



# ONLINE CAT CONFERENCE

January 28–30, 2022  
*All times listed are Eastern Time.*

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Friday, January 28

7:00–7:15 p.m.

**Stacy LeBaron, Community Cats Podcast**  
Opening Remarks

7:15–8:30 p.m.

**Pat Dames, Founder and Manager, TNR Texas**  
**Bryan Kortis, National Programs Director, Neighborhood Cats**

**How to Start a TNR Program** | *Session sponsored by Lola the Rescued Cat*

Learn how to start or enhance a TNR program and create a positive impact in your community with guidance from two seasoned TNR professionals.

### **About Pat Dames**

Pat lives in Austin, TX and is the founder and manager of TNR Texas. She is also a trapper with the City of Austin and Shadow Cats and has a long history of volunteering with many cat rescue groups around the country. Most of Pat's professional work has been in nonprofit management, with a focus on building relationships, marketing, and program development in the areas of public health, women's cancer support, equine therapy, and even the management of a nonprofit animal shelter. Pat lives with three cats, all rescues.

### **About Bryan Kortis**

Bryan is co-founder and national programs director for Neighborhood Cats, a leading community cat advocacy group with hands-on programs in New York City, New Jersey, and Maui. Currently, he and his wife Susan Richmond live in Hawaii and can usually be found trapping cats or releasing them after they've been neutered. In between stints with Neighborhood Cats, Bryan served as a grants manager for PetSmart Charities, overseeing more than \$21 million in TNR and spay/neuter projects. He has produced many of the leading educational materials on TNR, including award-winning books and videos; has assisted numerous communities in setting up large-scale TNR programs, and is a frequent presenter on community cat issues. Bryan has a BA from Cornell University and a JD from the University of California, Berkeley.

Saturday, January 29

10:00–10:15 a.m.

**Stacy LeBaron**

Welcome

10:15–11:15 a.m.

**Mike Bricker, Chief of CARE Centers, CARE**

### **Harnessing the Power of Community Wisdom**

Community wisdom is the aggregated base of knowledge, intuition, skills, and assets that residents bring to solving their collective challenges. In this presentation we will show you how to harness and use this power to help create sustainable change, for people and pets, in the community you serve.

### **About Mike Bricker**

Michael Bricker is the Chief of CARE Centers for Companions and Animals for Reform and Equity (CARE). As Chief of CARE Centers, Michael curates strategies for each CARE Center to develop a national model for workforce development to provide sustainable change and save more animals. Previously, Michael was Director of Operations for the Shelter Embed program at Best Friends Animal Society. He spent most of his time in Texas, as Interim Executive Director at different shelters. Before Best Friends, Mike was the Director of Operations at Camden County Animal Shelter (CCAS). In addition to rewriting the shelter's adoption policies, Mike helped to create a Lifesaving Department, launch CCAS's community cat program, pioneer the Rent-A-Dog program and modernize the shelter's medical operations.

11:15 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

**Kyla Burton, Trapper**

**Sterling Davis, TrapKing**

**James Evans, Founder and CEO, CARE**

**Nina Love, Founder, The Black Thornberry**

**Latonya "Sassee" Walker, Trapper**

### **Breaking the Bias in TNR Panel Conversation**

Join James Evans and an amazing panel of BIPOC Cat Advocates discussing privilege and harm that is past and present inside this field. They will also talk about the necessity of finding a space that is safe for BIPOC people and the ways others can learn how to support them.

### **About Kyla Burton**

Kyla (pronounced Kay-La) began her journey as a foster parent by volunteering with a large national organization headquartered in New York City in 2017. She became TNR certified a few years later, and practices full circle TNR. Kyla is passionate about the well-being of all community cats, but her main focus is on the most vulnerable and tiniest felines. She considers herself and her cat Calvin a dynamic duo when it comes to fostering kittens! Together, they have fostered hundreds of kittens over the years. Outside of rescue work, she works full time in technology and lives in Brooklyn. Kyla loves to travel, indulge in true crime television, and coffee!

#### **About Sterling Davis**

He is the TrapKing... need we say more.

#### **About James Evans**

James is a multi-awarding winning creative strategist with 25+ years of experience working with a diverse group of brands, both non profit, and for profit, including Timberland, Disney, NAACP, Baltimore Health Department, Kennedy Krieger Institute, CVS and Safe Streets. James and his team have initiated several programs, including the ground breaking Gulf Spay/Neuter Campaign and HSUS' Pets for Life, which helped reshape animal welfare, advocating for more diversity and inclusion throughout the field. Other notable projects are HSUS' Adopters Welcome, Outdoor Cats and Stop Puppy Mills, as well as clients like Best Friends Animal Society, Maddie's Fund, and SPCA of Texas.

