

A photograph of a woman with her hair pulled back, smiling warmly as she holds a tabby cat. The woman is wearing a dark blue top. The background is a solid dark blue color.

# Helping More Cats

St. Hubert's Animal Welfare Center

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Pet Retention Coordinator

# How We Help Cats



- ❖ Medical & Behavioral Work
- ❖ Fostering & Adopting
- ❖ Shelter Partnerships
- ❖ Community Outreach/Humane Education
- ❖ Community Pet Food Bank
- ❖ TLCC program & emergency boarding/fostering
- ❖ Animal Control
- ❖ TNR
- ❖ Take in owner surrenders

# Owner Surrenders

*What is assumed is not always the truth*



- ❖ Heartbreaking for everyone involved
- ❖ Most do NOT want to give up their cat
- ❖ Many feel it is their only option
- ❖ Some pet parents feel ashamed they've run into financial or other difficulty

## But what can we do?!

# What we're seeing...

- ❃ We can help more cats by helping more pet parents
- ❃ Community outreach = thirst/need for knowledge
- ❃ Knowledge can keep cats in homes
- ❃ Helplines offer one on one guidance



# So how do we help more cats?

- ❖ Established pet helpline in late July 2014
  - ❖ Help to assist in correcting unwanted pet behavior, reducing amount of cats being surrendered to a shelter
  - ❖ Help strengthen and/or repair the bond between cat and human affected by troublesome behavior
  - ❖ Offer one on one phone, office or in shelter consultations (home consultations in the future)
  - ❖ Assist families with finding low cost vet care, pet friendly housing or other assistance
  - ❖ Break down preconceived notions regarding missing pets thereby increasing reunions

# What we ‘teach’ pet parents

- ✿ Why their cat is exhibiting a certain behavior
- ✿ What their cats are trying to communicate
- ✿ How to modify/eliminate unwanted behaviors
- ✿ Surrendering is not their only option
- ✿ We are a resource and support
- ✿ How to effectively search for missing pets
- ✿ Hope



# Hope?

## *Hope...*

- ❃ Inspires
- ❃ Empowers

## *Hope that...*

- ❃ My family will remain in tact
- ❃ We can improve the quality of life for both pets and humans in the home
- ❃ If I mess up or get 'stuck' I have somewhere to turn without judgment
- ❃ My missing pet can be found, and I can be involved



# Missing Cats - 101



- ❖ ~ 2-5% of cats who enter shelters each year as strays are reclaimed –*ASPCA, HSUS*
- ❖ More than 35% of cats are acquired as strays –*ASPCA*
- ❖ 92% of indoor –only cats are found within a 3-5 house radius of home
  - ❖ 84% of outdoor-access cats
- ❖ When in unfamiliar territory cats often hide in silence to avoid detection
- ❖ If people see a cat outside with no ID they assume 'stray/feral' not 'lost pet'
- ❖ 21% of calls received by our helpline are missing pets

# Posters AND flyers



# Posters AND flyers

## ❃ **More than 35% of cats are acquired as strays**

### ❃ **Posters**

- ❃ Busy intersections/roads
- ❃ 22x28” neon
- ❃ Big, bold, stencil letters
- ❃ 5 words max
- ❃ Color photo, large phone number

### ❃ **Flyers**

- ❃ Community bulletin boards, vets, shelters, police stations, etc.
- ❃ Neighbors, mail carriers

### ❃ **Both**

- ❃ Powerful combination
- ❃ Quick, easy to make
- ❃ For lost AND found animals

“...A man took her in and told his friend about the stray cat and asked if he wanted her. The friend said no but said his mom might. The mom asked for a description of the cat because she had seen a missing flyer. It was her! His mom lives around the corner from us but she was found several blocks away across a busy road.”

# My cat has been missing for 2 days, she's never coming back is she?

Most cats that are brought to shelters go unclaimed due to the time between when a pet parent gives up hope and the cat makes him/herself noticeable

Per 2014 study by MPP - 0% of indoor-only cats were recovered at an animal shelter compared to 1.2% of outdoor-access cats that were recovered at an animal shelter



I'd have called/searched/done something sooner but I assumed he'd find his way home like always!



