

Mews

2018
Vol.2

What Is Mediation?

Also In This Issue:

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Health Matters | Cat Mama Shop | #EveryCatHasAStory



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Mediation — The Next Frontier

We've been chugging through 2018 and we've just received some great news that I'd like to share with you: CWS has succeeded in entrenching mediation as the first step in the humane management of cat-related issues in Singapore. We have always been at the forefront of advocating humane management, and this news legitimises our efforts.

Mediation is the crucial backbone to creating a safe and dignified living environment for our community cats and a step toward the legalisation of responsible cat ownership. In 2017 our team of two worked more than 2000 cat-related cases, some of which you can find in this issue of the

Mews. This number is on the increase with more issues such as hoarding and backyard breeding coming out of the woodwork.

To keep up and stay ahead of these latent issues, we will be expanding our mediation team from 2 to 5 and working with investigating officers from the AVA as well as town councils and grassroots officers to implement a protocol for the investigation and resolution of cat-related issues.

We have also expanded our education footprint this year with an increased number of adoption drives and events to educate the masses about responsible cat ownership. We have increased our involvement with schools and will be unveiling a specially conceptualised education board at schools in the next few months.

I hope that you will support us through this stage of exciting new developments through your continued donations. Our increased role and focus on mediation requires increased overheads. With more mediators to support we will have greater operational costs and expect sterilisation rates to reach unprecedented rates. Although we do receive a partial subsidy from the AVA for the sterilisation of community cats, the demand for low-cost pet cat sterilisation is at an all time high. We must meet this demand if we are to move closer toward a goal of legalising pet cat ownership in Singapore.

We will be announcing a fundraiser shortly and we hope that you will join us in our vision for Singapore's cats – happily cared for and safe, be they on the streets or in our homes. If you would like to make a donation, please visit: www.catwelfare.org/donations

Together, we can make a difference. Together, we can help save lives everyday.

Laura Ann Meranda

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Cat Welfare Society is a charity that aims to promote a humane, responsible and informed society in Singapore where pet cats are taken care of responsibly and community cats are treated with kindness.

Website

<http://catwelfare.org>

Online Shop

<https://catwelfare.store>

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Mews 2018, Volume 2

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We say laughter is the best mewdicine! Cats do the quirkiest things which is one of the reasons we love them so much. The world needs more joy. Share with us your feline's funniest memes by emailing us at mews@catwelfare.org so we can compile and share the best ones in our subsequent issues.



ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Transformer Teddy

It took a village of dedicated people to transform Teddy. Here is the story on how rescuers worked together to bring about amazing change to a life that would have otherwise been lost.

Teddy was part of a litter of kittens which were born at a beach club at East Coast Park. They grew up without incident, and Teddy became confident and friendly with human visitors. But when the beach club closed down, life would take a terrible turn for Teddy.

A man was regularly spotted in the vicinity of the beach club and according to multiple witnesses, he had been seen throwing stones at cats in the area. Teddy's vigilant caregivers kept an eye on the man for months and even lodged a police report but without concrete evidence, there was nothing the police could do. The caregivers who visited the park daily to feed the community cats, noticed a marked change in their behaviour – from friendly and affectionate to fearful and defensive in a short time.

One morning, the man was spotted entering the abandoned beach club. One of Teddy's main caregivers, Cat Welfare Society (CWS) Board Member, Edward Foo (read more about him in Who's Your (CAT) Daddy?) saw this, called the police and discreetly followed the man from a distance. When the man finally emerged, Edward saw Teddy, bleeding profusely from wounds to his head. Without heed for his own safety, Edward confronted the alleged abuser, who turn tailed and ran, with Edward hot on his heels. Thankfully, the abuser was cornered 5 minutes later, with help from the Singapore Police Force. He would later be interrogated by the police as well as AVA and let off with nothing but a stern warning.




Teddy spent 3 weeks in the animal hospital recovering from serious head trauma. At the time of the incident, he was just over a year old. He had been hit by a pole measuring 1 metre in length with a diameter of 1 inch; his head was swollen and badly bruised. While he gradually made a successful recovery from his injuries, the emotional trauma of the abuse lived on in Teddy. The handsome boy which used to approach and interact with humans every day became fear-aggressive and almost feral after the attack, hissing and striking at anyone who tried to come near.

