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Check out the above stories on our Facebook page!

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Fall 2014

**What is Spare Cat Rescue?**



Above: Georgie, Sniffles (a.k.a. Lil' Mikey), and Magnus— 3 happy kitties placed in their Forever Homes by SCR in 2014

Spare Cat Rescue is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization formed in 2003 by a small group of Carthage-area animal lovers. We offer several low-cost spay & neuter clinics for owned cats each year, TNR assistance, and consultation for pet parents experiencing difficulties with their animals. We also provide endless volunteer hours to staff and clean at the PetSmart Adoption Center in Joplin, MO and to transport cats, dogs, and small animals from Carthage Humane Society to off-site adoption events. We are NOT a shelter and we cannot accept animals from individuals. For more information, visit us at [sparecatrescue.org](http://sparecatrescue.org) and "Like" us on Facebook.

**I love animals! How can I help?**

We are funded entirely through donations. Every dollar you give goes directly to help local animals in need. We also welcome volunteers for many different jobs throughout the year. Whether you prefer behind-the-scenes jobs, interacting with the public, or just snuggling baby cats, we can put your individual skills to use to directly impact the lives of animals. And even though our name doesn't specifically mention it, we also work with dogs and need help with that. Ask any SCR Board member if you would like to be a part of this highly rewarding program!



Right: Zuri says, "Thanks for giving me a chance, y'all!! If it weren't for the nice humans at CHS and SCR, I'd still be wandering the streets. Instead, today I am in a loving Forever Home. Now, does someone have a treat for me?"

**Just the Stats, Ma'am: What We've Done So Far This Year**

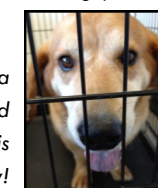
- SCR Board Members hosted over 55 cats and kittens in their homes through the CHS foster program
- Our Spring low-cost spay and neuter clinic at Central Pet Care provided assistance with alteration surgery for over 60 owned cats
- We found Forever Homes for more than 200 CHS animals through the Joplin PetSmart mobile adoption program (150+ cats and 50+ dogs)



Cuddly baby Kee, 2 days old



Ready and waiting for surgery



Smiling Buddha was reunited with his original family!

## Grr-eat News from Sarcoxie TNR

Earlier this year, Spare Cat Rescue embarked upon a brand new adventure in Sarcoxie. For several years, residents in that area have contacted us requesting assistance with multiple local feral cat colonies. Until now, we were unable to assist, partly due to shortage of volunteers and funding. Some residents wanted us to "remove" the cats from the area by surrendering them to a shelter, but feral cats are generally non-adoptable, so this would have meant a sad end for many animals. Others were okay with us returning them after they were neutered, but there was no designated caregiver for the animals. Spare Cat Rescue's policy for Trap, Neuter, & Return (TNR) is that cats must be returned to their colony of origin, and that the colony must have a designated caregiver to provide daily food, water, and shelter and to monitor all colony members for health issues. In February, that all changed and we were happy to be able to assist with a new TNR program in the Sarcoxie area! With the blessings of the Sarcoxie Chief of Police, our resident

trapper, Ms. Donna Henry (with an occasional helping hand from others) began to trap and transport feral cats from colonies throughout the Sarcoxie community to local veterinarians wishing to assist. The feral cats were "fixed" to keep them from reproducing. The neuter operation also helps with undesired behaviors, such as spraying and fighting from unaltered males, as well as howling from females and other annoying mating-related behaviors. Each cat is given a rabies vaccination and one ear is clipped so that an altered animal can be easily identified. The cats are then brought back to their colonies and released. To date, we have altered 70 feral cats in Sarcoxie! That's 33 female cats and 37 male cats in just 6 months! Approximately half of those were funded by SCR, thanks to donations from our generous supporters. Recently, the Carthage Humane Society also received a TNR grant through PetSmart Charities and they have been gracious enough to work with us on our TNR projects in the 4-state area.

