



Charlotte with one of Beijing's many abandoned kittens

### Charly's Cats

Charlotte Landwehr, a local high school student at Western Academy of Beijing, has cared for a colony of homeless cats since the tender age of 13. Four years ago, a friendly neighbor taught her how to trap and neuter strays. "I was pretty panicked about it," says Charlotte, "but [my neighbor] did the trapping and neutering there for me, and after that I did all the trapping myself."

Beijing's cats are often tossed out onto the street by owners who've grown tired of them, by people who leave town, or by well-meaning owners who suddenly find out that their home countries don't accept any furry companions from China. However they get there, cats have a rough life on the streets. Because many aren't spayed or neutered, stray cats frequently give birth to new litters, and thus the problem continues to multiply.

Too often, authorities try to control the cat population by trapping and killing the creatures. Young Charlotte realized that a trap-neuter-return (or TNR) program could

not only help cats stay disease-free and keep them out of fights, but help protect humans from cat-borne illnesses like rabies.

Charlotte runs her TNR project, Charly's Cats, in partnership with International Center for Veterinary Services (ICVS), an animal hospital that performs sterilization surgeries and offers TNR training workshops. Charlotte is a devoted caretaker of her own colony, but she's realized that the cat population can't be controlled without a community-wide effort. "My main goal is to teach people to do TNR," she says. Charlotte lives up to her word, giving presentations to local community groups on a regular basis. "People should maybe look outside and start planning TNR programs in their own backyard."

**How to help:** Check with ICVS for scheduled TNR training programs. Charlotte accepts donations to pay for the procedure; a cat can be spayed, ear-tipped and vaccinated against rabies for as little as RMB 160.

#### Bread of Life Bakery

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#### Compassion for Migrant Children

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#### Beijing Brooks Education Center

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