Smol2Swol

2025 Annual Mewsletter

Wishing you a Happy Swolstice!

Thank you for being part of the S2S community!

Our community helps us find loving forever homes for our graducats

With our deepest thanks to the Small Miracles Cat and Dog Rescue

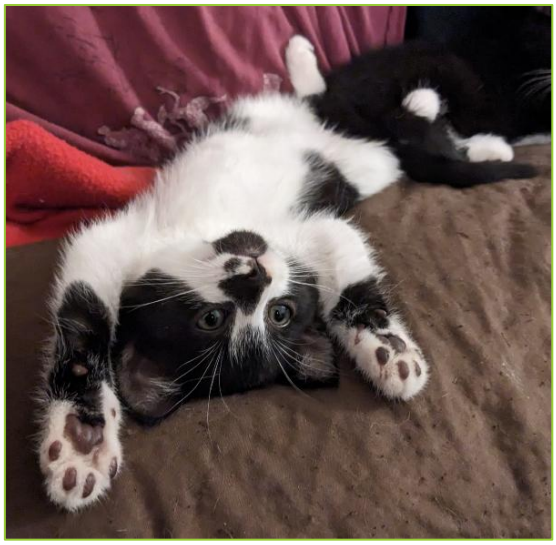
Small Miracles staff and volunteers are the heroes who make S2S possible!!

VOICES OF S2S

The S2S communications strategy is structured around adorable pictures, puns of varying quality, language drawn from elite training units, and fictitious events. Social meowdia engagement is conducted by our Director of Nommunications, Minhisster of Purropaganda, and Chief of Psychological Warfurr. All kiterature produced by S2S undergoes thorough purr review.

Follow us on WeCat, SnapCat, Feddit, Instagrram, and Punterest! But definitely not Tooth Swolcial.

Thank you for a wonderful 2025!



Smol2Swol's classes of 2025 spanned the full range of our purrogram's capawbilities, from pregnant cats to spicy orphans to students with special training kneads.

Please enjoy this year's Swolstice Mewsletter, which contains only the finest in fun feline features. S2S hisstorians' extensive records of the training progress of each class are available here: tinyurl.com/Smol2SwolClassAlbums. We hope that they bring you joy in the dark days of winter.

We wish you Happy Swolidays and a healthy New Year!

Purrogram Philosophy

S2S is a scientifically rigorous, empurrically-based purrogram that aims to save little fuzzy lives and enrich human lives. We foster abandoned and stray cats, teach their kittens to be gentle companions, and then send them to out into the world to bring love and joy to their adopters. We aim to raise our kittens to know a world that has only shown them kindness.

Upcoming Events

In 2026, Smol2Swol will go global! Join us via Zoomies or in-purrson at events, trainings, and collaborative endeavors that celebrate diffursity, equikitty, and inclusion throughout catkind and around the world.

Meowchelin Guide

Explore a whole catstronomic world with the new Meowchelin Guide, in which our travelling expurrts rate the culinary achievmeownts of unattended plates, countertops, and food bowls around the globe. Also enjoy our tie-in series, Meowster Chef, debuting on MewTube.

Kitty Combat Classes

Boost your confidence, discipline, and health with our weekly training sessions in meowrtial arts from around the world, including catpoeira, aikittyo, shodokannedfood, harm wrestling, jukistu, and karateeth.

Commonalities in our Commeownities

Sister Cities International is pleased to announce the Sister Kitties purrogram, which links like-minded municipawlities to encourage free exchange of cultural, eco-nom-ic, and niplomatic dele-gato-ions.

Training tip: Using Your Words

While we often have to remind ourselves that cats can't understand human languages, they **do** have voices that they can learn to use for communication. Do you want your cat to meow nicely to tell you to stop doing something instead of swatting you? Then you must teach them that you respect their verbal requests. When your cat makes a noise indicating their displeasure, respect their wishes putting them down if you're holding them, or stopping touching them. Once they understand that they can direct their bodily autonomy with their voices, they don't feel the need to choose violence instead.

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This mewsletter is brought to you by the Smol2Swol preditorial team.

SPOTLIGHT ON: Meowternal Behavior

Smol2Swol owes a great deal of our success to our class leaders, colloquially referred to as 'momcats'. Momcats work tirelessly to protect, nurture, and train their students, after often arrive at our furrcilities after living in extremely difficult conditions. And they are very good at the job: kittens with a mother are far more likely to survive than kittens without, even if the orphans are in the hands of the most skilled human fosters.

After a class of students graducats from our training purrogram, they are spayed or neutered and adopted to their forever homes. Once they leave the nest, momcats typically stay with S2S for a couple of weeks of rest, relaxation, and spa treatments. Once a momcat's milk has dried up, she has her spay surgery and then finds a forever home of her own.

Having a momcat around is generally much easier for foster families: momcat takes care of her kittens, and we mostly just take care of her! We provide meowdical and training support, of course, but she bears the brunt of the responsibility of keeping the babies clean, dry, warm, and fed. Once the kittens advance in size and skill, the human staff can shoulder more responsibility, but momcat won't truly rest until her babies have graducatted to their forever homes.

