



Caring for Connecticut's Homeless Felines

2019

Year-End Summary

To donate to Branford Compassion Club via Paypal using your debit or credit card (or your Paypal account) visit our [website](#). You may make a one-time donation, or click on "Make this a monthly donation" to make a recurring payment. Or, checks payable to Branford Compassion Club can be mailed to: Branford Compassion Club, P.O. Box 768, Branford, CT 06405.

Our Mission Statement

To provide for the feeding, shelter, and care of homeless, abandoned and feral cats; educate the public about the importance of spay/neuter population control, responsible pet ownership and kindness to animals; and, establish an ongoing community network to achieve these goals.

A Note from the Board President – Spring 2020

Dear Friends,

What a year we had! We took in 283 felines, found forever homes for 223, spayed/neutered 47 and returned them to their feral colonies, enhanced the shelter with newly painted, renovated rooms and cat furniture, expanded our donor database, researched and pursued new grant-making organizations, and found thousands of new friends on Facebook.

For most non-profits, every year is financially challenging, but 2019 was especially so for Branford Compassion Club. Over the summer months, our financial situation caused us to freeze new intakes to the shelter. In response, BCC added three more fundraisers to its calendar and created a sustaining sponsorship program on its website for supporters to donate monthly. We informed our supporters and the media about our uncertain fate and word of our financial troubles travelled fast. The Board of Directors and volunteers are so very grateful to everyone who came to our aid, whether donating through our monthly sponsorship program or offering assistance and words of encouragement. In times of adversity, you really do know who your friends are. And we know ours. We are happy to report we ended the year in the black, thanks to you!

This year, however, brings an additional challenge, one we share with the whole community and country: the COVID-19 virus. At this time, Branford Compassion Club Feline Rescue & Adoption Center remains closed to the public, but we continue our mission of caring for homeless felines. Adoption applications are still being processed and approved adopters will be notified by email or phone. Applications can be downloaded from our website at www.branfordcompassionclub.org.

We look forward to the future, even though many challenges lie ahead of us. Our volunteers are dedicated, and our supporters are compassionate and generous. Together we will continue to give homeless, abandoned, and feral cats a better life.

Thank you!

Best Wishes,
Margaret (Peg) Johnson
Board President

Who we are

Branford Compassion Club (BCC), is an independent non-profit organization totally supported by private donations and the dedication of volunteers who feed, clean and provide required medication to cats at our feline rescue and adoption center, maintain our feral colonies, foster special needs cases, and contribute their time and talents to events organization and management.

Our challenges

All of that care and concern costs money, so we must continually raise funds. In 2019 we held 14 events, including our biggest event, Animal Awareness Day. Fundraising has become extremely competitive and, unfortunately, people often donate to the largest, typically well-funded organizations because they are so well known. In our community, that includes the town shelter, which, though municipally funded, also must hold fundraising events.



Broadening our audience is especially important, because we cannot expect our historical supporters to be our only source of funding as we grow and costs increase.

Another significant concern is the unpredictability of veterinary bills. We know what the cost will be for healthy cats or kittens we rescue, which includes vaccinations, spaying or neutering, flea and tick prevention, etc. We have negotiated a favorable fee structure with our primary vet, Branford Veterinary Hospital, for routine and basic services. And, we order many of our medical supplies ourselves, for storage at the vet, to get more favorable pricing.

However, we also see ill or injured cats whose medical costs cannot be anticipated. When highly unusual or extreme situations arise, we go to Pieper Veterinary in Middletown.

These situations can wreak havoc on a budget. By mid-year we faced the possibility of closing our shelter and reverting to the in-home rescue organization of our first 14 years. In response, we curtailed the number of rescues we took in, solicited donations on Facebook for special needs cases, received a sizable grant and expanded our database of contacts for email marketing. Our diligence enabled us to finish the year in the black and begin rebuilding our reserves.



This handsome, gentle, and hurting little guy came into BCC's care this week. He had an abscess on his head, a fever, and his tail had been fractured in two places. The fracture that occurred at the base of his tail rendered it paralyzed and Linkie's tail was removed by Dr. Gavaletz at the Branford Veterinary Hospital. He is recovering nicely...not thrilled about the cone, but tolerating it like the true "gentlefeline" he is. He has been neutered and vaccinated. Any donations toward his vet care are greatly appreciated. Thank you for your support. We couldn't do what we do without you!!

This Facebook post brought in \$933 from many of our thousands of followers!

