

# Cookies, Coffee, Cats: New Cat Cafe Opens in Alton

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter  
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ALTON - A new organization has opened in the Riverbend community, and for founders Kristine and Mark Ressler, it couldn't be more purr-fect.

MeowTown is a cat cafe where customers can enjoy cookies, coffee and cuddles with cats. The organization partners with [Metro East Humane Society](#), and all of the cats are

available for adoption. Kristine explained that MeowTown is a passion project that has brought her whole family together, starting when she and her 9-year-old daughter Lily went to a cat cafe in St. Louis and realized they needed to open something similar in the Riverbend.

“We were there, and I thought, ‘This is so amazing. I have goosebumps. Alton needs one of these so bad,’” Kristine remembered. “Alton’s amazing. I love this area. Anytime I leave it and come back, it’s like, I love Alton so much. And the community rallies around things like this. So I think, not only the cats, but it’s really about the community too. We want to bring something here.”

The Resslers bought the building, located at 301 W. Elm Street in Alton, a year ago and started renovating it to create their own cat cafe. Now officially open, Kristine explained that people can come in and hang out with the cats in 50-minute blocks. They can enjoy treats and coffee while they play with the animals, and there is also a mini-shopping section where customers will find cat-themed souvenirs.

Because there can only be so many people with the cats at once, reservations are encouraged but walk-ins are welcome. It costs \$9 to reserve your spot, and the money goes back to the cats’ care.

Through the [Metro East Humane Society](#), MeowTown currently has ten cats who are all up for adoption, including Karen, Earle, Candy Cane and Jingle Bells. Kristine, who is particularly fond of the cat Mabel, noted that the Ressler family is quickly falling in love with the cats at MeowTown even though they do not have any cats at home — yet.

“I have a feeling that might change,” she joked. “We have been working with the Metro East Humane Society. They are an amazing organization. So awesome. And they really do amazing things and they’re so supportive.”

This support is what Kristine wants to see at MeowTown. She noted that a lot of people are struggling right now, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic. She hopes that MeowTown can be a positive space for both the cats and the community members who find their way to the cafe.

“A lot of people have asked, ‘Why are you doing that?’ And it’s a passion,” she explained. “It’s a good place for humans. It’s not just for cats, but it’s also therapeutic for humans to spend time with cats. It’s a therapeutic place for people. We need spaces where we can be, that promote wellness. So that’s kind of where we’re going with this, to promote wellness in humans and animals. I know a lot of cafes are like, ‘It’s all about the cats.’ And it is, it is all about the cats, but it’s also about humans at MeowTown. So that’s our story.”



MeowTown requires all guests to be ages 6 and up. Parking is across the street from the building. Kristine noted that [they are looking for volunteers](#) to help care for the cats. For more information about MeowTown, or to make a reservation, visit their [official website at MeowTownAlton.org](#).