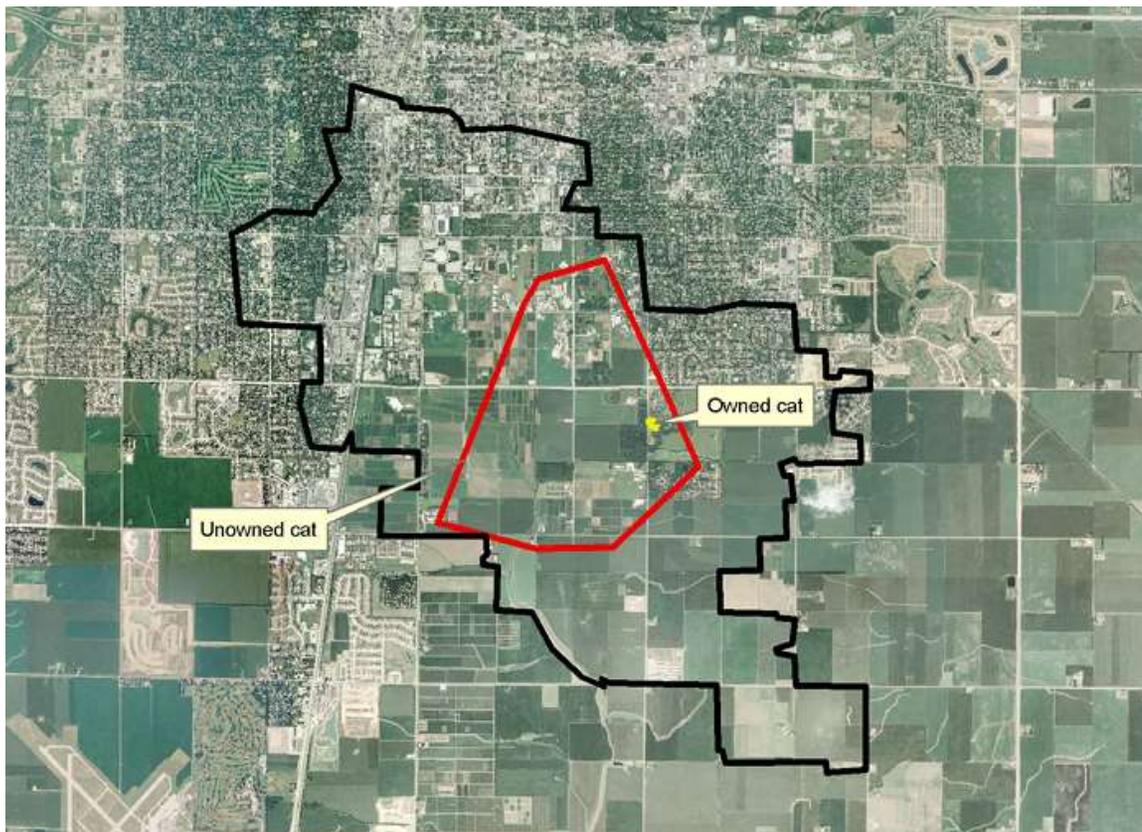
- ❃ Time is always of the essence
- ❃ As their exposure to the outdoors increases so does their exposure to possible threats
  - \*especially for indoor only cats*

I walked around my block calling his name and shaking treats, but he didn't come to me so he must not be around. He'd go up to anyone!

- ❖ Personality friendly/skittish  
will dictate some
- ❖ Natural instincts tell them  
to hide in silence
- ❖ Displaced, disoriented



She's old so I think she went off to die,  
you know how cats do that.



*Courtesy of University of Illinois*

- ❃ Cats are extremely territorial
- ❃ Territory defined by what they have access to
- ❃ Stay within known territory unless something causes them to continue
- ❃ 92% of indoor only cats are found within 3-5 homes



# I was told there's a lot of coyotes/predators in my area, so she probably couldn't survive.

- ❃ Coyotes and Great Horned owls are predators that occasionally prey upon cats and small dogs if the opportunity presents itself. If you live in an area where these and other predators (hawks, eagles, cougars, etc.) roam, then this is a factor that you must take into account. -[missingpetpartnership.org/recovery-tips/probability-categories/](https://missingpetpartnership.org/recovery-tips/probability-categories/)
- ❃ Attacks are presumed without actual evidence
- ❃ It is often easier for a pet parent to accept death & grieve then go through the ups and downs of a missing pet

# I asked my neighbors to look

- ❖ Some neighbors ideas of looking will consist of briefly looking around yard from one position
- ❖ Best to ask if you can physically search
- ❖ Cats likely to stay hidden, not being able to be easily spotted

Where should I look?



Where should I look?



Where should I look?



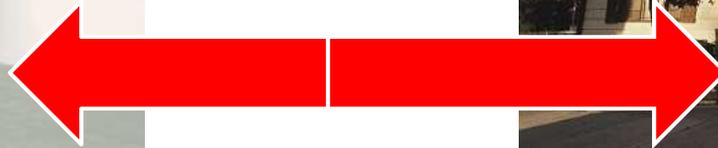
Where should I look?



Where should I look?