Branford Compassion Club
Income and Expense
January through December 2019

	<u>Jan - Dec 19</u>	<u>Jan - Dec 18</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
Program Income	34,814.50	33,894.26	920.24
Direct Public Support	61,112.67	57,755.84	3,356.83
Indirect Public Support	91,268.01	22,869.31	68,398.70
FUND RAISING EVENTS	43,258.37	22,279.55	20,978.82
Total Income	<u>230,453.55</u>	<u>136,798.96</u>	<u>93,654.59</u>
Expense			
Bank and Paypal Charges	905.84	1,000.70	-94.86
Business Expenses	120.00	150.00	-30.00
Contract Services	1,583.77	550.00	1,033.77
Fund Raising Costs	6,858.73	4,583.00	2,275.73
Merchandise Costs	0.00	893.00	-893.00
Operations	17,771.35	22,935.88	-5,164.53
Other Types of Expenses	3,046.00	3,728.00	-682.00
Payroll Expenses	3,995.40	4,055.54	-60.14
Rent Expense	18,000.00	18,120.00	-120.00
Repairs and Maintenance	0.00	2,020.19	-2,020.19
Salary	33,799.92	33,799.92	0.00
Utilities	5,558.33	5,155.03	403.30
Veterinarian Services	89,155.15	118,980.75	-29,825.60
Total Expense	<u>180,794.49</u>	<u>215,972.01</u>	<u>-35,177.52</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>49,659.06</u>	<u>-79,173.05</u>	<u>128,832.11</u>
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Our strengths

We are an organization of volunteers grounded in the compassion of the six women who founded BCC in 1997. Their shared vision and dedication helped us grow from a home-based initiative to the opening of our shelter in 2011. Since that opening, we have adopted out more than **2,100** cats and kittens.

We couldn't fulfill our mission without the hard work and dedication of our volunteers who are involved in not only direct care at the shelter and of our feral cat colonies, but also event organization and participation; socializing our cats to prepare them for adoption; fostering moms, kittens and special needs cats; public relations; baking and crafts, and more.



Pat Carr: Direct care, feral feeder, socializer



Eunice Lasala: Founder, Board member

"It just feels so good to finally get them homes." That's the thinking of Pat Carr who works on socializing some of our shyer residents so they will be ready when their forever home opportunities arise. She really appreciates the progress that can be made just by spending some quiet time with the cats.

"It makes you wonder what's in their backgrounds that makes them so fearful of people, but it's very rewarding when they show some progress." Pat noted, too, that the cats' personalities can continue to evolve once they're in their forever homes, so patience on the part of their new families is a must.

Pat enjoys her experience with BCC, which she finds to be welcoming and appreciative of her contributions. She finds her fellow volunteers to be committed and enthusiastic and believes the infrastructure and discipline we have in place really contributes to creating an environment that's good for both the cats and the volunteers. In general, Pat would love to see more people volunteering, because organizations like ours just never have enough.

Growing up in North Carolina I always had many animals around including pigs, chickens, cows, horses, and dogs. My favorite was always cats, and over the years I have had many.

As we raised our family in Branford, I began to notice cats at different locations who appeared homeless and hungry. Soon I was out each day with wet and dry food. When I met two other women doing the same thing, we joined forces to share the load as the Branford Compassion Club. It was expensive and time consuming, but we never missed a day.

While recruiting other cat lovers to help us we met a local vet who had received a grant to go to a different town in Connecticut each day to spay, neuter, and vaccinate cats at a low cost to reduce the overload of feral cats in the state; we began working with him.

Many of the feral cats we trapped, especially kittens, were adoptable. They usually came to my house, our first "shelter". Today we have a shelter in North Branford and a formal adoption application process. Our care is now much more with the cats housed at BCC. We have just six feral colonies with four or fewer cats at each, but we are still there every day to feed.

Like other organizations with a mission to accomplish, what we need is more money and more volunteers. There are so many wonderful and caring people in our area who wish us well. Although we struggle to make ends meet, we are still there with love, compassion, and dedication to BCC.

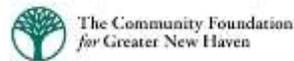
Our supporters

We are fortunate to have the support of many individuals and organizations who believe in our mission and encourage the work that we do every day. Throughout the year we receive anonymous donations of food and supplies directly to our shelter at 2037 Foxon Road, North Branford, CT, which helps keep our operating costs down. A growing number of people are choosing to become **sustaining sponsors** with monthly donations made automatically via PayPal, ensuring us of a more reliable monthly income.

