

Roanoke Valley SPCA: Service Project Activities

Outdoor Cat Winter Shelter

Volunteer hours: 1 outdoor cat shelter = 2 hours of volunteer service

<https://www.catster.com/lifestyle/how-to-make-an-outdoor-cat-shelter>

“Outdoor cat shelters are literally the difference between life and death,” says Donna Baldrige, community cat expert. Donna has been running a successful feline feral program in conjunction with the North Fork Animal Welfare League for over a decade. The benefits of an outdoor cat shelter to the cats are multifaceted. “Cats seeking refuge from the elements can put themselves in dangerous situations – from being injured in a car engine to being trapped in a basement or accidentally locked in a shed; an outdoor cat shelter mitigates these threats.” She also emphasized that having access to an outdoor cat shelter dramatically reduces the risk of serious illnesses like upper respiratory infections. Upper respiratory infections, if left untreated, can result in blindness and can be fatal.

You don’t have to be a cat expert to be part of the solution to animals facing the death sentence in shelters across the country. According to Austin Pets Alive!’s Cat Program manager, Monica Frenden, “70 percent of cats entering the shelter system die.”

Donna’s work with the North Fork Animal Welfare League is a testament to TNR’s lifesaving properties: the North Fork has a 97 percent save rate for dogs *and* cats. Managing a sterilized community cat colony requires a few straightforward ingredients: food, water and shelter. And you don’t need an architectural degree to make a fabulous outdoor cat shelter!

Materials needed for an outdoor cat shelter:

1. Large plastic tote (with removable lid)
2. Styrofoam cooler
3. Straw
4. Knife

Roanoke Valley SPCA: Service Project Activities



Assembling an outdoor cat shelter is as easy as 1-2-3-4-5:

1. Cut hole in plastic tote
2. Place Styrofoam cooler into tote
3. Cut hole in Styrofoam cooler (align cooler and tote holes – this is the entrance way)
4. Add straw for bedding
5. Replace Styrofoam cooler cover and tote cover

Other resources:

Alley Cat Allies (video, photos, text):

<https://www.alleycat.org/resources/how-to-build-an-outdoor-shelter/>

Cole and Marmalade (video):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpW69fNzcjc>

Bushwick Street Cats (text guide):

<https://bushwickstreetcats.org/shelters/winter-feral-cat-shelter-build-instructions/>

Roanoke Valley SPCA: Service Project Activities

RVSPCA cat shelters in action!