Edward decided that returning Teddy to the scene of the abuse would not be good for him, and so Teddy was placed in a pet hotel for 8 months to recuperate. But Teddy's spirit remained injured. Edward refused to give up on him, deciding instead to partner with Animal Lovers League (ALL) to help rehabilitate Teddy. Mohan from ALL, set to work on Teddy, spending the next 10 months trying to gain Teddy's trust.

Mohan chuckles as he remembers how he would sit in the enclosure with Teddy every day, refusing to let Teddy ignore him. He would repeatedly touch Teddy to desensitize him to a human's touch and to show that he meant no harm. 20 months after the incident, Teddy is a chubby and affectionate 8kg cat that not only loves to be carried, but allows anyone to carry him. With patience, love and a never-give-up attitude, abused cats can be successfully rehabilitated and given a second chance of life!

Teddy is now ready for adoption! Who will be the lucky one to give this special boy a loving forever home?

Our community cats face harsh and unpredictable dangers in the open, including risk of abuse from intolerant people. Animal abuse is crime that is punishable by law. If you suspect or happen to witness someone abusing an animal, try to obtain photographic or video evidence while calling the relevant authorities for assistance. We all can and need to play a part in looking out for the animals that share our living space.

 Numbers to call in case of Emergency: Police: 999 | AVA: 1800-476-1600 | SPCA: 6-287-5355 ext 9



Teddy before abuse



Teddy during treatment



Teddy, now, after complete recovery

WHAT IS MEDIATION?

Saving The Boon Lay Cats

An Overview

Mediation is the process by which Cat Welfare Society representatives work with the offending person(s), the feedback provider and the various agencies such as HDB, Town Councils and the AVA in coming to a compromise and resolving cat related issues amicably

In 2016 and 2017 CWS mediated over 2000 cases each year involving cat-related issues and brought them to a humane resolution. This means that no cats were culled as a direct result of CWS's intervention.

Mediation is a deeply personal battle waged each day by our mediators and volunteers. It takes various meanings for them – be it fighting to give the voiceless a voice or a battle against unfairness or even just about helping families, we will share with you some of our most memorable mediation stories, like the Boon Lay cats.



In late 2017, CWS was alerted to a case of welfare negligence in Boon Lay. The feedback provider reported that in one of the rented flat units in the area, 9 cats were found kept in deplorable conditions, without food and

water, for an extended period of time. Both residents and the feedback provider had been feeding the hungry cats by inserting food through small slots in the windows. Videos taken show the house in a mess, items strewn all around, pee and excrement covering the ground. It was a difficult sight to swallow.

CWS Executive Director, Laura, immediately sprang into action, contacting various agencies like HDB and AVA to report the case in a bid to try and locate the tenant of the unit so the cats could receive the necessary aid they needed. The errant tenant, somehow catching wind that the authorities were looking for her, is then suspected to have subsequently abandoned all the cats at the void deck. The feedback provider who had been feeding the cats daily recognised the cats and found them shivering in fear downstairs. None of the cats were sterilised.

2 of the cats were eventually adopted by a kind neighbour while the remaining 7 were impounded by AVA, but later bailed out by Laura to be fostered till they find permanent homes. To date, one of the 7 cats has been adopted.



With the mediation efforts of CWS, 9 cat lives were saved. Today, all the cats are healthy and doing well. Mediation efforts continue as CWS is still pushing hard for prosecution of the case.



We Do This By:

1. Having a clear stance that responsible cat owners and responsible caregivers must not be penalised.
2. Following a list of guidelines that responsible cat owners must adhere to and a protocol for responsible caregiving.
3. Educating the general public and working closely with the 16 town councils, AVA , HDB, NEA, Nparks and the various agencies.

Common Cat Related Issues That CWS Mediates:

1. Irresponsible cat ownership: Hoarding, Roaming pet cats.
2. Irresponsible feeding, unchecked population control in housing and industrial areas.
3. Welfare issues of pet cats usually neglect and/or hoarding.



In conclusion, countless other feline lives are saved every single day by our mediators who work on the ground to help negotiate and resolve a myriad of cat-related issues. With people becoming more socially responsible and with the advent of technology, more cases of neglect, abuse, hoarding etc now get flagged and come to light, allowing our mediators to respond more quickly than ever before. Everyone plays a crucial role in not just looking out for one another but also for the animals that share our living spaces in the community.