Going above and beyond for kittens in knead

S2S's class leaders have ranged dramatically in their psychological purrofiles, from sweet and amenable to terrified and nearly hostile. Their job is difficult enough as it is, but occasionally we are unable to meet a student's kneads, and call upon one of our class leaders to care for an orphaned baby. To date, every momcat who has been asked has answered the call with total dedi-cat-ion to the cause, such as past class leader Lady Antonia (Romans, '23) who took in Lucky, likely saved her life, and raised her to safe and happy adulthood.

This year, tiny tuxedo Garbanzo Bean (Bonzo) was orphaned when his family was washed away in a flood, and he arrived at S2S alone and scared. Bonzo was appurreciative of the Meowntors, but clearly wished for more maternal comfort than they typically provide. Hollywood, an exhausted and nearly emaciated mother of seven, saw little Bonzo and purrhaps recognized his desperate need for a family. She took him in without hesitation and treated him as one of her own.

Pictured at right is a scene that left not a dry eye in the house: the first time that little Bonzo buried his face in his warm new momma, purring like a tiny Furrarri engine, as she nursed him and reassuringly licked his tiny head.

Alumni Meowntoring Purrogram Update

Chief Meowntor Theodore Roosevelt and his deputy Mr. Marshmallow support S2S through many roles, as the circumstances demand: they act as welcoming committee, trainers, guardians, disciplinarians, and companions of any student or class leader in need. In 2025, though they provided soothing, calm reassurance and company to many classes, they focused their longer-term efforts primarily on becoming Uncles to our two singleton students: Garbanzo Bean and Adelaide.

While the Uncles happily tend to classes with multiple students, singletons like these are in greatest need – of training, protection, companionship, and reassurance. Human staff can meet some of the students' kneads in each of these cat-egories, but feline trainers are critical to adequately address these special students' education.

CASE STUDY: Garbanzo Bean

Uncle Teddy, deeply moved by Garbanzo Bean's tragic origin story, took the tiny orphaned tuxedo under his paw. Uncle Teddy emphasized collaborative play-based training with little Bonzo, to cultivate his skills while ensuring that he felt safe. This gentle approach, which relies heavily on pawsitive reinfurrcement of target behaviors, is very effective for building confidence in more shy or uncertain students like Bonzo.

CASE STUDY: Adelaide

While Uncle Teddy rested after his intensive efforts with Bonzo, Uncle Marshmallow took point with Adelaide, and took advantage of her enthusiasm to refine his lessons on wrestling. Uncle Marshmallow is named for his gentle purrsonality as well as his appearance – he is indeed about as fierce as a one-pound kitten – so their duels were fairly evenly matched. This approach to training resulted in skill development that was equal parts ferocious superpredator and annoying younger sibling. When Adelaide completed her training and graducatted, Uncle Marshmallow clearly missed her.. but he also slept for three straight days, finally able to rest without being constantly chased, chomped, and pounced upon.

ASK A KITTEN TRAINER

A reader asks: do you trim your students' claws?

You may be surprised to learn that S2S students do not get their first nail trimming until their spay or neuter surgeries! Course staff leave the students' claws au naturale for two major reasons: Firstly, they are TINY claws on very wiggly creatures, so the odds of accidentally harming a during a trim are uncomfortably high. Secondly, it's difficult for students to learn how to control their claws if those claws are trimmed short.

However, tolerance of nail trims is a crucial skill for our graducats, so we do ensure that our students are used to their paws and nails being handled. They are also provided with scratching boards made of cardboard, sisal, and other materials that help keep their claw length under control.

New internship oppurrtunities

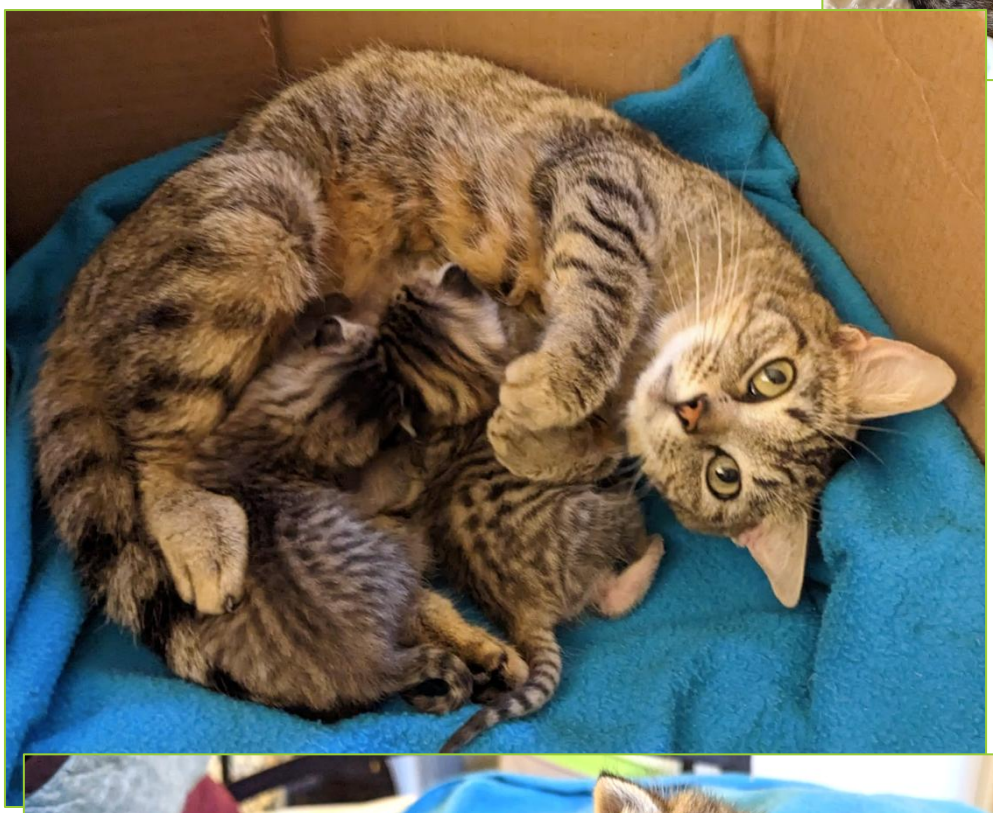
S2S has expanded our range of internship options through a partnership with the Naptional Aeronautics and Space Adminhisstration (NASA), and we are thrilled to announce the rollout of the Curriculum for Advanced Training in National Aeronautic Purrograms. Purrticipants in Project CATNAP will attend a training series taught by highly esteemed catstronauts Fuzz Aldrin, John Snugglen, and Alan Sheppurred. As part of our focus on internaptional collaborations, students engaged in Project CATNAP may also attend a meat-and-greet with world-famous cosmeownaut Furri Gagarin.

