

CAT rescues Hurricane Katrina cats

Sherwood's Cat Adoption Team chartered a plane to rescue 41 cats from the New Orleans area following Hurricane Katrina

By **NICK PETERSON**
Of the Gazette

SHERWOOD — When Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, the toll taken on the people living there was enormous, and caring for those individuals was the priority of aid agencies across the nation.

But the disaster also triggered a compassionate response from another layer of society — those sensitive to what happened not only to the people, but to other living creatures that rode out that storm.

That is where CAT came in — the Sherwood-based Cat Adoption Team, which is the Pacific Northwest's largest non-profit, no-kill cat shelter and hospital.

In the aftermath of the storm, on Oct. 3, CAT arranged for a private plane to rescue 40 homeless cats — plus one possibly previously-owned cat — from Hurricane Katrina.

The cats came from four shelters and rescue groups in the New



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HURRICANE CAT — Britta Bavaresco, a CAT board member, holds Angel, a cat that the Cat Adoption Team flew in from the New Orleans area following Hurricane Katrina.

Orleans area that were destroyed by the hurricane and later moved to the Humane Society of North Texas.

"All the cats that we brought in are previously-sheltered cats — they were in shelters in the New Orleans area and those shelters were completely destroyed," said

Britta Bavaresco, a board member and the former executive director of CAT. "We wanted to focus on the sheltered cats, because that's kind of what we do — we find animals new homes."

Bavaresco said there were other groups concerned with the animals that had owners who

were hit by the storm, and separated from them. CAT wanted to make sure that the sheltered cats also were also taken care of.

"We've been scanning all these cats by microchip scanners to make sure they haven't been owned by anyone," Bavaresco said. "We've found one

At a Glance

Want a cat?

The Cat Adoption Team center is open seven days a week, 10 a.m. — 6 p.m.

They prefer adopted cats be given to indoor-only homes.

They have approximately 250 cats to choose from.

"We always appreciate any contributions in terms of volunteering or donating money or supplies that people can provide," Bavaresco said.

Whiskers Wonderland

CAT is holding a fund-raiser Nov. 19 called Whiskers Wonderland, 6-10:30 p.m. at the World Forestry Center, Miller Hall, 4033 Canyon Rd. Admission is \$60 in advance, or \$75 at the door.

For more information call 503-925-8903, or visit CAT's Web site at www.catadoptionteam.org.

microchip, so that cat is going to be on hold until we find out if there is an owner that we can reunite the pet with."

Angel is that cat — plucked out of the Louisiana flood waters. She was very ill in the beginning, with loss of weight from starvation, but Bavaresco said she's eating well again.

If CAT does find the owner of a previously-owned cat, Bavaresco said they will fly the cat back and reunite them with the owner. Any cats that they suspect have previous owners are posted on www.petfinder.com.

As of Oct. 7, five of the cats from the Louisiana shelter had already been adopted by local families.

But there is also an added benefit for CAT, Bavaresco said.

"With the media exposure from the hurricane cats, we had a lot of additional traffic, which was wonderful. In the last two days we did over 25 adoptions of our own local shelter cats."