

Northwoods Humane Society – Deanna Persson, President

I was talking with a friend and super animal lover who asked what I thought about getting a new kitten or cat for her home. She currently has one middle aged cat and a younger one. She is concerned that her two cats are bored and a little depressed when she goes to work. She has a pet cam and an automatic treat dispenser. When she looks at them during the day they are often just staring at the automatic pet dispenser. When she gets home from work the cats are ready for attention and play.

I really couldn't answer the question of 'should she get another cat' to help with their boredom because there are too many variables. Her two cats currently have the companionship of each other. A third cat could throw off the balance (it depends on the cats) or she could have three cats that she would worry about.

Enrichment is essential for cats and kittens of all ages and keeping your cat's environment as exciting and stimulating as possible will promote a happy and healthy life.

The following are great DIY projects that will enrich you cat's days. Basically all you need to have on hand are a few boxes, a sharp knife and some non-toxic glue.

Boxes and cats go hand in hand. We had a cat named BC (Band Cat). This cat showed up when my son's garage band was practicing in the garage. The cat immediately became a part of our family. For BC's first Christmas, we got him a pretty elaborate activity center. Mike set it up and we were ready to watch him enjoy it. What we watched was him making himself at home in the box it came in.

Here are some of the suggestions for DIY enrichment ideas. Using two or three boxes big enough for your cat get in – cut out a hole on one side for each of the boxes and put a toy and a treat or two inside in each box. Put the individual boxes in different rooms so they have to search for the treat and toy – change it up by moving the boxes around.

Another is to save toilet paper cardboard centers. Cut a hole on one side of the tube about 1 ½" in diameter and fold in each end. Put two 3 small treats in the tube leave several around the house for the cat to find.

Using a shoe box, cut three holes the size of a small paper cup. Cut the hole small enough so

that the cup does not fall thru. Put the dry food in each cup and your cat will work to scoop it out with his paw.

An easy thing to do is to put a low piece of furniture next to the window where you can put the cat bed and the cat can have a view of the outside world. You can also find window ledges designed for cats.

Put together three medium sized boxes each having holes that match up so that your cat can have a tunnel to explore – toss in a catnip mouse or a couple of treat

There are programs that are called “bird TV” for cats – these me just be the ‘cat’s meow’ for enrichment.

You can see these ideas and more on the ASPCA website.

Special note: The Northwoods Humane Society Thrift Shop has now switched to winter hours. We will be open Monday through Saturday 11 am to 3 p.m. We are closed on Sundays. Items may be dropped off Monday thru Friday. Ring the back doorbell and a volunteer will greet you. If Saturday is the only day that works for you, just let the cashiers know that you have items to donate as we don’t always have a volunteer in the back on Saturday.

Currently, there is a definite flavor at the shop – fall decorative items along with Thanksgiving and Halloween. Christmas will be coming soon. We will not be able to take Christmas items after November 15th as we have an abundance of great items to put out on the floor. We ask that those donating clothing just donate winter wear. We just don’t have the storage space for spring and summer items but look forward to them in April. Thank you to all of you that share their ‘treasures’ to help the animals in need

If you have questions about the shop, would like to volunteer or need help with a pickup of donations, please give me (Deanna) a call at 715-634-4543.