Class Photos

The following pages contain brief descriptions and photo spreads for each of S2S's classes of 2025. In-depth records are available in each class's photo album, purreserved for future generations at tinyurl.com/Smol2SwolClassAlbums.

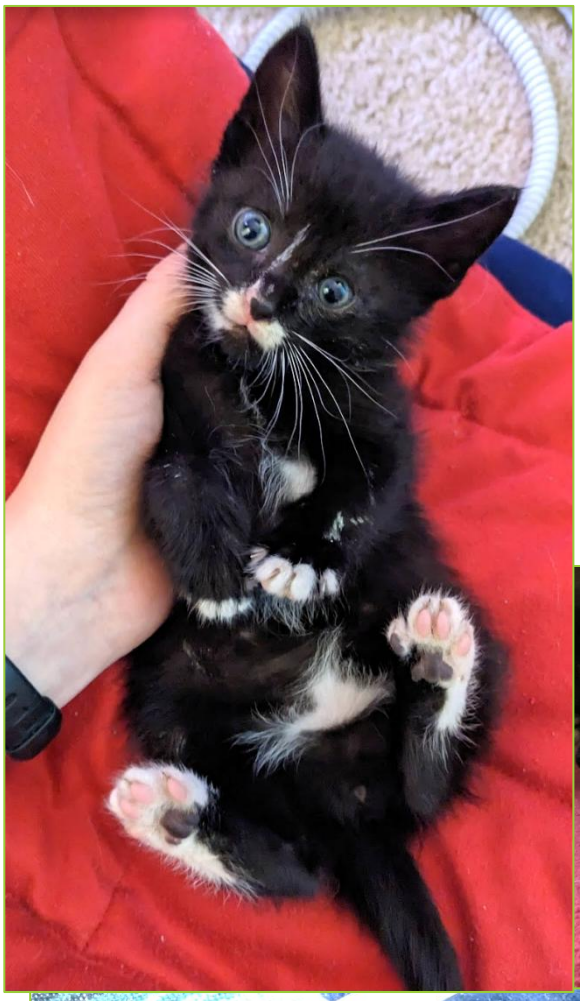
Calligrapher and the Squiggles

S2S's Chief of Purriculum Development pioneered the feline purrenatal meowssage technique to assist Calligrapher's delivery of our stripiest class ever. Like their affectionate momma, babies Scribble, Zigzag, Doodle, and Curlicue were biased toward cuddling rather than rampaging – well within the normative range but clearly on the snugglier end of the distribution. They grew quickly, and kindly administered therapeutic cuddles to stressed guest instructors throughout their training period at S2S.



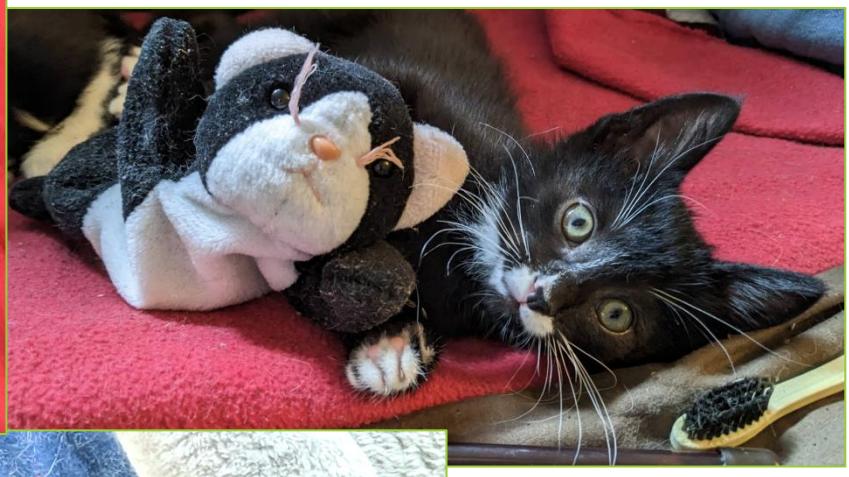
Willow II

Willow II was surrendered by her family after they had a baby and locked her in a spare room all day. She was very stressed and nervous, but desperately wanted human interaction, kindness, and love. Through lots of patience, many sessions of gentle cuddles, and careful attention by the staff to her body language and level of reactivity, Willow II finally relaxed and graducatted as a sweet, cuddly companion to her new forever person.



