



Spring 2016

SNIPPETS

News from the SD West River Spay/Neuter Coalition

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Happy Tails: Special Kitties

Volunteers step up to help cats in need

While Coalition volunteers spend the greatest share of their time helping colony caretakers with TNR (trap, neuter, return) of feral cats and assisting low-income cat caretakers with the cost of fixing tame cats, we sometimes find ourselves involved in cat rescue as well. These might be abandoned tame cats living in feral cat colonies, injured or sick cats or others found in some kind of dire situation. Being cat lovers one and all, volunteers cannot turn their backs on these special kitties. Because Coalition funds are designated for spay/neuter only, volunteers personally assume any costs associated with medical care. Here is a sample of cats rescued this past year.

Smoky

Last spring, Coalition volunteer Shari Rose spotted a cat lying beside the highway. She stopped and noticed right away that the cat had a tipped ear (universal sign of a fixed feral). Assuming the cat was feral, Shari approached cautiously wearing a heavy jacket and gloves. The cat stared at her as though, Shari said, "begging for help," and offered no protest as she picked her up, laid her in a carrier and rushed her to Dr. Lloyd Emond, one of the Coalition's dedicated vets.. Although the little Russian Blue that Shari named Smoky could not stand, Dr. Emond found no evidence of broken bones. Back home Shari made Smoky comfortable and over the weeks the young cat, obviously not feral, slowly recovered, though still walking with a bad rear limp and unable to jump. With five other cats already, Shari had to find the little female a pampered home. She located a Colorado nonprofit organization that helps disabled pets and they agreed to take her. Charlie Petrick (Black



Smoky (necklace computer generated for Posh Paws' photo)

Hills Rescue Transport) and Rhonda Champion who works with deaf dogs, transported Smoky to Colorado. After a few weeks recovering she was featured on the Posh Paws website. A viewer couldn't resist her sweet face and sad story and took Smoky home.

Kepler

During a bitter cold spell in February we learned about three feral cats a Box Elder woman had been keeping in carriers in an open shed under blankets for several weeks as she searched for spay/neuter assistance. A volunteer arranged for immediate free spay/neuter and offered to provide a warm, temporary recovery place for the cats since the client could not house them indoors. Sadly, when the volunteer went to pick up the fixed cats, one of which was tame and declawed, the client had changed her mind and took them home. Ten days later, a volunteer saw a photo of the cats still outside in carriers advertised as "free to a good home." That very evening the volunteer picked up all three cats. The two ferals were placed in an approved barn home and the domestic kitty, Kepler (named after a 19th century astronomer), went to live in a beautiful Victorian home with a loving family and two other black cats, his days in the cold behind him.



Kepler taking a snooze

Jasper (pictured on page 4)

A woman called to sign up her two kittens for a spay/neuter clinic, then called a few days later to cancel as one of the kittens had developed a "gigantic lump" on his leg and wasn't eating. She had taken the cat to a vet but could not afford the expensive surgery Jasper required and had made an appointment to have him euthanized. To the rescue came Tom Huhnerkoch, DVM,

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SAVING LIVES, CHANGING LIVES

Our Participating, Much Valued Veterinarians

The Coalition could not accomplish all that it does in saving cats' lives without the invaluable assistance of our veterinarians. Every week we receive calls from throughout western SD, eastern Wyoming and even Montana from folks who lack the resources to fix their cats, whether one or a colony of 20+. In the smaller towns throughout West River dedicated veterinarians offer reduced cost spay/neuter. However, in Rapid City proper we have only one vet, our hero Dr. Victoria Cook, who for several years now has offered a reduced rate for both feral and tame cats whose owners receive some form of public assistance. Although cat intake at the Humane Society has decreased during the years the Coalition has been active, the euthanasia rate of cats remains at 58%. We are reaching out here to plead with Rapid City vets to donate a few hours each month to assist us in our important mission. Please call 593-5550 and leave a message.

We wholeheartedly welcome Dick Splichal of LFC Veterinary Service in Custer as the newest member of our veterinary roster, and we say goodbye to supporter, Becky Wagner, who before retiring, altered over 500 cats for the Coalition!

