



Save-A-Pet



Cat Room Remodel includes Multi-Level Cat Towers to Meet the Needs of Cats Awaiting Adoption and Create a Fear-Free Environment



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— SALLY HUBBARD

Background

Save-A-Pet, a no-kill rescue and adoption center in Grayslake, Illinois – operating under the mantra of ‘Help, Heal, Home’ – has saved more than 61,000 cats and dogs since 1972 by rescuing them from less-than-ideal situations and adopting them out to homes.

Challenge

Save-A-Pet needed a long-overdue upgrade of its main cat room. The vision was to create a peaceful sanctuary, along with a stimulating, fun, and healthy environment for the cats while they waited for their forever home. The design needed to accommodate at least 100 cats in a stress-free environment.

Rachel Bird, owner of Once Upon a Design, donated her time to design the cat area around the needs of the felines, including providing more vertical space and accommodating cats with diet restrictions while also ensuring the cats would be showcased to encourage adoption.

Solution

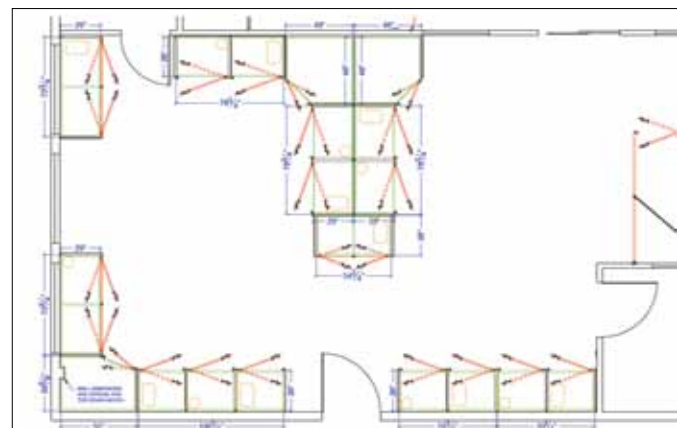
Rachel Bird created a design concept to transform the space and greatly enhance the lives of cats as they await their new families. The result is a cozier and more home-like environment created for the cats and kittens in the main cat room at the Save-A-Pet Adoption Center. The design features multi-level Cat Towers from Mason Company that provide living areas of various sizes, delivering the vertical territory that cats crave and need to reduce stress. The space includes large, medium and small condos while certain condos and living areas designated for adoptable cats requiring a special diet or with non-contagious medical needs. Additionally, there are three corner units with shelves, including one in the main cat room and two in the special diet areas on the porch.

“All of the condos from Mason Company provide the cats with a personal, secure space that fit their needs,” said Sally Hubbard, animal welfare and operations manager. “They allow the cats to adjust to shelter life and minimize stress levels while still showcasing them to potential adopters.”

Ms. Bird designed the floor plans and elevations to utilize the Mason Company condos to maximize the space in the room in a way normal cage banks can’t because of their fixed dimensions. Mason’s Cat Towers also use glass panels to create a glass enclosure in the main room and take advantage of windows that would bring natural light into the special diet rooms. “Mason Company’s staff was very accessible and enabled me to design exactly what was needed. I could increase the height and depth of condos as needed to design customized cat towers to exact specifications,” Ms. Bird said. “It was so easy to accomplish exactly what we wanted.”

The room also includes solid, wood-constructed cat trees to provide additional vertical space. Bird and Save-A-Pet selected an environmentally-friendly and non-toxic paint in a calming purple color for the walls that had been found in research studies to significantly reduce stress in cats.

“We wanted a healthy design approach that included material selections to significantly benefit the cats and improve their quality of life,” said Ms. Bird.



Results

Save-A-Pet now houses approximately 80 cats in the main room and about 140 total including the special diet rooms, kitten room and intake area. The design has made a huge difference for both the cats and staff.

“The Mason Cat Towers are the anchor in a space that now creates a feeling of peace and calm for the cats,” said Ms. Bird. “The cat towers are truly wonderful and the space is amazing.”

Hubbard says the cat spaces are a complete change from what Save-A-Pet had previously.

“Everything is now designed with the comfort of the cats in mind and the space is much more conducive to the well-being of cats, said Hubbard. “It is also more comfortable for people who come visit.”

Save-A-Pet staff members also love the cleaner and healthier environment. The latches are also easier to use and cats that need to be separated have more space and the design is healthier by ensuring their food is separate from litter boxes.

“Cleaning is so much easier and we are also able to clean more thoroughly because it is all smooth surfaces and no bars,” said Hubbard. “The cats have experienced almost no upper respiratory infections and their stress level has gone down. It is calmer in the room and you can literally feel that difference.”

“Everything looks so much nicer to the public to drive adoptions, which is our goal,” said Hubbard. “We are seeing increased traffic in our facility and are also finding that the cats are less stressed and show better, which makes it more likely for someone to adopt them. Save-A-Pet would definitely recommend the Mason Company cat tower and housing solutions.”

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