This TNR program in Sarcoxie will drastically reduce the number of unwanted kittens that would have born to these colonies. New kittens would have continued to reproduce or been surrendered to the shelter, which leads to overcrowding. Although some folks still see the feral cats as a nuisance, they do offer a service to their community, as they are working animals who provide free pest control. We've even seen "snake-wrangling cats" who fearlessly kill venomous snakes!



Trapping is still under way, but as the number of unaltered cats in the colonies dwindles, it naturally becomes more difficult for us to trap them. SCR is in need of donations to purchase additional traps. Volunteers are also needed to help with monitoring, trapping, transport, and release of the feral cats. If you would like to make a donation or to volunteer, please contact us via e-mail at [spare\\_cat\\_rescue@yahoo.com](mailto:spare_cat_rescue@yahoo.com) or send us a message on Facebook. We greatly appreciate any help we get - big or small!

A super big thanks to Donna Henry, the Feral Cat Whisperer, for her endless dedication and hard work on this program. Also, we would like to thank the residents and businesses of Sarcoxie and the City for their support on this project.

Spare Cat Rescue also has a limited number of low-cost spay/neuter vouchers available to residents of Sarcoxie who would like help with the cost of spaying/neutering their owned cats. In the past several months, we have helped several residents. Please contact us for more information.

## Mice and Birds and Sparkle Balls, Oh My!

A huge thank-you goes to loyal Spare Cat Rescue supporters Karla and Clark of Dallas, Texas. In July, they saw our Facebook request for washable toys for our PetSmart Adoption Center cats and kittens. The timing of our call was serendipitous, as Karla and Clark had very recently lost their beloved black kitty. Big, beautiful, long-haired Willie G. had gone from living on the streets of Dallas to being a pampered companion and avid toy collector. His humans wanted his treasured playthings to be loved by special kitties in need, so they sent them all the way up to Carthage! Our volunteers were thrilled to receive these gifts, and the kitties immediately set about loving their new toys with gusto. We at SCR all know the pain of losing a dear fur baby, so we recognize how bittersweet it must have been to send these lovely gifts. Thank you, Karla and Clark, from the bottom of our hearts! Please know that Willie G's generous gift will be cherished by many, many very special kitties, and you can be sure that he is now rocking out in that big concert in the sky. As one of our Board members puts it, "I better be **really** good in this life, so I can see all my kitties again in heaven!!" Romp in Pleasure, sweet boy.



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[www.sparecatrescue.org](http://www.sparecatrescue.org)

## A (True) Happy Tails Story

by Anne Stocker, Spare Cat Rescue Public Relations & Media Specialist



Darrell calls out, "Baby kitties?"

It was a hot, sultry night in August. I was driving home at the tail end of a very long day, filled with a 10-hour shift at work, then kitty care, then a 2-hour SCR board meeting. I was getting some ice cream to treat myself when I received a call from my husband. I *should* have answered, "Cat 9-1-1 – what's your emergency?"

He quickly explained. Our neighbor had informed him that there was a trash bag full of kittens that someone had thrown into the river. Step 1: Hang up. Step 2: Call Kaylene, our fearless leader, President, and founder of Spare Cat Rescue. Step 3: Jump out of Mom's car before it has stopped moving. (Oops.) As we approached the house, we saw the neighbor, who was very upset. Kaylene was trying to contact the Animal Control Officer while racing back into town to pick me up. The neighbors were holding one yellow tabby kitten – soaking wet, scared, and wrapped in a towel. They began to tell us a horrific story as we all stood in the middle of the road and listened in shock.

The neighbor's daughter and her boyfriend were at Spring River in Carthage (by Kellogg Lake) when they noticed a trash bag floating in the river above the dam. Then, they spotted a small, wet kitten struggling to make it to the boat dock. They could not reach the trash bag, but could see that there were other kittens and some movement in the bag. It appeared that one kitten had already expired. The girl brought the yellow tabby boy home and recounted the terrible story to her family – she was very shaken and upset. They were not able to keep the kitten, so we took him with us until we could figure out a plan.

(At this point, I had to run into the house to throw my now-cold-fudge sundae into the freezer, hoping the hubs wouldn't help himself while I was out saving kitties!)