Clinic	Vet
Belle Fourche Veterinary Clinic	Bill Marlatt, DVM
Spearfish Animal Hospital	David Elsom, DVM
Northern Hills Veterinary Clinic	Carl Johnson, DVM Margie Jones, DVM
Country Cats	Tom Huhnerkoch, DVM
Cook Veterinary Clinic	Victoria Cook, DVM
Country Vet	Lloyd Emond, DVM
LFC Veterinary Service (Custer)	Dick Splichal, DVM

Equally Appreciated Volunteers (north to south)

Donnette Thayer, Canada
 Carol Markeson, Belle Fourche
 Sandy Kringin, Belle Fourche
 Lori Tetreault, Whitewood
 Sarah McEvoy, Deadwood
 Donna Watson, Deadwood
 Kathy Brown, Black Hawk
 Claudia Murphy, Black Hawk
 Amber Mahle, Rapid City

Kristina Prioetti, Rapid City
 Shari Rose, Rapid City
 Laurie Kampfer, Custer

Foster homes
 Christy Land
 Kristi Skorseth
 Shari Rose
 Kathy Brown
 Margo Pruet

**The Coalition has helped fix over 7,000 cats!
 That's over 700,000 unwanted kittens prevented.**

A Note from the Vice-President

Shari Rose, VP (Rapid City)

In the spring of 2006, I started seeing a large dirty white cat limping across our lawn. At first I fed him from a distance and it took a full year before I could pet him and finally bring him into my home. Before long his ribs no longer showed and he was grooming himself (something cats struggling to survive often don't do). During that time I learned from a neighbor that the now 15 lb. cat, appropriately named Big Guy, had been left behind when his person, another neighbor, had moved away three years before. Big Guy's experience made me realize out how difficult life is for an abandoned cat. Because he wasn't neutered, I searched for help, found the Coalition on line and signed up Big Guy for one of their spay/neuter clinics. When I saw all the clients there with their cats in laundry baskets and cardboard boxes, I was so



happy to find out someone was helping them with the high cost of fixing their cats that I was hooked. I began volunteering at Coalition spay/neuter clinics, then setting them up and talking to prospective clients. Over these past seven years I think I've done it all: design flyers and business cards, educate people who call us for help, rescue, foster and re-home cats, teach clients how to trap, do TNR, assist with administrative duties, network with other animal welfare groups, advertise and, through social media sites, spread our message of saving cats lives through spay/neuter. It has been a very emotional journey, guiding me onto another path in life. Big Guy died last year, but he spent his last four years snuggled up in bed next to me, warm and well fed. He was a driving force, one that changed my life forever. ◆



Big Guy

Contact us by mail or through our website or Facebook page

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**Facebook:
 West River Spay
 Neuter Coalition**

GOING PLACES

Trap, Neuter, Return (TNR)

A large portion of Coalition funds and volunteer efforts go toward TNR. During 2013, we successfully stabilized five large colonies (with up to 30 cats per colony) and several smaller ones.

School of Mines Project

Kristina Prioetti

The Coalition had been providing monetary and moral support for Kristina Prioetti for many years as she worked to finally control the feral and free-roaming cat colonies in her School of Mines neighborhood. She re-homed several abandoned domestic cats and set up feeding stations for all the fixed ferals. Early in 2015 the School began to demolish abandoned buildings in the area where the cats lived to make room for an expansion project. Kristina contacted us for help and while we searched for suitable barn homes through various social media sites, Kristina

set to work trapping. She re-vetted every potential adopter referred to her (we have stringent requirements for placement) and successfully relocated the remaining eight cats to approved barn homes. Great job Kristina!

Custer Laurie Kampfer

Custer volunteer Laurie Kampfer had a busy year helping folks in the Southern Hills fix their cats through vouchers and TNR. With the blessings of the City of Custer, Laurie and her local volunteers undertook TNR of a cat colony near the downtown area. Trappings have yielded 15 cats, including 10 feral adults that were altered, vaccinated, ear-tipped and returned, and five kittens young enough to be tamed and adopted into approved homes. Dick Spichal, DVM (LFC Veterinary Service), the Coalition's new vet, per-



formed the surgeries and kept the cats overnight. Laurie and her volunteers set up five insulated boxes for cold weather, and volunteers regularly feed the cats. Laurie plans to continue her TNR efforts in the early spring to catch kittens that were too old to tame and too young to alter as well as any colony newcomers. ●

Rescuer	TNR Totals	Placements
Lori Tetreault	49	Placed 16 kittens and cats in homes, 17 in barn homes
Laurie Kampfer	30	Placed 10 kittens and cats in homes, 20 in barn homes
Amber Mahle	39	Placed 3 kittens in homes
Shari Rose	25	Placed 2 cats in own home, placed 2 in barn homes

98.5%
of donations pay
for spay or neuter
surgeries!

