

# **"Catty Shack:" A sanctuary for feral felines (approved by Bill Murray)**

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
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HAMEL - After several feral cats she was feeding went missing or were tragically found dead, Sarah Shipton of Hamel decided her furry friends deserved a safe place.



So, Shipton did what any reasonable cat lover would do - she took out a loan and built an actual sanctuary for cats, complete with an environmentally-friendly cat-proof fence, insulated shack full of cat toys, a looping lawn dragon and a porch area for interaction and general viewing of kitty antics. Shipton also works at a local law firm, which gladly helped her file the paperwork for becoming a non-profit. Now, Catty Shack - as it is known - houses seven cats ready for adoption to loving homes.

"We had a cat-proof fence installed by Martin Fence," Shipton said via Facebook Messenger. "It's a composite fence made of recycled materials (we try to be as environmentally conscious as we can) that has a cat guard at the top. We also had a 14 by 16 shed built for the cats to live in."

All cats taken in by Catty Shack are taken to a vet soon after arriving for testing and being either spayed or neutered. In fact, most of the operating expenses of the non-profit go toward medical expenses for the animals or food.

"Our operating expenses vary depending on the amount of food and supplies we get donated," Shipton said. "Our biggest expenses are getting feral cats fixed and checked out at the vet. Folks can help by donating via our [website](#). They can adopt a cat, they can buy us something from our wish list, or donate directly via PayPal."



Currently, Catty Shack is home to seven cats, which is legally the maximum amount it can hold. Of those cats, one is ready for adoption at this time. Shipton said as many as six cats have found forever homes after their stays at the ranch.

Catty Shack has also been informally endorsed by Bill Murray, the star of the movie *Caddyshack*, and all-around swell guy. Shipton said she made him a shirt, which are now for sale on the website, and gave it to him at the Chicago Symphony.

"I met him in Chicago, where we had pizza at the symphony," she said. "I told him about our cat sanctuary and I had made him a shirt. He said, 'this is so cool,' and loved the shirt. He said, 'this is great. I need a new shirt,' and then we talked a bit. He's a nice guy who seemed to like what we are doing."



Murray is not the only person outside the ranch to notice what good Shipton is doing. St. Louis establishment, The Heavy Anchor, has also allowed her to host benefit shows to raise additional funds for the constant care of the cats. Such a show is going to occur at 8 p.m. on Dec. 15.

Called "[Playing for Pussies.](#)" the show will feature music from Jeremy Essig, Langen Neubacher, Jacob Vi and Josie Voyer, as well as comedy from Milk Milk Lemonade.