James is currently the founder and CEO of CARE, Companions and Animals for Reform and Equity, a non-profit that is using research, community wisdom and storytelling to inspire inclusivity in animal welfare and create BIPOC run equitable organizations and programs.

#### **About Nina Love**

Nina Love is the Founder of The Black Thornberry. As a single mother working full-time in healthcare, providing a service for residents with developmental disabilities, Nina also provides a service to the community by helping stray and abandoned animals off the streets in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Her mission is to ultimately end animal homelessness and inspire others to get involved so that we can live in a world free from cruelty and neglect.

#### **About Latonya "Sassee" Walker**

Latonya, also known as Sassee, has been doing TNR, rescue, and advocating for the animals in her community since 2011. Prior to this, she was a conscious rapper and recorded many sounds and performed in many shows. At one point, between working a full-time job for the New York City Health & Hospital and the rescue world, she chose to give herself full time to the animals. Sassee has dedicated her life to helping animals suffering outside and owners who cannot afford spay neuter. She loves educating and seeing what a difference makes when we care.

12:15–12:30 p.m.

**Dr. Sara Pizano, DVM, Team Shelter USA**

#### **A Special Announcement about a New Grant Opportunity**

12:30–1:30 p.m.

**Lunch break/Cat Trivia/Announcements**

1:30–2:30 p.m.

**Brianna Lovell Myers, Community Cats Grants Program**  
**Dawn Benefiel, Indy Neighborhood Cats**  
**Kristin Marstin, Central Virginia Regional Rescue**  
**Kathy Stone, Operation Fancy Free**

## **Grassroots Orgs are Making a Big Impact: Panel Discussion with Community Cats Grants Graduates**

Did you know Community Cats Podcast offers a grant program? Learn all about it through the lens of our recent graduates. What was their experience like? Was it time consuming? Was their fundraiser successful? If they can do it, does that mean you can too? (spoiler alert: you can!) Tune in to this interactive discussion to have your CCGrants questions answered.

### **About Brianna Lovell Myers (moderator)**

Brianna Lovell Myers manages the Community Cats Grants Program with Community Cats Podcast. From application review to fundraising and beyond, Brianna is there for grantees every step of the way. In addition to grants, Brianna works with the CCP Affiliate Program, Community Cats Pass holders, sponsors and advertisers, and more.

### **About Dawn Benefiel**

Dawn has a strong background in Client Services Management and software delivery. She has worked with remote teams locally and in the UK, US and AsiaPac. She has a successful track record building and maintaining excellent client and partner relationships. After her move to Indianapolis in 2013, she began volunteer work with local animal welfare groups and is now the executive director of Indy Neighborhood Cats. Indy Neighborhood Cats was established in August of 2019 as the only organization based solely in the field of addressing the free roaming cat population. Dawn loves animals, being involved in her community and dedicated to family.

### **About Kristin Marstin**

Kristin works full-time as a software engineer, and volunteers full-time as a board member, kitty foster mom, and TNR Program Manager for Central Virginia Regional Rescue (CVRR). Central Virginia Regional Rescue is a 100% volunteer-based non-profit dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation, and adoption of regional animals into permanent and loving homes. Through education and community outreach, we aspire to eliminate the need for euthanasia as a means of pet population control.

### **About Kathy Stone**

Kathy is the co-founder and president of Operation Fancy Free. Operation Fancy Free Inc began in August 2013. After working in dog rescue for 10 years, Kathy and her husband, Bryan, knew how little help there was for cats in their community. Statistics from the local shelter showed hundreds of cats being killed each year because no one wanted them, so Kathy and her husband started helping cats wherever and whenever they could. Their work gained support from the community, and by July 2014, Operation Fancy Free had earned its 501(c)3 and it has been nonstop ever since.

2:30–3:00 p.m.

**Break, cat trivia**

3:00–4:00 p.m.

**Danielle Bays, Senior Analyst, Cat Protection and Policy**

### **Catpurrdy: A Game of Current Affairs**

This community cats take on the Jeopardy game show will get you up to speed on hot topics for ailurophiles, pawlitics, and the latest mews from the world of cats.

### **About Danielle Bays**

Danielle Bays is a frequent speaker, award-winning author and wiz at cat trivia. As the Senior Analyst for Cat Protection and Policy at the Humane Society of the United States, Danielle works with animal shelters, cat advocates, policymakers, and other stakeholders to broaden support for community cats nationwide.