Cat Welfare Society
Volunteer Team
Trap
Neuter
Return
Manage

NIGHT PROWLERS

Follow A Volunteer On Her First TNR Project

In the unrelieving black of night, a sultry breeze runs through the tree tops, rustling the leaves gently. We continue our vigil in the van, waiting patiently for our intended to reveal itself.

A sudden movement catches my partner's eye. She nudges me softly, jerking her head in the direction of some bushes by the sidewalk. Immediately, we flatten ourselves against the seats to try make ourselves as inconspicuous as possible.



Our intended appears, a sleek black shape, slipping between the trees that line the sidewalk. Determined, focused and swift, if we hadn't spent the last forty-five minutes laying in wait, we could have easily missed it.

This is my first time. As a relatively new volunteer of Cat Welfare Society (CWS), this is my first exposure to a Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) project under the Stray Cat Sterilisation Programme (SCSP), which is undertaken by CWS to effectively control the stray cat population in Singapore.

The process may sound simple, but TNR is actually painstaking as it involves laying in wait, sometimes for hours on end, for the cats to take the bait and enter the traps. This is typically done after office hours, as most of the trappers and volunteers hold down full or part time jobs. Human and vehicular traffic also taper down later into the night, which is when the cats, which are nocturnal creatures, typically emerge to look for food.

Once the cats to be trapped are identified, humane traps are laid out, with cat food used as bait to draw the cat into the trap. The attempts are not always successful. Some cats might be too frightened to go near or even enter a foreign looking trap while others might be trap savvy and mastered the art of removing the cat food without triggering the trap. At times, attempts fail as the cats are simply not hungry, especially if there is a caregiver around that feeds them regularly. As far as possible, whenever trapping is required in a certain area, known caregivers are notified to withhold the night feed till trapping has concluded. Not every caregiver cooperates with the trappers however, with some berating them for being cruel and catching the cats. It is hard and thankless work.

Cats that are successfully trapped are sent to one of the veterinarian clinics under CWS' SCSP for sterilisation the next day. After the procedure, the cats are monitored shortly for recovery before they are discharged for release back to the exact location where they were found. This can be just as time consuming as actually finding the cats to begin with as all carriers need to be labelled properly, loaded and driven to the exact spots where the cats were picked up. The cats are once again released into their homes, none the wiser about the ordeal, but now able to lead safer and healthier lives.



WHO'S YOUR (CAT) DADDY?

The phrase “Crazy Cat Lady” evokes a demeaning stereotype of a middle-aged or elderly spinster with a weird cat obsession. While female cat lovers worldwide are now reclaiming the phrase and wearing their “Crazy Cat Lady” badges with pride, an increasing number of male caregivers and community feeders have come to the fore and are proving that such gender stereotypes have no place in modern society. We speak to two male caregivers who are active in Singapore’s cat welfare community.

Edward, 45, is a Cat Welfare Society committee member whose love for cats began very early in life. “I was greatly influenced by my grandmother who took care of homeless cats when she was alive,” he says with a smile. “Now I have 6 rescued cats of my own, and all of them have their own designated sleeping spot on my bed every night. Thank goodness all of them have been trained to sleep through the night!”

37-year-old Edgie is an aircraft engine inspector and readily admits he had always been “more of a dog person” until he met his wife. “My wife was already caring for community cats before our marriage. When she was in between jobs, she started rescuing cats too and asked me if I could help feed the community cats in my area. 6 years later, I’m still feeding the community cats!” he says with a laugh.

Both men are currently regular feeders in their respective neighbourhoods. When he is not overseas for work, Edward gets up at 5.30am to spend one hour feeding community cats before he starts work. After work he spends another one-and-a-half hours in the evening to cover the feeding area again. Edgie, on the other hand, takes the night shift while another feeder takes the morning shift. They notify each other if they go on a holiday or if they have to miss a round of feeding due to personal matters.

It is a routine that requires sacrifices and has taken some getting used to, but for Edgie, the satisfaction is significant. “Seeing each cat grow up healthy is definitely worth it!” Edward couldn’t agree more. “The most fulfilling part of

being a caregiver is seeing the difference we are able to make in an animal’s life.”

