

## = Goathouse Refuge =

The Goathouse Refuge in Pittsboro , North Carolina , is a nonprofit no @-@ kill animal sanctuary for cats that is run on a volunteer @-@ basis . The refuge is cage @-@ free so the cats can freely roam around within the boundaries of the property . Founded in 2007 by Italian @-@ born artist Siglinda Scarpa , the refuge can hold up to 300 cats on a 16 @-@ acre farm . There is an art gallery located on the first floor of the house where Scarpa sells her handmade art such as pottery , sculptures , and cookware to help support the refuge .

## = = Founding = =

Siglinda Scarpa says she had issues with communication as a child , stating that ? people were not seeing me , that they were talking , but never to me . ? It was not until her father brought a stray kitten home and placed it under her sheets that Scarpa felt she could communicate with someone . The kitten was a year old when he became very ill and died . After his death , Scarpa decided to take in as many cats as possible , with the hopes of eventually creating a safe haven for cats . Scarpa created the Goathouse Refuge in 2007 , naming it after an old goat who came with the dilapidated plantation house and the 16 acre property . Originally , the land was just intended for her pottery studio . After the house and studio burned down Scarpa rebuilt it with plans that included a sanctuary for cats , using personal resources and proceeds from her pottery sales to make it possible .

## = = Adoption = =

The Refuge has found homes for at least 900 cats since they opened in 2007 . They ensure that the cats have been tested , de @-@ wormed , and have had their first shots . The adoption fee covers spaying / neutering , micro @-@ chipping , and vaccinations although some cats may have sponsors who donate to cover for some or all of the adoption fee . There is also an application that must be filled out which asks very thorough in @-@ depth questions to ensure that the cat will go to a good home . The applications are reviewed first by staff to see if the applicants are a good fit for the cat . Afterwards , a home visit is required to see if the house is suitable for the cat .

The Goathouse Refuge differs from many other shelters in that all cats are welcome , and none are subject to euthanasia unless past all hope of recovery . Neither disposition , age , nor illness affect whether a cat will be accepted to stay at the Refuge . Adoption is the ultimate goal , but unadoptable cats may live out their lives on the property as well .

## = = Operations = =

As a nonprofit shelter , the Refuge is run mainly by volunteers who clean litter boxes , change food and water , wash dishes and blankets , sanitize areas and perform other duties . There are two shifts of at least two volunteers each , early morning and late afternoon , which revolve around the feeding habits of the cats . The volunteers also need to socialize new kittens and cats with behavior issues to make them ready for adoption . New volunteers are introduced to the cats who need to receive special attention for conditions such as allergies to certain cleaning products and dietary restrictions , which are made clear by charts and signs on the cats ' cages .

Because the Goathouse Refuge offers their 300 cats ( number as of January 2013 ) medical treatment on @-@ site , quality food , toys and comfort items such as lots of blankets , the cost of maintaining is higher than the average shelter . Contributors help in many ways to the shelter , including providing items the cats need , donating money , or attending fundraisers . Scarpa 's fundraisers use themes such as Burrito Bash , Venetian Carnival , Garden Gourmands , and Mad Hatter 's Tea Party . These events are listed in such online and written publications as Raleigh 's Indy Week , Chatham County 's Chatham Chatlist , Chapel Hill 's The Daily Tar Heel as well as on the Refuge 's website and Facebook page .

The Goathouse Refuge also provides alternative solutions for those who wish to see a particular cat go to a good home , but cannot adopt the cat themselves . There is the option to sponsor a cat by donating to cover their adoption fees so that the cat may have a higher chance of being adopted . The refuge also provides " virtual cats " as gifts and will send the donor a photo of a cat of their choice as well as a behind @-@ the @-@ scenes story about him / her . For those who wish to donate regularly there is a program called " Coffee Cat " , sponsoring a particular cat at the cost of approximately a cup of coffee a day . The donations from Coffee Cat are spent on food , medical needs , and litter for that particular cat .

= = Controversy = =

In March 2013 , the Goathouse Refuge was a cover story in the Indy Week paper . The article claims that there are too many cats falling prey to illness , and that the sanctuary is out of control : " One local veterinarian has treated about 35 cats from owners who had recently adopted from the Goathouse . " The author , Lisa Sorg , says that according to former volunteers at the Goathouse Refuge , there are twice as many cats on the premises as recommended by a veterinarian , and that Scarpa makes volunteers sign an anti @-@ defamation agreement and instructs them to lie to state inspectors , among other allegations that Scarpa denied or justified . Just over a day after the article 's release the comments section on the Indy Week website became so heated that Denise Prickett , INDY Editorial Web Director , posted " We have closed comments on this story for the weekend . We will reopen comments Monday morning . All future comments must respond directly to the story and must be civil . Comments that do not follow these guidelines will be removed . "