary checks for the cats takes several days at minimum. For this reason, we will be measuring project success by initiated adoptions. A successful implementation of this project should result in initiated adoptions for twelve of the twenty available cats.

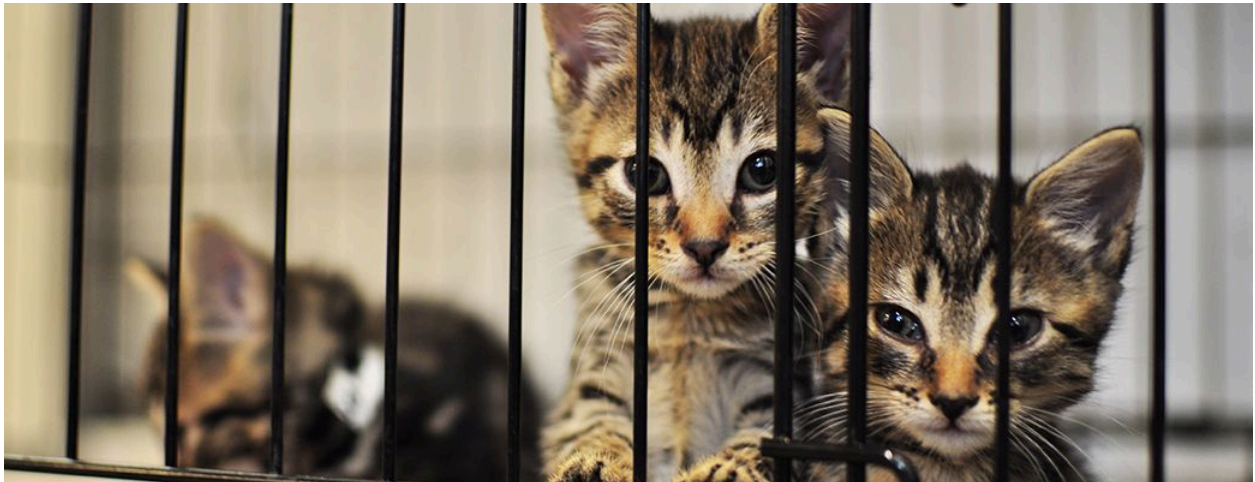


Figure 5. Shelter kittens waiting to be adopted. Image taken from the ASPCA website.

4. DESCRIPTION OF AVAILABLE FACILITIES

In order to host an event like this, one needs a space where the cats are comfortable but that is also suitable for decoration and for guests to spend time in.

This is what makes the Kitty Cat Café the perfect organization for this project. Our current café cats are already familiar with the space and our shelter partners are familiar with the process of introducing new cats to the café. We also already have a physical location where we have held similar themed special events. We are still a limited space however, and too many people interacting with too many cats is not conducive to the experience



Figure X. The Kitty Cat Café and Adoption Lounge storefront in Peabody, MA. Image taken from @mama.is.loosing.it on TikTok.

we want to create with this event. That is why we will be using our booking webpage to ensure that the amount of guests in the café at a given time does not overwhelm the animals. We will also confer with the shelter staff to decide which cats' temperaments are best suited for this kind of event. At the informational stands staffed by shelter volunteers, we will also have displays showcasing the cats for whom it was determined that the event would not be a comfortable environment.

5. QUALIFICATIONS OF PERSONNEL

As we are a nonprofit organization, we have limited staff. Our personnel will be primarily comprised of volunteers working both with the Café and our shelter partners. Volunteer applications are available on PAWS Wakefield and PALS Animal Life Savers' websites, and those looking to volunteer at the Cafe can contact us at kittycatcafema@gmail.com to see if they are a good fit for our organization.

Volunteer requirements vary, but there are basic requirements for those looking to volunteer with animals.

Essential capabilities for a volunteer are physical, cognitive, and emotional. Physically, volunteers must be able to "see clearly", "hear well", "cope with loud environments", "stand and/or walk for significant periods of time", as well as bend, squat, and have quick reflexes and high dexterity. It is also important that volunteers be able "to understand, remember, and follow both verbal and written instructions/procedures" and recognize hazardous situations and safeguard against them. Finally, there are also certain emotional requirements for being a volunteer working with animals. Being able to understand constructive criticism is important, as well as remaining calm and maintaining a positive attitude, especially in "high emotionally charged environments" such as in euthanasia decisions. ("essential volunteer capabilities").

i. Café Staff

At the Kitty Cat Café and Adoption Lounge, we have a very limited team of paid employees. We rely mostly on volunteers, but we do have a board of directors.