Edward’s 20-year volunteer journey has seen him involved in different activities pertaining to animal welfare. He runs an active network of caregivers around East Coast Park, who are on a twice-daily patrol and feeding roster. He was part of a group of caregivers who were one of the first respondents to a horrific cat abuse case in East Coast Park. Community cat Teddy suffered serious head trauma and was hospitalized for 3 weeks.

The incident helped Edward see that being a male caregiver had its advantages. “Nasty people are more likely to bully or intimidate a female caregiver rather than a male one,” he explains. “And because of the commonly-held misconception that men are less emotional than women, there are times when mediation with individuals or authorities can go over smoother.”

Thankfully, Teddy has made a full recovery through months of rehabilitation and is now a chubby, cuddly cat who loves being carried like a baby!

Edgie also recalls one memorable caregiving incident. He and his wife rescued Patches, a calico community cat who was terrified of everyone and everything. She was so malnourished and fatigued that she would wobble when she walked. The husband-and-wife team quickly brought her to a vet for medical attention. Upon discharge, Edgie fed her every night and after a few months, he slowly won her trust. Now, Patches demands massages and will paw and nag at him if he is not doing it properly!

“You could say I’m happily enslaved,” he says laughing heartily. Edgie is all smiles when he tells me that Patches “talks” when she eats, purrs and makes “bubbles” when she gets her massages.

Edgie is pleased that the phrase “crazy cat lady” has evolved over time to become more positive and less exclusive. “I find that the new generation of kids has shed

Edgie (top and bottom)



Edward (Top and Bottom)



the hang-ups of previous generations, and now it's a lot less 'weird' for guys to like cats," he explains. "Even some of my male friends who play in metal bands are fond of cats!"

Edward readily agrees. "Men loving cats is not a sign of weakness! We are here to help and contribute to the voiceless and defenceless. Volunteering needs a genuine, unconditional loving heart for the animals to work. And it doesn't matter if that heart is male or female."



HEALTH MATTERS

Pyometra In Cats

Do you remember how puberty was like for you? It's not the smoothest of transition periods for many teenagers who go through bodily changes – Menstruation! Acne! Hair... everywhere! – and simultaneously experience being the emotional victim of a flood of hormones. But while we will forever have our awkward memories of puberty to look back on and laugh about, cats that undergo puberty have a much more dangerous route ahead of them, one that can result in severe illness and death.

Just like in humans, a hormone called progesterone is released each time a sexually mature female cat goes into a heat cycle. Progesterone levels will remain elevated for several weeks, and this helps the uterine lining to thicken in preparation for pregnancy. Here's the difference: if a human female does not get pregnant, the thick uterine lining will break down and menstruation occurs. However, cats do not menstruate. If a cat experiences several heat cycles and does not get pregnant, the uterine lining can become so thick that cysts can form, resulting in a condition known as Cystic Endometrial Hyperplasia.



It gets worse. The high levels of progesterone causes the cervix to open, allowing bacteria to enter, which can lead to infection. Infections in this case are very serious as disease-fighting white blood cells are kept out of the uterus due to the high progesterone levels. Pus begins to fill the uterus and this is what is known as Pyometra.

Pyometra may progress quickly or take several months to fully develop. The visible symptoms of Pyometra depend on whether the cervix is open or closed when the infection develops. If the cervix is open, you may see pus or bloody discharge coming from your cat's vagina or stains in her bedding. If the cervix is closed, the pus or bloody discharge will not be eliminated and you may notice a

painful, engorged abdomen as the toxins build up within. Other signs like lethargy, fever, loss of appetite, excessive thirst and vomiting may also occur.



All cases of Pyometra are medical emergencies, but a closed Pyometra (where the cervix is closed) is far more dangerous and life-threatening. If your female cat is unsterilised and exhibiting any of these symptoms, immediate medical attention is required. If left untreated, Pyometra can lead to organ damage, blood poisoning and death.

Cat Welfare Society President, Thenuga, who is also the volunteer coordinator for the organisation's Low Cost Pet Cat Sterilization Scheme, shares that she receives pictures of cats with various medical complications related to Pyometra every other day. She feels it is important that cat owners are educated and made aware of the dangerous risks they undertake when they do not sterilize their female pet cats.