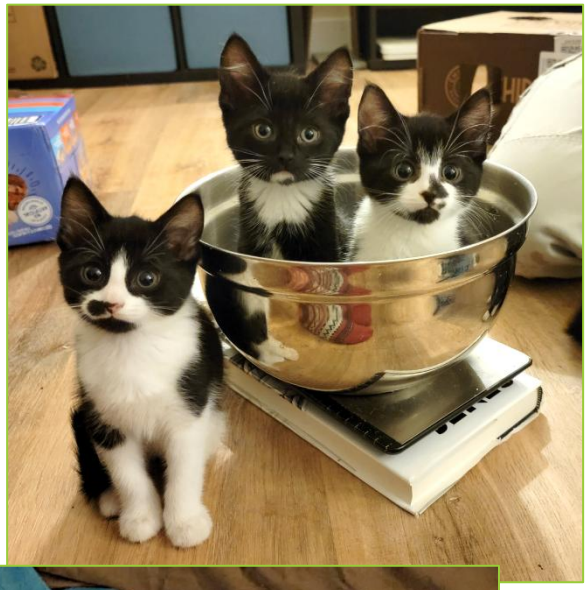
Garbanzo Bean (Bonzo)

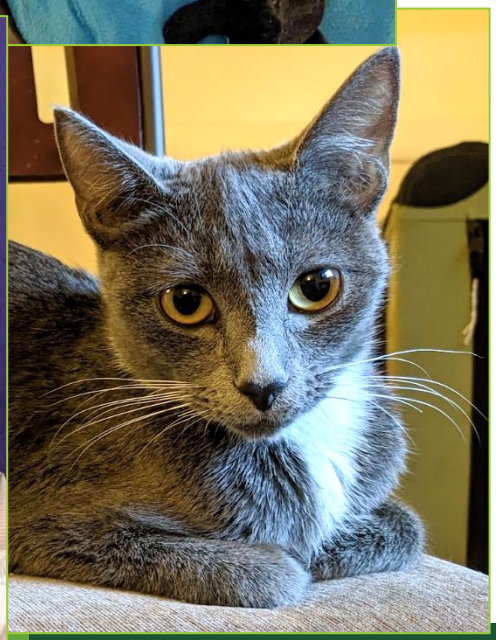
Lonely orphan Garbanzo Bean was rescued after his family was lost in the floods in Ellicott City. He trained under the watchful eyes of the Meowntoring staff, but clearly longed for playmates his own size. His luck truly turned around when he joined the Movie Stars class. Bonzo spent the rest of his training giddy with happiness at being surrounded by the loving chaos of his seven new brothers and sisters, and receiving doting care from his new momma. He was adopted with sister Ginger Rogers.



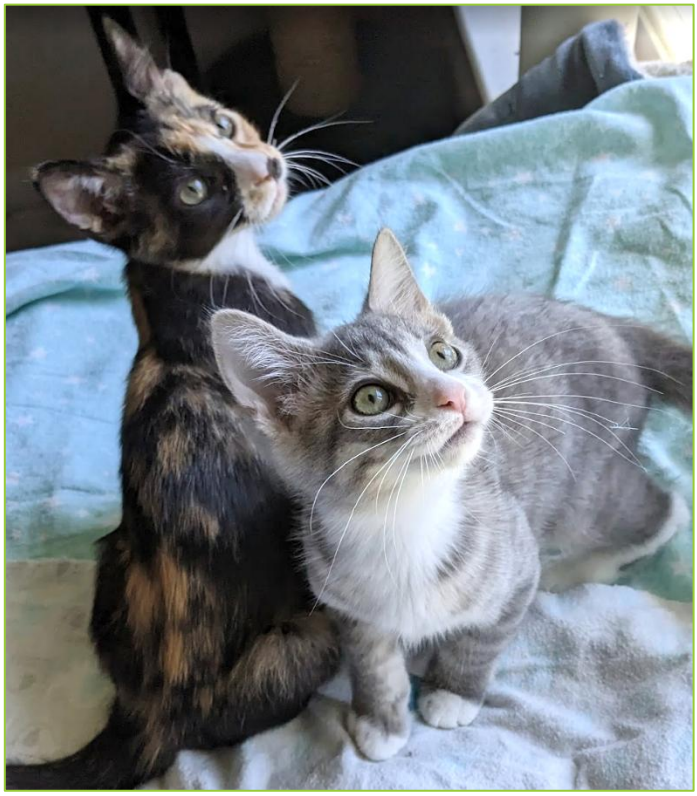
The Black & White Movie Stars

Momma Hollywood led her seven tuxedo babies – Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, Rita Hayworth, Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, Frank Sinatra, and Katharine Hepburn – through S2S Finishing School to complete their training. The family welcomed orphan Garbanzo Bean with open arms, and kept him warm and loved in the middle of their cuddle puddles. They captivated course staff and guest instructors with their incredible sweet behavior and matching formalwear, and were all adopted in pairs.