# Where should I look?



# Where should I look at night?

- ❖ Same as during day -
- ❖ ***WITH A FLASHLIGHT!***
- ❖ Keep in mind cats are crepuscular so they will be most active during dawn & dusk
- ❖ Strong possibility they will stay hidden/trapped



# Never give up...

- 🐾 St. Hubert's Pet Retention has a 47% RTO rate for cats
- 🐾 Many of those families/pet parents had given up hope/doubted that their cat would ever be found

“Thanks Tara for the information. And thank you sooooo much for the info about most indoor cats being found within five houses of their own home. **We went looking for the cats this evening and found the calico, three houses away.** She was scared and it took some finessing to get her in the carrying case, but she's home safe and sound now.”



# Cats reunited = more families together



You can't imagine how much help this email is. **It gives me hope, which I was starting to lose.** Now, there are other things I can do to find Patches instead of waiting for a phone call...

...A man took her in and told his friend about the stray cat and asked if he wanted her. The friend said no but said his mom might. The mom asked for a description of the cat because she had seen a missing flyer. It was her! His mom lives around the corner from us but she was found several blocks away across a busy road.

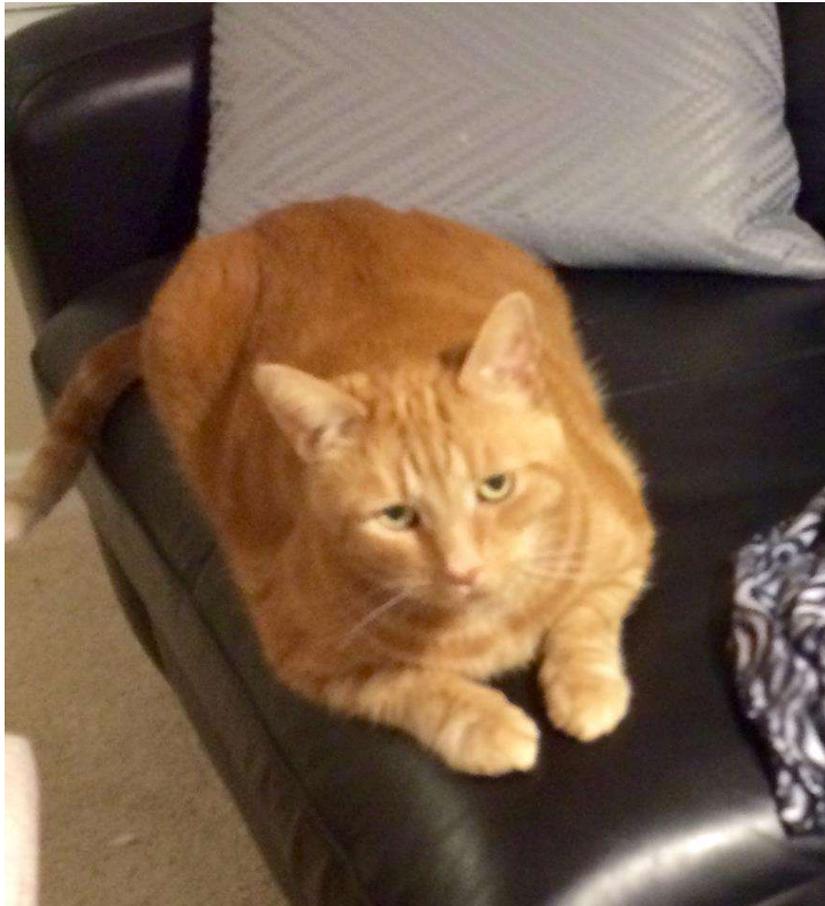
# Cats reunited = more families together

Yes, yes!!!! Bucki was found yesterday afternoon! This super nice lady that lived 5 minutes by car from my house called me saying that she spotted a golden animal that may be my Bucki! **She had my flyer still in her house and so was able to call me...**

*Thank you so much for everything!*



# Cats reunited = more families together



“Tara - a neighbor called me this morning about an animal living in her garage that could be a cat and it was Kiki!!!!!!! **He's been two streets over for three days** and I guess outside for the other two that he was lost. Thank you so much for your help. Just knowing that someone was helping made me feel so much better.”

# How you can help cats in your community

- ❖ Share your compassion and knowledge with cat 'owners' in your community
- ❖ If a cat is missing, help search effectively, help with flyers/posters, check classifieds/social media
- ❖ Encourage friends/family/neighbors to microchip their cat and use collars (Beastie Bands are great)
- ❖ When you see a cat outside think LOST not STRAY, call animal control, make found posters/flyers
- ❖ **Offer support without judgment**





Thank you for attending  
and being such amazing  
*advocats!*

We think you're  
pawsome!



*Cosmo - Pet Retention Office Assistant (l) & Rusty – Finance Office Assistant (R)*

*🐾 Both available for adoption! 🐾*