Kaylene arrived and with a pet carrier (holding the yellow kitten—now named "Lucky," of course), camera, and flashlight in hand, I jumped in the car and off we went with Darrell (her hubby) at the wheel. From the back seat, I commented, "There's nothing I'd rather be doing at 9:07 on a Thursday night than emergency kitten rescue." We realized that at our next meeting, we should probably discuss acquiring a spotlight and a flashing police light for Kaylene's car for just such occasions. I suddenly wasn't tired anymore.

When we arrived at the river, it was already dark. We had a pretty good description of where the trash bag was last seen, so we began to scour the bank, calling out to baby kitties. The water was still. No kitties (plenty of spiders and poison ivy, though). Along the way, we picked up some fellow cat lovers who joined in the search. We asked some folks who were hanging out below the

dam if they had seen the bag, kittens, or anyone acting suspicious with a bag. Of course, no one had seen anything. Neither did we. We spent almost an hour running up and down the banks in search of baby kitties – sadly, with no luck. With heavy hearts, the search party disbanded and we packed up and headed home.

Stop crying – there's one (incredibly) happy ending here! The neighbors across the street contacted me to say that their grandson, Cean, wanted the kitten. They are animal lovers and had just recently rescued a big white dog. So after a sad, fruitless search, we were able to end the night by finding Lucky a new Forever Home! Cean changed the kitty's name to George Junior, but he really IS Lucky!!! We delivered little Junior to Cean's grandparents' house, where he was welcomed to stay the night and be pampered. By the time we left their house, the little guy was already feeling better and was reaching up to Cean's face for kisses. He was already putting the trauma of his long day behind him and even trying to play a little. We are so happy to be able to say that Lucky has a new home, where he is loved and worshipped (as every baby kitty should be). A huge SCR thanks to the "first responders" who saved the kitten and reached out for help, Henri and Anthony, Cean and Cali, Darrell and Kaylene, Mom, Mario, and the nice folks at the river that helped in the search. And just in case this story wasn't enough to warm your heart, check out the awesome picture of a super-happy young man and his new kitten!



Cean and the luckiest kitten around



Kaylene meets Lucky

Want to read more? Check out our blog at [sparecatrescue.wordpress.com](http://sparecatrescue.wordpress.com)

## The Scoop: Frequently Asked Questions & Queries about Litter Box Issues

*Warning: Not for the faint of heart or litter box-shy!*

**Q: I only have one cat, but when I scoop his box it looks (and smells) like he's had the whole neighborhood over for a party. What is causing so much volume and odor?**

A: Like most things in life, if you "put good in", you "get good out". Assuming your kitty isn't hosting all his friends when you aren't looking, fillers in cat food are usually to blame. As gross as it sounds, you want to see small, compact "tootsie rolls" in your cat's box, which will tell you that the animal is not taking in too much indigestible material. Read the label when buying cat food. The first ingredients should always be real meat (not meat by-products) and there should be no fillers, like corn gluten or wheat gluten. It doesn't have to be an expensive food, either – there are great options on the market at almost every price point. The internet is a good place to start. You can also seek advice from your cat's veterinarian or the folks at Spare Cat Rescue. If you've tried a high-quality diet for several weeks and you're certain that your cat isn't sneaking any "extras" like people food (which can lead to all kinds of digestive troubles), it's time for a check-up with your vet. Please bear in mind that very loose, watery stools can indicate illness and should always be treated immediately to prevent dehydration.

**Q: Sometimes my cat goes outside her box. What can I do?**

A: This could be something very serious, but it might have a simple answer. Here are a few questions to ask yourself:

**1. Does your cat seem ill?** Even a simple infection can cause accidents, and can turn serious if not cared for in a timely manner. Your kitty may be telling you she is sick. A check-up with your vet is always a good first step.