"After the cat is sterilised, the possibility of developing uterine or ovarian cancer is eliminated and the incidence of breast cancer is greatly reduced. The cat will not be in pain from cysts or enlarged wombs and will have no chance of dying from a womb infection. We're not exaggerating when we say sterilisation saves lives."

Sterilising a female cat when she is young and healthy is the best way to prevent Pyometra and ensuring your female cat is no longer at the mercy of hormonal changes. We urge all cat owners to spare their cats from unnecessary and not to mention, expensive health complications that can be easily avoided by a simple surgical procedure.



Sources:

www.cat-world.com.au/pyometra-in-cats.html

<https://vcahospitals.com/know-your-pet/pyometra-in-cats>

<https://www.petmd.com/cat/conditions/reproductive/signs-pyometra-cats>

<http://www.catster.com/lifestyle/cat-health-pyometra-symptoms-treatment>

猫猫店

CAT MAMA SHOP

Rescuer Resources

In case you haven't already heard, we have re-branded and re-launched our online shop!

Aptly called Cat Mama Store in appreciation of the many female cat rescuers and caregivers who make up the cat community in Singapore, the new store-front logo has been designed by the good folks of Goodstuph, who have thoughtfully included a tipped cat ear to highlight the society's efforts in advocating sterilisation as the best way to effectively control the cat population.

Rescue is often confused with mediation. Mediation is the process by which a compromise is reached without affecting a cat's welfare. Rescuers usually step in when a cat is in immediate need of assistance, usually because of a dire welfare issue or medical needs. Rescuers take on cases every day and often at short notice. Here are some of the supplements and items available for rescuers on the Cat Mama Shop:

(a) Revolution — Quick and safe spot-on application to protect cats and kittens from fleas, heartworm and other harmful parasites. Kitten \$38 | Adult \$42

(b) Nutri-Cal — High calorie supplement - \$12

(c) Heating Pad — For young kittens who have not learnt to regulate their own body temperatures yet - \$17

(d) Argasol Gel — Anti-bacterial, anti-viral and anti-fungal topical gel. 118ml | 24ppm \$40

(e) Argasol Spray — Sanitisation spray for the management of traumatic wounds, cuts, abrasions, skin irritations, postsurgical incisions and burn. 500ml | 32ppm \$70

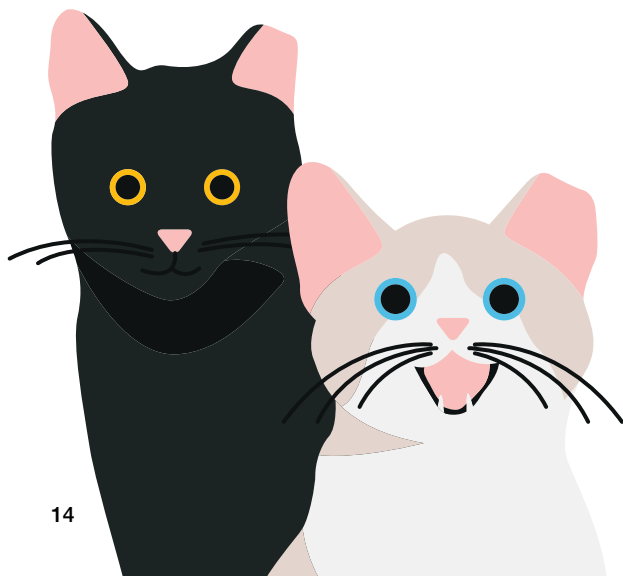
(f) Lysine Viralys — Supplement to support a healthy immune system - \$13

(g) Lysine Powder — Used to treat upper respiratory problems or feline herpes - \$14

(h) Tomlyn Eye Wash — Used for flushing eyes and soothing eye irritation - \$15

(i) Tomlyn Non-probing Ear Cleaner - \$12

(j) Foldable Cat Cage — For isolation and to help get cats accustomed to new environments/litterbox training. - \$30



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)



(e)



(f)



(g)



(h)



(i)



(j)



#EVERYCATHASASTORY

Cats are the real victims whenever there is human conflict pertaining to cats. Every cat that is fortunate enough to be rescued has a heartrending story behind it.