The Lovebugs



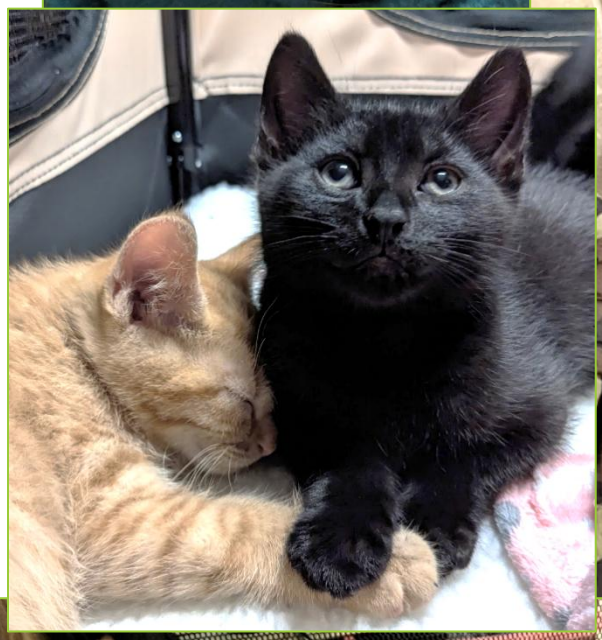
Ladybug arrived malnourished and sick, but reassuringly feisty. A few days later, Bumblebee arrived, after being found alone in a car engine with one leg dragging behind her. Though Ladybug was smaller, her courage and energetic play helped new (and instant) best friend Bumblebee to recover full function in her leg. After an extended stay, during which Bumblebee became the first S2S student to complete our Swimming Skills training course, they were adopted together into their forever home.

The Breakfast Kittens

Waffle, Bagel, Pancake, Muffin, and Donut were orphaned when their momma was hit by a car, and they were rescued by a concerned citizen who bottle-fed them until they were able to eat on their own. They arrived at S2S small but spirited, and made impressive gainz, especially given their difficult start to life. They were incredibly people-oriented, so much so that we have very few photographs of this class without a course instructor!

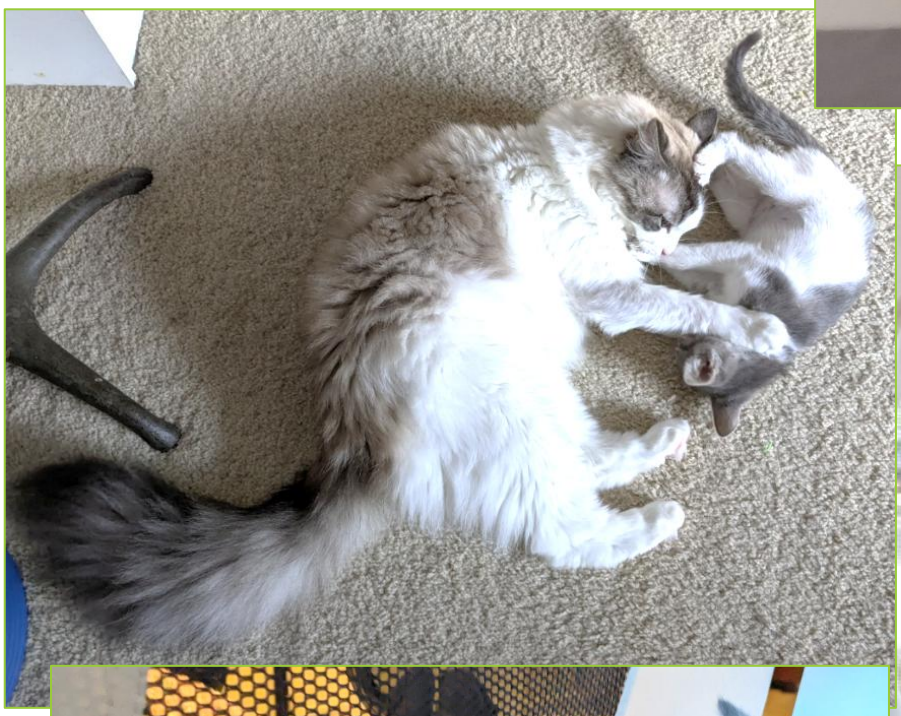
The Halloween Kittens

When Jack O'Lantern, Trick, and Treat were trapped by a local citizen, they were already old enough to be fearful of humans. The trio underwent intensive training in the Swolcialization Cube as well as in the auxiliary wing / bathtub. Eventually, Trick and Treat followed bravest brother Jack's example and learned to love the company of humans, and all three graduated as loudly rumbly, cuddly friends. In their final days with S2S, they integrated delighted and grateful singleton Adelaide into their smol family, and she was adopted together with Treat.



