



# Best Friends ANIMAL SOCIETY NEWS

## Palpable passion for saving felines

By Best Friends staff

Even though Americans love them, cats are still the pet most likely to be killed in our country's shelters. But we're working hard to change that. Through Best Friends' community cat programs and a partnership with PetSmart Charities®, we've created public/private relationships focused on keeping community cats out of shelters in Albuquerque, New Mexico; San Antonio, Texas; and Baltimore, Maryland.

These projects have saved thousands of stray cats from dying in shelters. Shelly Kotter, Best Friends' community cat program manager, says: "Albuquerque hasn't killed a feral cat since we started the program, and the staff in San Antonio called me recently and said they have no kittens." Best Friends is not stopping there. We're launching programs in three new cities: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Columbus, Georgia; and Tucson, Arizona.

Community cats in those places will soon have a brighter future. Thanks to a generous grant from PetSmart Charities®, Best Friends will provide staff, vehicles, humane traps and funding for spay/neuter and vaccinations, based on what each community already has and what they desperately need to save more cats.

The city of Columbus applied last year, and we were happy to sign them on this year. Kotter explains, "We thought there were some things they needed to

work on last year and, boy, did they! They have buy-in all the way up through the mayor, who cares for a colony of cats." With a population of just under 200,000 people, and cats dying in the shelter, Columbus is ready for big changes. Working with our shelter partner Columbus Animal Care and Control, the goal is to complete 2,000 spay/neuter surgeries for each of the next three years.

"I can't say enough about Philadelphia," Kotter adds. "It blew me away." The shelter Animal Care and Control Team Philly, has committed to doing 1,500 spay/neuter surgeries per year. Best Friends plans to hire two full-time staff, plus supply vans, traps and a budget for extra medical care to complete an additional 2,500 surgeries. The shelter has targeted programs aimed at helping Philadelphia residents with their pets, and now there will be more much-needed capacity to help community cats as well.

In Pima County, Arizona, the project is gearing up to spay or neuter 5,000 cats in the first year. By targeting nine zip codes around Tucson, a city selected because its shelters have the highest intake numbers, the three-year goal is to make the county no-kill for cats.

This project was made possible with a few minor revisions to the local animal ordinance. The Pima County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously in favor of the changes and the Community Cats Project. "The support for this program has been overwhelming, from

elected officials and from the public," says Peter Wolf, Best Friends cat initiatives analyst. "This is going to be a game-changer for Pima Animal Care Center and for the community as a whole, and we're all ready to hit the ground running."

Here in our own community, Four Directions Cat Program works with over 50 urban and rural communities in a radius of about 150 miles surrounding Best Friends Animal Sanctuary in Kanab, providing trap/neuter/return (TNR) services, including trapping and transport assistance, a food program, and veterinary care. We use the Best Friends clinic for spay/neuter services, and six veterinarians' clinics around southern Utah participate in a low-cost spay/neuter program.

Additionally, Best Friends has other community cat programs: In Utah, we work with Salt Lake Animal Services, West Valley City and Davis County on TNR programs, in DeKalb County, Georgia, we also work with the municipal shelter saving cats' lives, and in Los Angeles, California, which focuses on providing TNR for residents in five zip codes in the East Valley area.

Even though there's a lot of work ahead, what makes these programs possible and successful are caring people who want to save animals instead of kill them.

Kotter says, "The absolute and total passion (for the cause) is palpable in each city. All these people from government really care, so we're thrilled to work together to save cats' lives in their cities."



I like it out here with all my friends. Photo by Molly Wald.

### Correction

There is a correction to the G2G article run last week on Todd Seliga. The correct link to donate to Heifer for Grand to Grand Ultra competitor NPS Ranger Todd Seliga is: <http://teamheifer.heifer.org/seliga>

### Love is in the air ...

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## G2G contestant Mike McTeer is heart-healthy and ramping up his training

By Susana Young

Five years ago, Mike McTeer was an overweight pack-a-day smoker with, "a few other bad habits that were getting in the way of living a healthy happy life." He and his wife Tana were both in high-stress jobs, working long hours. They often talked about not knowing what they were searching for in life, but "we knew this lifestyle wasn't it." His compass became recalibrated after he woke up from a heart attack at age 44. He quit all the bad stuff cold turkey, including his job. Tana "dragged" him to Kanab for a one-week backpacking trip, and before the week was up, they had made a decision. They purchased a small bungalow in Kanab, ready to test out a new lifestyle.

McTeer became interested in running when Grand to Grand Ultra (G2G) first came to Kanab and he was the official videographer. Ray Zahab, founder of Impossible to Possible (I2P), was here and gave a presentation about his story of going from a pack-a-day smoker to a worldclass adventure athlete. McTeer said, "It got me thinking, and the next day I started running. I had not run in fifteen



McTeer and wife Tana enjoy hiking together and look forward to more hikes after the G2G is finished. Photo by Tana McTeer

years. I started running the trails behind our house as training for filming the race, and I became hooked."

McTeer wants to experience the race from the other side of the lens this year. He is training now by running 70 miles a week, and will increase that distance to 100 miles a week as the race gets closer. Whether running out his back door and into the hills or heading to Snake Gulch, McTeer prefers solitude as he trains. He practices how to eat and drink while mentally and

physically fatigued. He is learning how to recover after a long day of training and how to take care of himself while on the trail. He recently read a 350-page book on how to care for feet when running long distances.

Does he worry about his heart? "I met with my cardiologist recently, just to make sure I had his OK to run 170 miles in a week. He was baffled. He'd never had a patient like me before. So he consulted with his colleagues, and decided to have me do a stress test." McTeer passed the test with no issues. In fact the cardiologist said, "You are more fit than most twenty year olds!"

McTeer is looking forward to running the race, knowing he has a healthy heart. He plans to "just put one foot in front of the other" for the duration of the race. "I may come in last, but I am not running the G2G to be better than someone else. I am running the G2G to be better than I used to be."

McTeer is also running to help raise money for Gavin Glynn, a four-year-old boy who suffers from a rare form of cancer. Glynn is at MD Anderson in Houston, getting the most advanced treatment available. McTeer is part of a 3-man G2G team, Team Gavin, helping to raise funds for Gavin's medical expense. You can help Gavin by going to [www.teamgavinglynn.ie](http://www.teamgavinglynn.ie) to make a donation.



McTeer doing videography for G2G 2013. Photo by Troy Snow

**Crossword Solution**

U	M	B	O		S	A	K	I
R	E	A	C	T	A	L	A	N
S	A	N	T	A	N	I	B	S
A	T	E		K	G		B	U
				D	E	R	A	I
F	I	L	I	A	L			
D	E	N		N	Y	S	B	E
E	M	U	S		E	A	T	U
C	U	R	E		D	I	A	N
A	R	E	A		D	Y	K	E

**Sudoku Solution**

9	4	6	8	3	7	5	1	2
7	1	2	6	5	9	3	4	8
8	5	3	2	4	1	9	7	6
2	3	9	7	6	4	8	5	1
1	6	8	5	2	3	4	9	7
5	7	4	9	1	8	6	2	3
6	9	7	1	8	5	2	3	4
3	8	1	4	9	2	7	6	5
4	2	5	3	7	6	1	8	9

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