Chippy



I was hungry but could not eat. I was scared but could not cry. It hurt to even open my mouth because my gums and teeth had gone bad.

It was the festive period a time to spend with family but there I was cowering alone in a corner, ironically, next door to a vet. The person who found me thought I was a kitten because I was so small even though I am actually about 8 years old. There was no way I could tell the vet my rescuer sent me to that I had been sterilised so they found out when they cut me open again. I was angry because I hurt, angrier that my family didn't want me anymore. All I want is some love, and to be able to eat and sleep properly. Is that too much to ask for?

The Tampines Roamer – Irresponsible Cat Ownership



I pee and defecated outside people's houses. I did not know it was wrong but it made the neighbours very angry and they called the Town Council to complain. I am lucky no one hit or kicked me for what I did. A CWS mediator was called in to talk to my owner about keeping me strictly indoors.

She said something about being neighbourly. She really is my lucky star. If she had not advised my owner, it is likely my owner would have been forced to give me up. Now I pee and poo in a big litter box at home. I don't get to go out anymore but that's ok. I spend most of my time sleeping, eating and cleaning myself anyway.

Dog and Squid



My little brother Squid and I (plus our other brother Cow) were lucky. The 3 of us were born in our human foster mama's house. She had taken our real mama cat, a community cat, for sterilisation only to find out she was heavily pregnant so she took mama in and that's how we were born a year ago. Now that Cow has been adopted, only the 2 of us are left.

I have a spotted coat and striped tail, and Squiddy has a kinked tail. I love being around my favourite humans, telling them all about my day when they come home. But I love my brother most! He lets me win when we play wrestle and doesn't complain when I steal his food. He is shyer than me when it comes to making new friends so I am always around to protect him. I can't imagine life without Squid, so wherever I go, he has to come with me!

Rainie



I don't remember what happened. One moment I was up high and the next I was in the drain down below, wet and cold. And the pain, I remember that the most, the unbearable pain like nothing I have ever felt before. Some people walked past, ignoring my cries for help. Perhaps they were scared of the trouble I might bring to them. But there are still many kind people in the world and one of them brought me to the vet where X-rays showed that I had multiple fractures and dislocations throughout my body. The vet said surgery was necessary but it had to be delayed till they were able to treat something that was wrong in my blood. As the weeks passed however, something entirely miraculous happened, surprising all the humans that had been taking care of me. It didn't hurt as much anymore, so I started limping around. Everyone, including the vet were amazed at the rate of my recovery, which had progressed so much that I did not require surgery anymore. My rescuer named me Rainie, because I was found in the aftermath of a thunderstorm. It was a miracle I survived a fall from such a height, and another miracle that I have recovered so well and so quickly without corrective surgery.

Tom Cat – The Unsterilised Male Community Cat



Someone complained that I was caterwauling so loudly she couldn't sleep. I couldn't help myself. It is my mating call so I can find a partner. I roam the corridors at night to find a female cat but all I see are other male cats. My instincts tell me that I can be the only male cat around, I need to be the strongest and fiercest cat so that I can find a girlfriend. So I fight with all the other male cats in the neighbourhood and we make a loud ruckus late at night.

People wanted me removed but this neighbourhood has been my home for many years. Where can I go? My fate would have been sealed if I had not been trapped and sent for sterilisation.

Now I just don't feel the need to find a girlfriend. Most of my days are spent sleeping and chilling with my best guy buddies. No one complains about me anymore.

Anakin Skywalker



I had the worst possible start in life. Barely less than a month old when I was thrown out like trash, in a used hamster cage. I most definitely would have died if my rescuer, who is a cat lover had not passed by. The family I was born into did not take care of me. I was found, dirty and scruffy looking, malnourished and small for my age. My rescuer took great care of me, showering me with love and care that I had never known. It seemed like my short life had finally taken a turn for the better until I started suffering unexplained seizures. When I have a seizure I lose all control of my body. The vet said that it was likely I would have to be on medication all my life to control my seizures. What was worse, at 3.5 months old, one of the vets I was sent to, diagnosed me to be blind. I don't let this affect me though. I navigate the house like a pro, you wouldn't even know I can't see. I am like any normal kitten. I love to eat, play with my big brother cats and snuggle with my foster mummy and daddy.