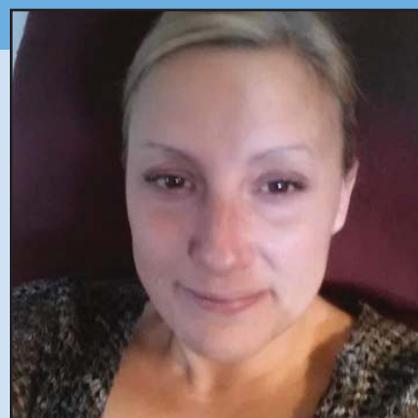


Our Newest Volunteer

AMBER MAHLE

Amber Mahle joined the Coalition in 2014, first by trapping the colony in the mobile home park where she lives in Rapid City. Feeling as though she had found her calling, Amber volunteered to undertake two large colonies in Box Elder, and as of the end of November, she counted 39 cats TNR'd in that town. She continues to set traps during brief periods of warm weather. With a heart of gold when it comes to animals, Amber willingly assists colony caretakers with TNR. She follows up by making sure the cats are healthy and well fed, even if it means buying and delivering cat food to them herself.

We are so pleased to welcome Amber as our newest volunteer.



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Jasper before

Jasper after

who adopted the kitten and removed a hernia so severe it would have ruptured within a day or two. Another cat saved by Dr. Tom!

Shirley Temple

In March, we received a call from a woman near Nemo who was very upset at seeing a cat with a stiff piece of plastic around its neck begging for food. She had tried, but had not been able to approach the cat. Volunteer Kathy Brown provided a Coalition trap and some training, asking for a call as soon as the cat was caught. After several tries they succeeded, then delivered the cat to Shari. From the



Shirley Temple

way the plastic was rimmed around the cat's neck, it was obvious it had been intentionally placed there. Shari immediately took the little gray tabby to Dr. Cook to have the plastic removed and to be spayed. Back home, Shari found the cat to be very skittish and noticeably afraid of men. It took several months for the fur around her neck to grow and stand up and over a year for her to be comfortable and unafraid. Although Shirley is a very loving cat, the right furever home could not be found (calm, quiet, male-free) so Shari felt it best to keep her - besides, in the meantime, Shirley had made several four-legged household friends.

Tommy

When called to pick up a tame cat found alongside a country road near Whitewood, volunteer Lori Tetreault responded. Initially she could not understand why someone would abandon such a sweet middle-aged boy. That is until she got him home and discovered how aggressive he was with other cats. A daunting job finding a one-cat home with a cat-loving person who doesn't already have too many cats, Lori searched and considered and searched some more and finally discovered a perfect place for Tommy. He now resides very happily at the Serenity Corner Assisted Living facility in Spearfish where he spends his days roaming from room to room checking in on occupants, then curling up each night with one of the lucky residents. ◆



Tommy

HELPING THE CAUSE - OUR OUTSTANDING SUPPORTERS

Best Friends Animal Society honored the Coalition with a generous grant to undertake TNR in several reported cat colonies in Box Elder. With only a short time left on this project, we have reached our goal of altering 150 cats, thanks to Amber, Shari and the three caretakers who handled TNR and transportation on their own colonies with guidance from Amber and Shari.

Louie LaLonde and the Saloon #10 hosted a fund-raising event in Deadwood during the OctoberFest that resulted in a significant contribution to our cause. A sizeable crowd gathered in front of the Saloon to participate in the wine and cheese offerings. Shari Kosel and Rose Burns pitched in to help and everyone had a wonderful time. The donation enables us to help many northern Hills caretakers with the cost of altering their kitties.

The Honor Students at Black Hills State University chose the Coalition for a second year as their fund raising project. Under the direction of Dr. Courtney Huse-Wika and headed up by honor students Elizabeth Miller and JLynn Williams, the Furball was a great success and a lot of fun as well. Thanks to their hard work we can now fix even more cats in the northern Hills.

A special thanks goes to Belle Fourche resident **Garri Garrison**, a true cat person and staunch supporter who has made many generous contributions to the Coalition. Garri said that the Coalition helped her fix her cats a few years ago and now she is happy to pay us back, which she has done a hundred times over. Thanks Garri!

Kudos to our long-distance California supporter **Maria Trainin**, who continues to provide us with beautiful cat cards that she makes for us to use and sell. Thanks Maria!

And a special thank you to **everyone** who has sent in whatever he or she could afford to help us with our mission of saving cats' lives through spay/neuter. Every donation counts! Paypal makes it easy to donate at our website: spayneutercoalition.com.