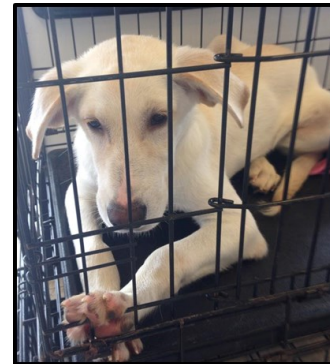
**2. How often do you scoop out solids and replace the litter?** You should be scooping a minimum of once daily (yes, even for a single cat). Most cats would prefer twice a day! Just as you wouldn't like to use a toilet that hadn't been flushed and cleaned, a cat likes a fresh, clean place to do her business. Replace the entire batch of litter and wash the box as often as is needed, depending on the traffic your box sees. Some singletons can have their boxes changed every 10 days or so; others, especially in multi-cat homes, need to be freshened up more frequently. The "sniff test" will tell you whether or not the box needs changing. If you keep your cat's box scooped regularly, you shouldn't ever smell it at all! That makes for a happy kitty and a happy human.

**3. Are there enough boxes for her?** The "rule of thumb" is one box per cat, plus one extra. So, if you have 2 cats, you should have a minimum of 3 boxes available. This helps if one cat is territorial toward her box, and it provides more convenient opportunities for your cat to do what you want her to do...use her litter boxes!

**4. Are the locations of her boxes good spots in her opinion?** Kitty needs quiet and privacy to do her business. If her box is out where the dog, kids, and every visitor to the house can see her, she probably won't use it. She won't appreciate it being moved suddenly, either. If you do have to change the location, try to make the change gradually and show her the box often to avoid confusion.

**5. Is your cat having mobility issues?** If she is getting a little older, it may be harder for her to access her box. You may need to adapt the height of the box and/or add a step stool for an aging kitty.

**6. Is your cat declawed?** This is something we take very seriously, because unfortunately we see it time and again in cats who have had this amputation surgery. As the years progress after surgery, arthritis develops in the amputated digits, and it becomes very painful to your cat to walk on the gravel in the litter box. This is a difficult scenario for most pet parents to take on, so sadly, it often leads to abandonment—or worse—for declawed cats. We strongly urge you to never subject your cat to this surgery, but if you do find yourself in this dilemma, it will take some creative options and a lot of patience to retrain your kitty. There are resources available in this situation. A great place to start is the internet, but you can also get advice from your vet or from any member of Spare Cat Rescue.



### Out of the Litter Box: The Tao of Dogs

by Ashley Gould, Spare Cat Rescue Board Member

While we're excited to see all of the pets we adopt go to good homes, there are times when one animal tugs at our heartstrings a little more.

Tao came in one Saturday, looking very unsure about adoptions. For a timid pup, a trip to the store can sometimes be overwhelming. It starts early in the morning with a possible bath, then a potty break, then you're loaded in a carrier, driven to the store, and put into a crate where everyone is looking at you and poking their fingers at you all day! After a few trips, a lot of the dogs look forward to it because they're put on leashes and walked around, they get to see lots of new faces...and sometimes, kind souls sneak them treats (which we're really okay with!) while the volunteers aren't looking.

That being said, Tao was scared. When I got him out of the carrier, he did what we call "koala-ing" by wrapping his paws around me to hold on as tight as he could. It may look really cute, but he was so scared. I was a little hesitant about putting him up front, but with his cute face and sad puppy eyes, we decided to do it anyway. A lot of people passed by and looked at Tao that day. He calmed down in his crate and had a snack and a drink. A mother and her daughter came by and talked about him, but ended up walking away.

When it came time for his bathroom break, I was told that Tao wouldn't walk on a leash, that he was too scared. He was timid, but once I got him to the grass, the same mother and daughter approached us. Tao immediately lay down belly-up, splayed his legs, stuck out his tongue, and inched his way toward the teenager.

We talked for a while about what our adoption policies were, and they told me they were interested. The mom explained to me that Tao, if adopted, would be trained as the daughter's emotional service dog and would get to help her overcome her emotional anxiety about new experiences. I realized that he would understand her anxiety, because he knew all about fear too. Then they decided to just go for it! The mom went to go get money for the adoption, and the girl elected to stay with Tao at PetSmart, instead of going with her mom. Her mom told me that this was a HUGE step already. She had never been comfortable with strangers like that before.

Seeing the huge smile on that young woman's face, I was reminded of why we show up on Saturdays. I think that was the perfect home for both dog and owner.