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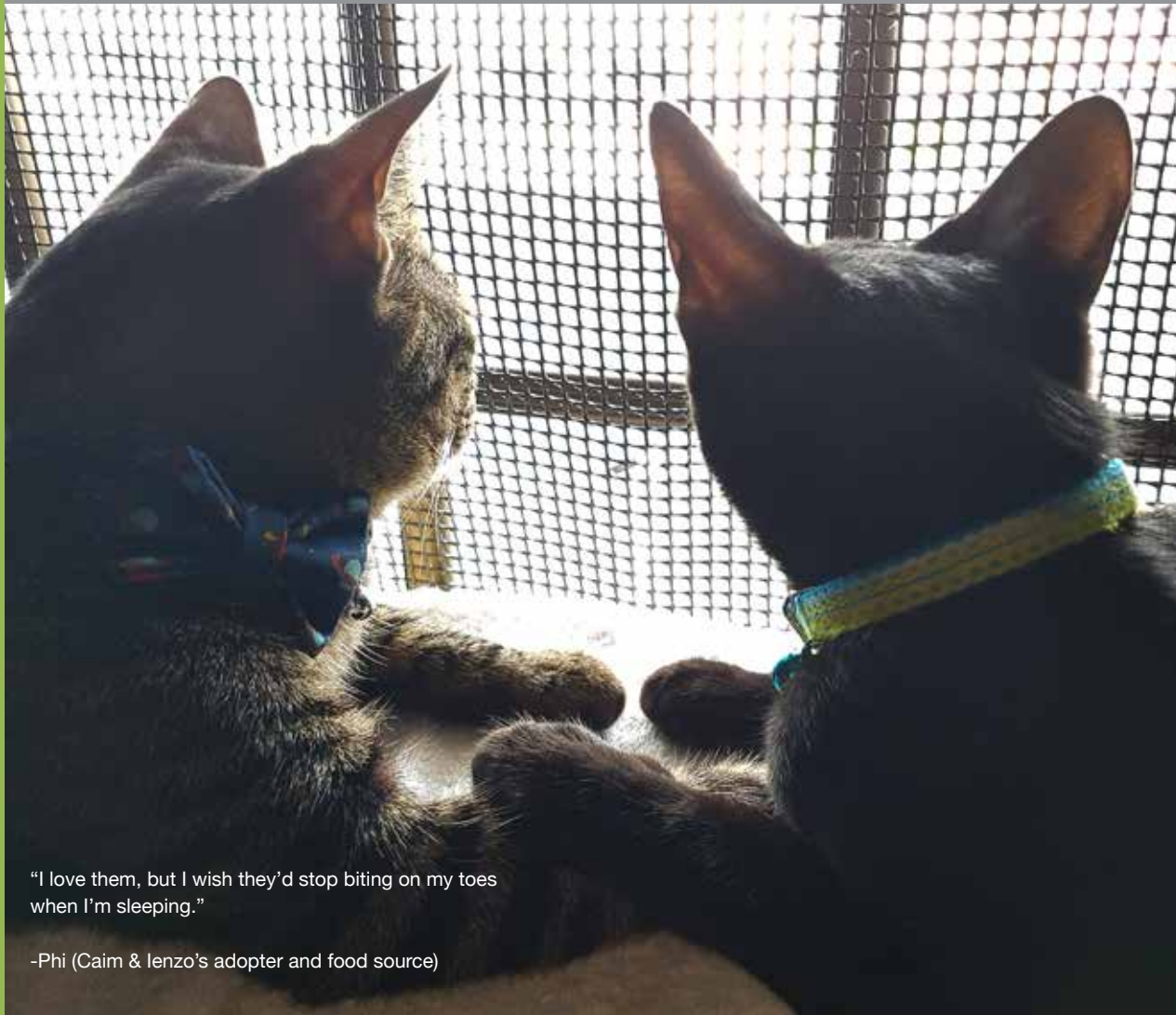
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#SAVINGLIVESEVERYDAY



"I love them, but I wish they'd stop biting on my toes when I'm sleeping."

-Phi (Caim & Ienzo's adopter and food source)

MCI (P) 132/04/2018

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