4:00–5:00 p.m.

**Zarah Hedge, DVM, MPH, DACVPM, DABVP, Chief Medical Officer, VP of Shelter Medicine, San Diego Humane Society**

### **Cat Counts: Calculating Impact**

Cat Counts was a pilot targeted Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) project through the San Diego Humane Society. The project began by learning about the DC Cat Count model, which introduced data-driven cat management in Washington, DC. In the first operating year of the Community Cat Program, the project has encountered countless stories of dedication and compassion by trappers, caretakers, and community members. The project opted for a community outreach / TNR hybrid and took a collaborative approach within and outside of the organization. The project moved forward with the goal of gathering not only quantitative data to show the impact of a targeted TNR program, but qualitative data as well to better understand how San Diego Humane Society can best support our community and the cats that roam it.

### **About Zarah Hedge, DVM, MPH, DACVPM, DABVP,**

Zarah graduated from Western University of Health Sciences in 2009. She completed the shelter medicine internship and three-year shelter medicine residency program at the Oregon Humane Society in conjunction with Oregon State University. Zarah received her Master's in Public Health with the University of Minnesota in 2013 and board certification in Veterinary Preventive Medicine in 2014. After completing her residency, she worked as a veterinarian at San Diego Humane Society for two years before becoming an Assistant Professor of Shelter Medicine and Western University of Health Sciences College of Veterinary Medicine. Zarah worked as hospital director at WesternU Spay/Neuter Center in Van Nuys. Zarah received board certification in Shelter Medicine (ABVP) in 2017 and in the summer of 2019, she once again joined the San Diego Humane Society as their Chief Medical Officer. In this role, she oversees a medical team of over 100 staff at four different locations in San Diego County. She also continues to serve as a reserve field veterinarian for Rural Area Veterinary Services, a program of The Fund for Animals.

5:00 p.m.

**Close**

Sunday, January 30

10:00–10:15 a.m.

**Stacy LeBaron**

Welcome

10:15–11:30 a.m.

**Andrew N Rowan, President, WellBeing International**

### **Global Cat Management**

The humane management of cats has proved to be more challenging than the humane management of dogs. In part, this is due to the success of the domestic cat in reverting to a feral state and successful survival in a wide variety of ecosystems. The first step in addressing humane cat management is understanding and addressing the distinction between cats that are totally or partly reliant on human support and those that have reverted back to a wild state. Cats that are reliant in part on human support can, and should, be distinguished from the truly feral *Felis domesticus* when it comes to management

options. These differences will be outlined and discussed and the relevance of TNVR approaches for specific cat groups around the world will be addressed.

#### **About Andrew Rowan**

Dr. Andrew Rowan has more than 40 years of experience in animal welfare science and in animal and environmental advocacy. He has served on many government and corporate consultative committees, on numerous Boards of national and international NGOs and most recently served as the CEO of Humane Society International for 20 years and as the Board Chair of the Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust. Dr. Rowan was a professor at Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine where he established the Tufts Center for Animals and Public Policy, launched an academic journal on human-animal relations (Anthrozoos), launched the first Master's degree in the world on animals and public policy (1995), and served for several years as Chair of the Department of Environmental Sciences. He has authored or co-authored numerous books and over one hundred academic papers. He is a recipient of the Rhodes Scholarship and has received numerous awards for his work.

11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

**Julie Kelley, Founder, Let's Be SMART Greece**

**Amber Beck, Special Projects Coordinator, Let's Be SMART Greece**

**Ellie Lofts, Shelter and Adoptions Manager, Let's Be SMART Greece**

**Mika Mavraki, Director of Animal Health, Let's Be SMART Greece**

#### **How to Think Globally and Act Locally**

Let's Be S.M.A.R.T (Successfully Managing Animal Rights Today) aims to educate about the importance of animals by raising the awareness level for their rights, well-being, and care. As well as rescuing, rehabilitating, and internationally rehoming both cats and dogs through their Greece campaign, they also have various global animal welfare related projects including a Veterinary Internship program, Educational animated video series, SMART Yards community projects, Stray cat welfare programs and many more! This presentation will explain the solutions Lets Be S.M.A.R.T have put in place to educate local communities, overcome the overpopulation problems, and increase the health and wellbeing of stray cats. Julie and other team members will provide an extensive view of the challenges faced in Greece and the solutions they are creating!

#### **About Let's Be SMART Greece**

Let's Be SMART supports a Greece campaign that operates a 5-star cat shelter in Athens, where they are working hard to promote the correct care for stray animals in need. The Let's Be Smart team will be talking to you live from their cat shelter so we can learn all about the stray cat crisis they are facing and what solutions they are implementing based on the different challenges in Greece. They will also be discussing the successes with several of their programs.