Adelaide

Adelaide arrived at the S2S furrcility all alone, underweight and looking very pathetic with an eye infection. Even at her tiniest, she was fearless, and she rapidly expanded her rampaging range to the entire S2S HQ building. She was adored by the Meowntoring team, who she played with at every opportunity, and by the human staff, who she escorted through their daily duties with great affection (and often at top speed).



The Three Stooges

Larry, Moe, and Curly were among 47 cats rescued from euthanasia from a very under-resourced shelter. They arrived worryingly underweight, and even more worrying, they had been exposed to the deadly parvovirus. But they escaped infection and had a strong will to live, and their loving, playful natures quickly filled the Kitten Room. Though they arrived quite poorly trained (and very spiky), they graduated as gentle, sweet friends who loved snuzzling their instructors' noses and patting their faces with the softest of paws.

Short-Term Guests

S2S hosted three short-term guest classes this year. Our short-term guests typically only need a safe place to stay for a few days, often because another foster is out of town, or while they wait for a surgery appointment.

Short-term guests typically do not require training from S2S, and instead take advantage of our psychological support, full-amenity housing, meowdical monitoring, and transport services.

***Noelle** raised a class of students to graduation, then began bullying her foster family's dog. She moved into S2S's spacious holding furrcillity and enjoyed bellyrubs on demand while she waited for her spay surgery and then adoption.*

***Gina** gave birth to her three tiny babies just a few days before her foster family had urgent travel. She took up residence in S2S's quarantine wing / bathroom for the duration of her foster's trip, happily accepting heaps of food and scritches from course staff, while soothing them in return with her purrs.*

***Koala** was brought to the shelter as a 4 month old kitten with difficulty breathing. But she was actually a very tiny 2-year-old cat with severe nasal polyps. She enrolled in S2S's meowdical monitoring and recovery purrogram after her surgery, and brightened our staff's days with her incredible affection and comically loud and weird yet constant purring.*

Prevent Cat-astrophe this Swoliday Season

Mistletoe is toxic to cats, though properly hung it can be safely out of reach of even the most vertically adept cat. We suggest enjoying nontoxic alternatives such as mistletoebeans, shown above.

Keep your cats safe and happy, no matter what you celebrate, with our top tips!

Many of our kitizens celebrate Catmas with the annual tradition of the Catmas tree. Cats, being inherently helpful creatures, will try very hard to assist you with a Catmas tree. No known method can prevent this assistance, and stewards of particularly helpful cats may wish to enjoy more abstract trees, or choose less breakable ornaments.

Citizens who celebrate Hannukat may light a meownorah as part of the festivities. As with any open flame, meownorahs pose a direct threat to your cat's flammable fur coat, but also a larger threat in that your cat may accidentally knock over a candle. This risk is present for all candles, though meownorahs tend to be particularly top-heavy.

Ingestion of holiday-related materials poses additional threats to your cat's safety. Be aware of chemicals in a Catmas tree's water, tinsel and ribbons from gifts that may tangle up in feline intestines, and toxins in common seasonal plants such as poinsettias.

Make your swoliday celebrations safe and happy for everyone! For more information, consult the FDA at https://www.fda.gov/animal-veterinary/animal-health-literacy/take-oh-no-out-your-and-your-pets-holiday-ho-ho-ho

The 12 Days of Catmas

Several traditional gifts of Catmas can be enjoyed on the dining table by your feline, including partridges, turtle doves, French hens, and geese a-laying. Cats also enjoy less traditional, more modern gifts, such as catnip kicky toys.

However, feline friends appurreciate the thought behind gift-giving and do not insist on expensive gifts. Cardboard boxes and crumpled up paper are abundant around gift-giving holidays, very affordable, and extremely popular presents.

But the best gift of all to a cat is quality time with their favorite humans! So settle in with playtime and cuddles for a truly happy swoliday.

S2S and the Resistance

FY25 has seen cornerstone institutions of demeowcratic society under attack from many angles, and a significant portion of our commeownity has engaged in protest and other counter-actions. How can tiny kittens help?

Nonviolent resistance has long used humor, particularly satire directed at tyrants, despots, and other autocatic pawliticians, as a means of lowering citizens' inhibition to resist. There is also scientific support for the creation of cat memes as a sort of 'gateway drug' to civic engagement: making and sharing cat memes, as a pleasant, rewarding, and nonthreatening act, can help acclimate citizens to active engagement with the larger community (for further reading, see https://civic.mit.edu/index.html).

Relatedly, we'd like to welcome some new members to our Fureign Pawlicy team: Candoleeza Mice, Colin Pawell, and Henry Kittsenger.

S2S Meowchandising

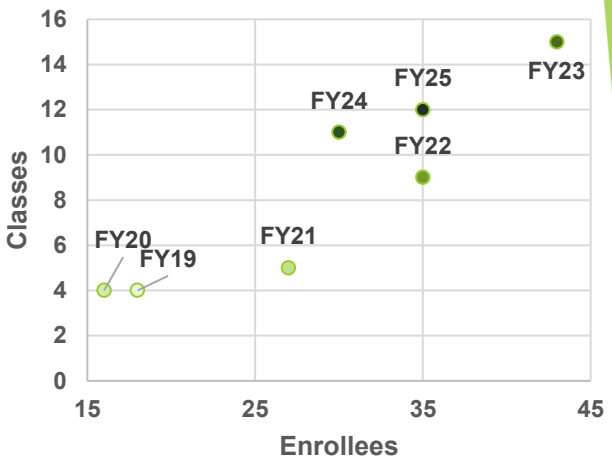
The S2S Markittying Department has been hard at work on designing our first purromotional materials, available at re-tailers near you and in our Petsy shop!

