



SHOW NOTES & TRANSCRIPT

EPISODE SHOW NOTES

Episode Title: The Secret Lives of Cats

Episode # & Date: Episode #36 – July 2, 2020

About this Episode: Judy finds out all about the colonies of feral cats that live on the peninsula and the dedicated volunteers and organizations that care for them.

Episode Web Page: <https://sanmateofocus.com/secret-lives-of-cats/>

EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

I'm Judy Gordon, and *this* is San Mateo Focus. As long-term residents who have raised six kids here, we thought it was high time someone shined a light on the good things in San Mateo to enrich the lives of those living here and the businesses that serve them. If you want to know the best places to eat and play, the events not to miss, *and* want to know how San Mateo became the crown jewel of the peninsula, tune in every Thursday and please be sure to click the 'subscribe' button on your favorite podcast app. Now, onto this week's episode.

I've been a client of San Mateo resident Jasmine Freeman for several years. During those years when we've been captive audiences to each other as she works on my hair, I've learned a lot about her. She's a busy lady. She's a devoted parent, a business owner, has a lot of friends from growing up in this area, and she knows how to put together a great party. But it wasn't until recently that she mentioned she volunteers every week with a nonprofit that manages and feeds feral cat colonies. It's fascinating the variety of interests and good work that people do in this area that you only find out about in casual conversation with them. Feral cat colonies might be something that a lot of people are familiar with, but I knew nothing about it, so I asked Jasmine if I could have an introduction to the founder of the nonprofit, to understand more about the work that they do, and the issues surrounding feral cats.

Trudi Geiszler, the founder of [Purrfect Catch](#), has always loved taking care of stray cats and kittens. She got the idea for creating a nonprofit for feral cats when she was living outside of Chicago. She was new to the neighborhood and couldn't figure out why there were two cats outside in bitter cold weather. When it was finally more pleasant spring weather and she started meeting her neighbors, she found out that they were strays and were not adoptable. For a variety of reasons, some vets will not treat ferals but she convinced her vet to spay both of the cats. When she moved to the Bay Area she started volunteering with a group that was managing feral colonies and eventually founded The Purrfect Catch. She calls it a cooperative because the 50 volunteers that work with her are so important in helping control the eight colonies that they manage. The colonies range from South San Francisco to Redwood City. Trudi works in marketing communications at Wells Fargo and says that she uses her corporate skills to do the work outside of her day job effectively.

Feral cats are always the result of pet owners' abandonment or the failure to spay or neuter their animals. Many people assume that their cats will survive when they move away and leave them behind. Domestic animals do not automatically return to their natural instincts and do not have the skills needed to survive outside unassisted. True feral cats are not socialized to people and are



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typically fearful of them and prefer to avoid them. They will occasionally form bonds with caregivers. They live in groups called colonies and have strong social bonds with their feline colony members. It doesn't take long for a feral colony to get out of hand because a female cat has a 45-day gestation period and a male cat will travel up to a five-mile radius to find a female in heat. To manage the colony Trudi and her volunteers feed and provide water for the cats daily and follow the established protocol called 'T.N.R.' - which means Trap, Neuter, Return. There is no way the Humane Society can do this work alone, so there are many volunteers helping out on the Peninsula. For Purrfect Catch, Trudi will trap any new cats in a colony and make sure that they are neutered or spayed. Cats who have been neutered or spayed will have an ear tip, so it's easier to identify those new to the colony. The Peninsula Humane Society has limits for feral cats, so she will also use Nine Lives Foundation in Redwood City, and SFSPCA, who can handle more volume.

Volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds and Trudi works around their schedules. Because of that, they continue with Purrfect Catch for a long time. Trudi provides orientation for volunteers which includes a trip to the colony and directions for feeding. She is the main point of contact for all volunteers. When there is an opening, Trudi will find volunteers through word-of-mouth or a post on Nextdoor. Volunteers bring their own food and water to the colony where they work and notify Trudi when they identify a new cat that requires capture for neuter or spay. If volunteers need help purchasing the food the donations to Purrfect Catch provide that assistance. San Mateo County has a voucher program that helps cover neutering and spaying expenses, and Trudi appreciates that because not all counties provide those funds. The Purrfect Catch receives donations in a variety of ways. People will hear about the work and donate through Paypal, purchase their products on Amazon through Amazon Smile, donate food, and a few have even made car donations. Employees from Franklin Templeton, Apple, Google, Gilead, Wells Fargo, Genentech, Fit3D, and Sephora volunteer their time and money with an employer match donation. In June, Trudi has spent \$3,000 on the 30 cats that were captured, neutered, and returned.

It's rare that a feral cat can become domesticated and adopted, but kittens are able to be socialized around humans and then adopted. If you want to know more about The Purrfect Catch and how to get involved, *Here's the Deal*: Trudi will have an opening in August for a Friday feeder at one of the San Mateo colonies. And, we can't leave without letting you know there is a patron saint for cats and her name is St. Gertrude!

Okay, that's all the time we have for this episode. Have a great week. Don't forget to subscribe to San Mateo Focus on your favorite Podcast app. As always, if you'd like more information about the topics in today's episode or any of our sponsors, visit sanmateofocus.com.

HELPFUL LINKS:

<http://www.thepurrfectcatch.com/>

<https://www.ninelivesfoundation.org/>

<https://www.sfspca.org/our-work/community-medicine/community-cats/>



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<https://phs-sPCA.org/>

<http://www.homelesscatnetwork.com/>

<https://familypetcaresstore.com/>

<https://www.learnreligions.com/saint-gertrude-nivelles-patron-of-cats-124329>

<http://www.saveacat.org/what-is-a-feral-cat.html>

<https://smile.amazon.com/gp/chpf/homepage?orig=Lw==>

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PODCAST SHOW NOTES

Podcast Name: San Mateo Focus

Logo:



Description: Whether you're new to San Mateo, California, or a long time resident, the San Mateo Focus Podcast is the place to learn about local history, good eats, and things to do.

Website: <http://www.sanmateofocus.com>

Email: info@sanmateofocus.com

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Producer/Co-host: Peter Radsliff

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