12:30–1:15 p.m.

**Lunch break**

1:15–2:00 p.m.

**Rosemarie Crawford, Director of Educational Programs, The National Kitten Coalition**

#### **From Fearful to Friendly**

What we do – or don't do – as caregivers can have a big impact on how social and well-adjusted kittens can become as cats. This session will explore various socializing techniques that can be used immediately to start kittens on their socialization journey. Learn ways to create a safe and nurturing environment which will help kittens become accustomed to humans and indoor environments. Understand

the role of positive reinforcement and get proven methods for transforming shy or fearful kittens into friendly and adoptable companions.

#### **About Rosemarie Crawford**

Rosemarie has long had a passion for helping animals – particularly kittens. She is a licensed veterinary technician, co-founder of The National Kitten Coalition and has almost 20 years of experience in animal welfare. She has served as a medical staff member in a high-volume, open-access shelter, and as a foster program manager in both a private and a municipal shelter. In addition to presenting training sessions for The National Kitten Coalition, Rosemarie works at a six-doctor veterinary practice in northern VA and in her spare time enjoys fostering kittens and spending time with her husband and three cats.

2:00–2:30 p.m.

**Susan Richmond, Executive Director, Neighborhood Cats**

**Bryan Kortis, National Programs Director, Neighborhood Cats**

#### **Up Your Game! Email Fundraising Inside Out**

We all want to help cats, but the more money your group brings in, the more you can do. Fortunately, there's email, a low-cost and growing way for nonprofits to fundraise. We'll discuss how to set up an email program, how to get your emails opened, and what kind of content you need to motivate people to give.

#### **About Susan Richmond**

Susan Richmond is the Executive Director of Neighborhood Cats. She joined the organization after over twenty years running a major New York City shelter and nonprofit veterinary clinic. At Neighborhood Cats, she has led multiple large targeted TNR projects in New York City and northern New Jersey, managed a program for providing scholarships to veterinarians for training in high volume spay/neuter of community cats and co-authored the Humane Society of the United States' online course on TNR. In her spare time, she can often be found trapping feral cats on Maui.

2:30–3:00 p.m.

**Break, cat trivia**

3:00–4:00 p.m.

**Jerrica Owen, Executive Director, National Animal Care & Control Association**

**Michelle Dosson, Bureau Manager, Norfolk Animal Care and Adoption Center**

**Julianna Tetlow, Director of Government Relations, San Diego Humane Society**

**Jennifer Toussaint, Chief of Animal Control, Animal Welfare League of Arlington**

**Mike Wheeler, Director of Community Services, City of Cabot, Arkansas**

#### **Community Cat Experiences by Animal Control**

Jerrica will moderate a conversation with several government agencies around the country that have gone above and beyond for community cats.

#### **About Jerrica Owen (moderator)**

Accomplished animal welfare professional Jerrica Owen joined the National Animal Care & Control Association (NACA) in April 2021, as the Director of Partnerships and Programs. She brings with her nearly 20 years of experience in emergent animal welfare, engaging and developing a diversity of staff, shelter operations, and leading successful initiatives in Animal Welfare in a cross-cultural environment. Previously the Director of Strategic Initiatives for San Diego Humane Society, Jerrica supported achieving success on the organization's primary strategies. In addition, she was the Senior Animal Response Team Leader for the San Diego Humane Society's Emergency Response Team and has extensive experience

in the field during some of our countries worst disasters supporting tactical and shelter operations for all types of animals including domestic, wildlife, and equine.

#### **About Michelle Dosson**

Michelle Dosson is the Bureau Manager for the Norfolk Animal Care and Adoption Center (NACC) in Norfolk, Virginia, where more than 5,000 animals are admitted and cared for each year. In her current role, Michelle leads efforts to engage community members and stakeholders in the implementation of proactive, lifesaving programs that promote kindness, increase pet-retention, and help keep people and their pets together. Michelle also currently serves on the Board of Directors for the National Animal Care & Control Association, a non-profit organization that is committed to setting the standard of professionalism in animal welfare and public safety through training, networking, and advocacy. Prior to joining NACC, Michelle was the national shelter outreach manager for Best Friends Animal Society, providing leadership and training for strategic shelter partners and animal services agencies across the country.

