



Love cats? Get online

Sherwood's cat shelter, the largest of its kind in the Pacific Northwest, needs your help to \$1 million makeover

BY KELLY MOYER

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Thanks to volunteer power and community support, the Cat Adoption Team's no-kill cat shelter in Sherwood has helped find homes for tens of thousands of cats over the years.

They've offered free and reduced veterinary care for families in need and given companionship to so many people. Now the shelter needs your help.

The shelter is ranked No. 41 out of nearly 4,000 shelters on an online contest to win a \$1 million makeover from www.ZooToo.com.

"We're the only shelter in Oregon that has a viable chance of making the top 20," says Kathy Covey, public relations and marketing director for CAT. "If enough people get on and show support, we'll get there."

The online contest doesn't require any purchases, you just need to log on, register and choose Cat Adoption Team as your shelter of choice. The more you interact with other ZooToo members, the more points you'll help rack up for the local cat shelter.

So what would \$1 million do for the Sherwood shelter?

So much, say Covey and operations director Ed Pashkin.

"We desperately need to expand," Covey says. "We have the room to do it (there's a large warehouse connected to the shelter, which is owned by CAT), but we need (money.)"

Inside the shelter visitors are greeted with helpful front desk personnel and an eclectic — and, for cat somewhat addictive — retail shop.

Beyond this you've got two choices. You can head for the kitten room, where dozens of fluffy, mewlin will make you want to scoop every single one of them up into a group kitten hug. Or you can head upstairs to see the adult cats (just as lovable) or visit the on-site veterinary clinic.

As Pashkin, also a certified veterinary technician, leads a tour of the shelter, it's apparent that CAT hovers quickly. The upstairs space requires visitors to sign adoption papers or meet with a veterinarian or adoption counselor in the same room as the shelter's washing machine.

The shelter looks cheerful and the cats are all well cared for, but there's always room for improvement especially in the veterinary clinic, where veterinarians, vet assistants and the cats are crammed into a space that is in need of stainless steel crates for the kitties who are waiting to be seen by the doctor.

Despite the tight spaces, the cat shelter has been able to accomplish a lot over the past 10 years.

It is the largest cat-only, no-kill shelter in the Pacific Northwest and has nearly 500 volunteers who contribute about 105,000 hours a year, which is like having 51 full-time employees on your staff who work for free.



JONATHAN HOUSE / SHERWOOD GAZETTE
LET YOUR LOVE SHINE IN — Kathy Covey, communications director for the Cat Adoption Team, visits one of the shelter's open rooms on Jan. 10. The local shelter, the largest cat-only, no-kill shelter in the Pacific Northwest, has a good chance of winning a \$1 million makeover through the online site, www.ZooToo.com.

Last year the shelter found homes for 3,129 cats and kittens — a 1,329 percent increase in adoptions shelter opened in 1998.

And the shelter's on-site veterinary clinic (which also sets it apart from its peers) makes sure the shelter cats and kittens stay healthy.

Before leaving the shelter, each cat or kitten has had a complete veterinary workup, including a spay neuter if necessary, a microchip and registration, parasite treatment, vaccinations and a screening for feline leukemia and feline AIDS (something other shelters don't test for).

The Sherwood shelter has 250 cats and kittens on-site that are available for adoption and Covey says a big push to get people to adopt more black cats.

"There just not as noticeable," Covey explains. "Last year only about 11 percent of the cats adopted were black cats but the majority of the cats we have here are black."

CAT also has outreach locations, off-site adoption centers and foster care families to help ensure that many cats and kittens as possible find a good home.

If you are a cat lover, or just want to support your local shelter, visit the online ZooToo site and register for the Cat Adoption Team. The contest ends March 31.

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