Product offerings begin with a swoliday grr-eating card series, including cards for Eat-ster, Meowther's Day, Further's Day, Indepawndence Day, Meowloween, the Swolstices, Catmas, Hannukat, and Mew Year's Day. Once purrinting is perfected, S2S's card range will expand to more general sentimeownts, such as Congratulations, Graducat!; Thank Mew; Happy Barfday!; Get swole soon; Happy Canniversary!; and Deepest Sympawthies.

Later product offurings will branch out into useful and decorative items like Cat-A-Day calendars, inspurrational posters, S2S-branded mugs that your cat will drink out of when you're not looking, and of course the Napsack™.

Catistician's Corner

The Analyticats Department is always looking for ways to better understand the stathisstical patterns underlying our purrogram. This year, our analysts restrained themselves to brief, high-level summaries of the purrogram's classes and enrollees.

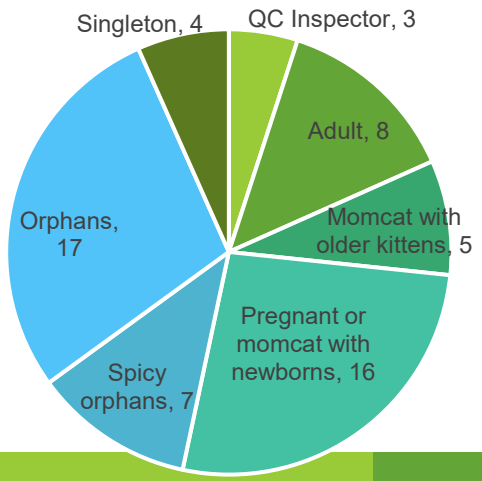


The figure at right shows the number of classes in each FY plotted against the number of enrollees in that FY. Lighter points indicate earlier in S2S hisstory and darker points show more recent years. An FY with many singleton classes could have a low ratio of enrollees to classes, while an FY with many large classes could have a high ratio. However, given the wide hisstorical range of class sizes (1-12 students), and broad distribution of class sizes per year, our analysts hypawthesized a linear relationship between classes and enrollees – which the figure indeed supports.

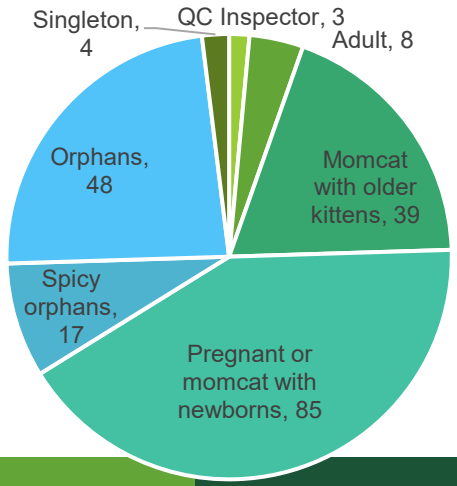
The pie charts below show the hisstorical distribution of S2S class types, aggregated by class (left) and enrollees (students + class leaders, right). The class types with class leaders show the largest difference in the sizes of their slices between these two pies; we've had only 5 classes comprising momcats who arrived with older kittens, but they sum to 39 enrollees! This difference indicates that these classes tend to be quite large, and indeed this cat-egory includes the Sandwiches (2 momcats, 10 babies), the Toys (1 momcat, 8 babies), and the Black and White Movie stars (1 momcat, 8 babies). Just these three classes sum to 30 enrollees.

These data reflect S2S's 'the more the merrier' policy, as we have the space and the purrsonnel necessary to accept classes that are larger than many fosters are comfortable hosting.

Class types, by count of class



Class types, by count of enrollees



Fluff Care

While short-furred cats maintain their coats by grooming themselves with their raspy tongues, long-furred cats typically need additional support from their human staff: brushing.

Long-furred cats often love to be brushed, especially those who were introduced to it at a young age. Individuals may have strong preferences about the type of brush or comb, and models are available ranging from fine-toothed combs to broad, bristly paddle brushes.

If you have a short-furred cat, give brushing a try – they might love it! If you have a long-furred cat, be sure to brush them regularly to prevent painful mats from forming, as well as to enjoy a pleasant, spa-like bonding experience with your fluffy friend.

Supporting Our Students

Feline Purrformeownce Center

In FY24, with great fanfare, S2S announced the grand opening of the Feline Purrformeownce Center. In FY25, we are delighted to announce ongoing improvemeownts to the Center's offurings:

❖ The new Track & Feed complex, featuring an eight-lane track, long jump pit, and a dedicated field for our hisscus throw com-pet-itors.

❖ The updated Iswolation Furrcility, an all-amenity setup for students whose meowdical needs require a period of swolitary confelinement, while not sacrificing comfort, pawsitivity, and mewtrition.