#### **About Julianna Tetlow**

Julianna Tetlow is Director of Government Relations for San Diego Humane Society. She led negotiations to secure 8 new municipal contracts and renewals for an additional 6. She manages all 14 contracts, leads San Diego Humane's advocacy efforts, and oversees the business intelligence unit. Prior to joining SDHS, Julianna served in the public sector for over a decade, working in state and local government on policy and legislation.

#### **About Jennifer Toussaint**

Jennifer Toussaint is the Chief of Animal Control in Arlington County, Virginia at the Animal Welfare League of Arlington. Jennifer joined the Animal Control team in early 2012 as a Deputy and accepted the Chief position in 2016. Since becoming Chief, Jennifer has implemented a local ordinance in relation to exotic animal care and ownership. She has also expanded the Animal Control Departments outreach efforts in providing additional support to pet owners to enable high owner pet retention in the community. She specializes nationally in Humane Urban Wildlife Management practices and has been published multiple times on the topic. Jennifer is a CIT trained officer and has trained animal control and welfare professionals on a variety of topics including: active listening, community cats, emergency preparedness, emotional support and service animals, animal neglect/cruelty investigations, and wildlife intake and triage. Jennifer is the 2017 recipient of the Virginia Animal Control Association Dr. Kent Roberts Animal Control Officer of the Year and received a commendation from the Virginia General Assembly for her service. In 2020, Jennifer's department won the Outstanding Agency of the Year award from the Virginia Animal Control Association. She is a graduate of Moravian College with a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and Spanish. Jennifer shares her home with her rescue dogs Rheagan and Ducky.

#### **About Mike Wheeler**

Mike currently serves as the Director of Community Services for the City of Cabot, Arkansas. In this role, Mike oversees Animal Services as well as the city's senior center. Prior to beginning his career in animal welfare, Mike served in the US Army as an Intelligence Analyst before opening his own insurance agency. Mike has worked in Animal Services since 2009 and is currently certified as an Animal Control Officer Level II by the Arkansas State Animal Control Association. Mike holds certifications in Animal Cruelty Investigations from Colorado State University, Animal Fighting/Cruelty Investigations from the University of Arkansas Criminal Justice Institute, and serves as a Specialized Law Enforcement Instructor- Animal Control for the Arkansas Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and Training.

4:00–4:45 p.m.

**Stacy LeBaron, Host of the Community Cats Podcast**

**Bonney Brown, Humane Network**

**Jon Dunn, The Best Friends Podcast**

**Kris McCauley, Pawareness Podcast**



## **Chris Roy, Doobert**

### **The Podcaster's Panel**

Stacy is going to be joined by some of her favorite podcasting friends in the animal welfare community. She will have some fun with the group sharing their best and worst podcasting experiences. Hopefully Stacy can keep this group contained as we close out the 2022 Online Cat Conference.

### **About Bonney Brown**

Bonney Brown is the co-founder, president, and principal consultant for Humane Network, and co-host of the Shelter Success Simplified Podcast. Humane Network is a team of expert consultants who help organizations across the country to be more successful in a wide range of ways through a variety of affordable services. Bonney has more than 30 years of experience in the field of animal welfare, including six years as the Executive Director of Nevada Humane Society, and seven years with Best Friends Animal Society where she served as COO, National No More Homeless Pets Director, and Communications Director.

### **About Jon Dunn**

Jon got involved with Best Friends in 2005, starting as a volunteer with No More Homeless Pets in Utah. Since he started as a full-time employee in 2007, he has worked in various positions, ranging from advocacy to social media, web, policy, innovation, and technology. Today his role involves supporting the thousands of Best Friends Network partner organizations across the country as the host of The Best Friends Podcast. This weekly show delves into topics relevant to anyone interested in or actively saving the lives of shelter pets. An avid vegan cook, he lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with his wife Kolene and four cats, Carl, Ralph, Bob, and Tina.

### **About Kris McCauley**

Kris McCauley is an entrepreneur, athlete, and animal rescue parent. He is the founder and host of the Pawareness Podcast, a show that aims to raise awareness on the issues concerning shelters, rescue organizations, and animals in the US and the world. He currently has two pets, a dog named Quinn and a cat named Beans, both of whom he rescued from shelters.

### **About Chris Roy**

Chris Roy is a technology guy in his "day" job and used his experience to create Doobert.com which is an online software platform custom-built for animal rescuers. It's like a combination of Match.com specifically for animal shelters and rescues to find new partners, and then a volunteer Uber for getting the animals where they need to go. Chris enjoys helping provide technology solutions to some of the biggest challenges in animal rescue and is always looking for new ways to help animals and the people that care for them.

4:45 p.m.

### **Stacy LeBaron**

Closing remarks, cat trivia

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