Cora Ducolon - High school English teacher and co-founder



Figure 5. A photo of our cofounders, Cora and Uri.
Image taken from The Kitty Cat Café website.

Uri Harel - School administrator and co-founder

Tony Beatrice - Arts administrator, music teacher, fundraising advisor, and cheerleader

Crystal Legaski - Educator, amazing volunteer, and our social media specialist

Lisa Glus - Resident artist, documenter of cat antics, and creative inspiration

We will need two types of volunteers working with the Café for this event: those who can help prepare the space by organizing, cleaning, decorating, among

other obligations, and those who can work during the event by helping guests, answering questions, and monitoring the cats.

ii. Shelter Staff

As our shelter partners are also nonprofits, they do not maintain a large paid staff either. They are maintained by small boards of directors and largely by volunteers. Typical shelter volunteer requirements are listed above, but shelter volunteers working for this event will be primarily tasked with transporting the cats and monitoring them during the event to prevent any negative interactions. They will also be tasked with staffing informational stands where they can educate guests on animal welfare and answer questions about the services they provide, the cats, and adoption.

6. BUDGET

We are asking for \$10,000 to fund this event. A majority of this budget will go to waiving adoption fees. Our partner PAWS Wakefield lists their rates for adoption fees on their website. The adoption costs cover the variety of vet care they receive during their stay at the shelter and before they can be adopted. For twenty cats, this totals approximately \$5,000. We will also be using this money to cover the loss that the Cafe would incur for being closed during normal operating hours. We typically charge guests \$14 for 50 minute sessions and allow 10 guests at a time. Being closed for the event days means we would lose approximately \$2,100 of revenue. Because of the financial constraints of operating as a nonprofit animal charity, we are not able to incur a cost like this without funding. Finally, we will use the remaining \$2,400 for event advertising and purchasing decorations.

i. Revenue Loss

50 Minute Visit In Our Cat Lounge (must be 8 years old)

50 minutes @ \$14.00

PER PERSON: You get to spend 50 minutes in our lounge with our adoptable rescue cats. You can bring in your own non-alcoholic beverage or purchase drinks or bakery treats from us.

Figure 6. The Kitty Cat Café booking price for a 50 minute visit. Image taken from the Klitty Cat Café website.

ii. Adoption Expenses

PAWS Wakefield's adoption fees average \$300 per cat. These fees cover a variety of vet care that the adopted cat receives, as well as enabling them to continue rescuing homeless cats. The vet care that the cats receive are as follows:

"Before our cats may be adopted, they must, at minimum,

- have a vet examination (\$100)
- be spayed or neutered (\$200 to \$320)
- have age-appropriate vaccinations for
 - rabies (\$60)
 - [feline viral rhinotracheitis](#) (aka feline herpesvirus 1 or FHV-1),
[feline calicivirus](#), and ([feline panleukopenia](#) (aka feline distemper) (\$25)
- be dewormed at least once (\$10)
- be microchipped (\$25)
- be tested for [feline leukemia](#) (\$30)

In most cases, we also provide, as needed, the following medical attention for each of our kitties:

- Flea and mite treatment
- Test for FIV ([Feline Immunodeficiency Virus](#))
- Vet-prescribed medications
- Special diets

- Dental extractions and other critically needed dental work”

(“About Our Adoption Fees”).

7. SUMMARY

If Maddie's Fund® chooses to fund this project, they will support the mission of rescuing cats from the dangers of outside life and placing them in safe, loving homes.. The Kitty Cat Café, along with PAWS Wakefield and PALS Animal Life Savers, pledge to match the guidelines supplied by the foundation. Maddie's Fund® stipulates that, in order to be considered for a grant from Maddie's Fund®, organizations must “be a US based 510c3 public charity or government animal well-being organization focused on dogs and/or cats”; “publicly share their annual animal statistics” and their “lifesaving percentage and the formula for how it was calculated” on the same page on their website; and “be an active participant in Shelter Animals Count” (“Grant Requirements”). The Kitty Cat Café, PAWS Wakefield, and PALS Animal Life Savers are all 501c3 public charities focused on the welfare of cats and are participants in Shelter Animals Count. We do not currently have our annual statistics and lifesaving percentages listed on our website, but we will be able to update our websites to include this information in order to be eligible for a grant from Maddie's Fund®.

END MATTER

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