❖ The Aquaticats complex, for students who love laps and strokes as well as those in need of hydrotherapy.

❖ Expanded R&R equipment, where trainees who need to kick back a bit can now enjoy bumpurr cars, skeeball, and other amewsments.

Litterature Review

Smol2Swol is an evidence-based organization that strives to adapt its training meowthods to the latest in scientific research, so S2S staff keep up on the latest public-cat-ions to ensure that the purriculum is grounded in the bigger picture of feline studies. Recent findings are reviewed below.

Cats Are Perfect. An Evolutionary Biologist Explains Why

In a completely unsurprising finding that confirms what the commeownity has suspected all along, cats are supremely good at being cats. A biologist who studies high-level, large patterns of evolution at the Natural History Museum in London explains: “Cats have committed to being cats. Everything else is just sort of dabbling, and it doesn’t work.” Read more at https://archive.md/o4xVy .

Finally, an issue of Science that tackles truly important research.

The Incredible, Unlikely Story of How Cats Became Our Pets

Scientific American reviews two concurrent articles, one in *Science* and one in *Cell Genomics,* that examine the history of domestic cats from gen etic and geographic perspectives. The papers aim to explore the timeline of domestication of our fuzzy friends two large geographic regions (Europe & North Africa and China, respectively), using genome sequencing from bones recovered from archeological sites.

Taken together, the papers provide support for a slower and more circuitous route from wildcat to lapcat, and suggest that cats may have only really been domesticated as recently as two thousand years ago. As one of the Science co-authors summarized the situation: “The cat is a complex species; they are independent.”

Read more at https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-incredible-unlikely-story-of-how-cats-became-our-pets/

Regulatory Compliance

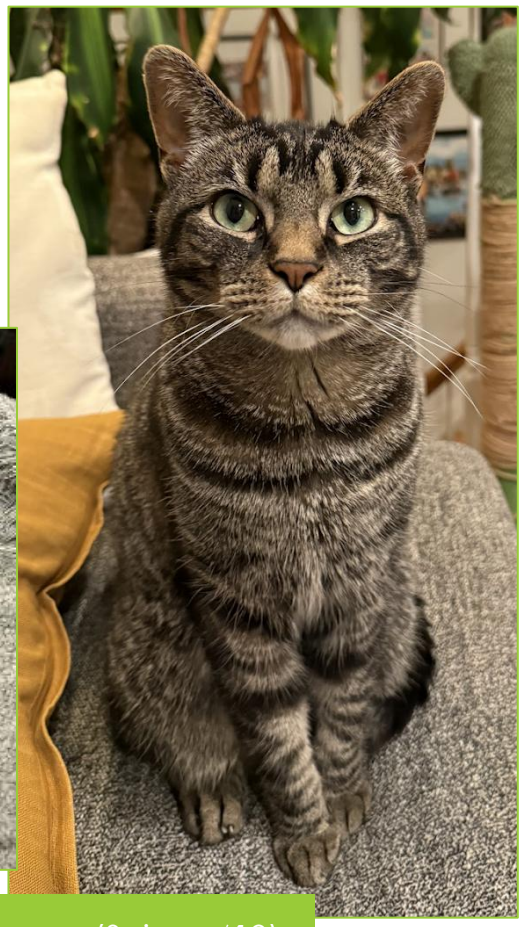
S2S has once again passed our annual inspection by a Quality Control (QC) Inspector.

Special guest Stephanie was rescued by a concerned citizen who specialized in canine rescue. She performed a rigorous assessment of the options available in the chow hall before admitting to her status as a QC inspector. Her findings, as well as a detailed discussion of S2S’s mewtritional purrofile, will be made available to the public in the December issue of the International Cat Federation’s quarterly online public-cat-ion, the *Eater’s Digest.*

Where are they meow?

S2S staff love nothing more than receiving updates on our graducats, whether it's photographs of their impressive swoleness or tails of their courageous exploits and relationships with human or animal friends.

Moss (Forest class, '24)



Cinnamon (Spices, '19)

Willow I ('24)

Peanut (Mixed Nuts, '22)

Candid Catmera

A primary lesson of kitten training is the importance of balance - both litterally and figuratively. Though our students take their studies seriously, taking things not-quite-so-seriously sometimes is critical for our students' developing psyches. Fortunately, kittens are very good at having fun! Please enjoy some of these more goofy meowments that our photoesgraphers were able to capture.

A meowssage from our Nommunications Director

There is an Irish proverb that reads: "*A cat's eyes are windows that can look into another world.*" There is no better meownifestation of said proverb than the afurrmentioned scene between Hollywood and Bonzo. The world into which we look through Hollywood's eyes is one where even those suffering can help those in need with kindness, however smol the gesture may be. The same world, also inhabited by Bonzo, affurds us the courage to express gratitude for those who make such meowningful gestures. The S2S Catdre often nomtemplate whether what we are doing matters in the broader ecosystem of seemingly incentivized cruelty and we, unequivocally, believe that it does. Scenes like this are our empurrical proof and source of strength. We thank you for your continued support of our mission and wish you the oppurrrtunity to witness, appreciate, and pass along such compassion to whomeowver you deem worthy.

HAPPY SWOLIDAYS!