In 2019 we were the grateful recipients of an anonymous **donation** earmarked to upgrade our facility with new flooring, washable wainscoting, and cat furniture made of PVC pipe and mesh hammocks. And a significant donation by the Marie Gibson Charitable Trust helped to ensure we would end the year in the black.



Grants play an important role in sustaining any not-for-profit enterprise, and BCC is no exception. Last year we received funding from eleven foundations and charitable trusts including:



Our fundraising activities include a number of significant events each year, most notably our annual Animal Awareness Day on the Branford Green. We seek **sponsors** for this event and are grateful to acknowledge the contributions of the following sponsors for 2019:

Platinum	Gold	Silver	Bronze
<i>East Shore Veterinary Hospital</i>	<i>The Sound/Shore Publishing</i>	<i>Shoreline Pet Lodge</i>	<i>Van Wilgen's Garden Center</i>
<i>c2c Graphics</i>	<i>Branford Veterinary Hospital</i>	<i>Companions & Homemakers</i>	<i>Comfort Keepers</i>
<i>Autografix</i>	<i>Guilford Savings Bank</i>	<i>Pawson Insurance</i>	<i>Physical Fitness</i>
<i>Premier Subaru & Kia</i>		<i>Pieper Veterinary</i>	<i>Christina Gagne</i>
<i>Susan Barnes</i>			<i>Happy Tails Bathing and Grooming</i>
<i>Regional Water Authority</i>			<i>Lakes Veterinary Services</i>
<i>WPLR 99.1</i>			
<i>K&G Graphics</i>			

A special shout-out goes to many people and organizations whose contributions of time, expertise, or event accommodations throughout the year helped make our fundraising successful: Darren Kramer (WTNH); Tom Gagliardi (auctioneer); Barbara Joy; Branford Elks Lodge #1939; Treehouse Comedy Productions; Ken Engelman; Rosso Vino Restaurant; Murphy's Distributors; Ron Smith of Avant Garde Salon; Althea DePascale; Donna Rozanski; Thimble Island Brewery; Dennis Nardella; Sal Annunziato; Celeste Robitaille and Resources in Search and Rescue; Donna Latella; Kaitlyn Vance; Carolyn Sires of

ECAD and her dog, Freedom; the Reverends Sharon Graycen, Bill Keane, Alberta Woody, Susan Prechett, Bud Myers, and Vance Taylor; Leeling Ho ad Erik Gustafson; Erica Trotta; Dave Hall of D.C. Hall Rental Service; Trista Milici and the Town of Branford; Lori Dellarocca and the Kohl's Cares Volunteer Program; Pine Orchard Yacht & Country Club; SES Audio; Aquatic Pool & Spa; Scenic Route Candles.

Our **adopters** are the people who make our wishes come true. **Two-hundred and twenty-three** cats and kittens went to their "fur-ever" homes in 2019.

Looking ahead

In the upcoming year we will continue to pursue our conviction that cats and kittens should live in homes, not in shelters, encouraging adoption through local media outlets, on social media platforms, and in our face-to-face interactions with the community.

Financial stability is essential for us to fulfill our mission. We will continue to build relationships with area businesses and broaden our base of individual contributors to create a sponsorship network that can serve as the backbone of our fundraising efforts.

With your help and support we know we can continue to bring Connecticut's homeless cats and the people who will love them together.



This tiger cat with white paws is 6 years old. His previous owner was a veteran who came down with dementia and was placed in an assisted living facility. Will you be his next companion? Tiger is a great assistant to our shelter manager – he hangs out on the front desk most of the day. A perfect company cat, he is just happy to be where people are and keep to the sidelines. Welcome this boy into your home and you will always have him to welcome you home each night.



This little gray girl is 8 years old and can be found lying on the front desk. She gets along with everyone but keeps to herself a bit. This lovely girl would blend in well with most homes with a calm atmosphere. She loves to be petted. This expressive girl has soulful eyes that are as blue/green as the Caribbean Sea.



This handsome black cat with bright green eyes is just 6 years old. This super inquisitive and keenly observant cat wants your company! He is very shy, but if you get to know him, he will wait for your company and then happily climb the furniture to meet you at eye level. He can be petted if you are very slow and patient. Talk to this shy guy and see how special he is. Time spent with this boy is time well spent.