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## Alley Cat Allies

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It is Alley Cat Allies' practice to exchange the names of our donors with other charities that share our values. We do this in order to both expand our donor base and to spread our mission and to support those charities who we feel are working toward the good of animals and our community. Please notify us if you would prefer that we not share your name. We would be happy to remove your information from our exchange list.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

# Redefining "Humane"

MY STORY MAY HAVE BEGUN much like yours. I chanced upon an alley of feral cats one evening in 1990. My instinct was to help them, and when I returned the next day I found that a number of neighborhood residents were already feeding and caring for the cats.

I knew that the best way to help these cats was to stop the cycle of breeding. However, I also knew not to look to the local humane shelter for assistance. "Don't waste your time," they told anyone who called for help with alley cats. Feral cats were unadoptable and the only humane thing to do was bring them in to be euthanized, a.k.a. killed. Perhaps you may have heard this, too.

My definition of humane care certainly doesn't include killing, and one of the first things that I learned from the caregivers was that above all, they did not want the cats killed. This is true for most people. Our national survey confirmed 81% believe it is "more humane" to let stray cats remain outside than to have them killed. That is why I started

Alley Cat Allies, as a resource for all the caring people whose compassion—helping feral cats live—was not valued by the animal welfare system.

This, however, was not the end of my story. After years of helping people all

over the country implement Trap-Neuter-Return, I came to understand that the genuine humane care of feral cats cannot coexist with an animal control system where killing is the expedient and accepted way of doing business. I realized that we had to take the next step and redefine what "humane" treatment of cats really means.

Redefining "humane" will not be easy and will require us to confront a system of entrenched institutions. Compassion and caring have become ingrained with the misguided belief that killing is kind. We must change the fundamental way that our society's animal welfare system does business, in order to align it with the basic values shared by most Americans—to protect and care for life.

The current system of killing animals has a lot invested in maintaining the status quo. With your help, I know that we can change it. We will investigate and expose this system, so that everyone knows the extent of the killing. By mobilizing all those who value compassionate care over killing, we can raise the awareness of those Americans who simply don't know—or don't want to know—what is going on.

Together, we can provide a safety net for caring individuals caught in the system who want to stop the killing, and provoke the outrage of taxpayers whose money is wasted on a system that provides no alternative to killing. Together, we can appeal to the public's respect for all life to change a system that has somehow forgotten its responsibility to protect all animals. Together, we will redefine what "humane" means in this country. ●



Becky Robinson

**Our Mission:** Alley Cat Allies is dedicated to protecting the lives and promoting the well-being of the nation's stray and feral cats and end the intentional killing of cats in shelters.

**Our Vision:** Alley Cat Allies envisions the time when Trap-Neuter-Return and other nonlethal control measures for managing outdoor cat populations are accepted as the standard.

**What Is Trap-Neuter-Return?** It is a full management plan in which stray and feral cats already living outdoors in cities, towns, and rural areas are humanely trapped, then evaluated, vaccinated, and sterilized by veterinarians. Kittens and social cats are adopted into good homes. Healthy feral cats are returned to their familiar habitat under the care of volunteers.