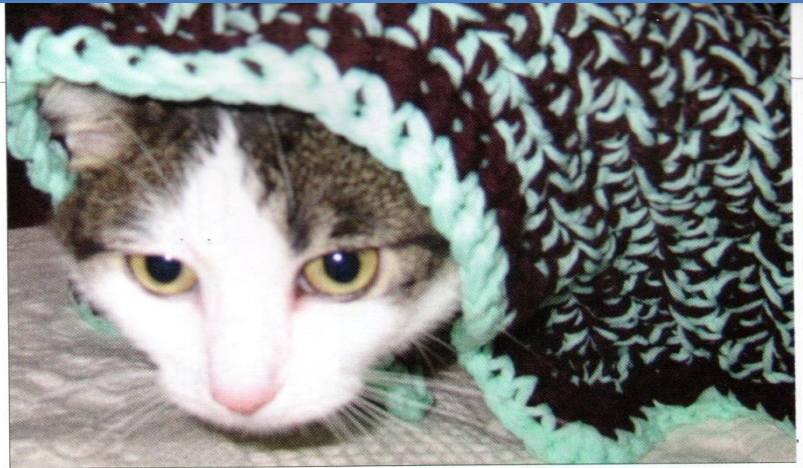


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MONTHLY COLUMN

To Give, To Inspire

COMFORT FOR CRITTERS, GLEN ELLYN

In May of 2007, when Linda Kozlowski adopted her kitten from the DuPage County Animal Control Shelter, she felt terrible about all the kitties she couldn't take home that day. She asked the shelter director if she could do anything for the rest of the pets she couldn't adopt. The director suggested she bring in old towels (torn to ¼ size), which they would use to make the pets more comfortable in their enclosures. "This simple request really was a bit emotional for me," says Linda. "I thought about the old towels as their only comfort and felt a tap on my shoulder to do something more."



Linda has been an avid knitter and crocheter since her mother taught her as a child, so she asked if she could crochet blankets for the pets. The center was delighted and promised to send the blankets home with the pets when they were adopted, since they would have the shelter smell on them and therefore help the pet adjust to their new family. Thus, the idea for Comfort for Critters was born.

Since their beginning in 2007, the organization has delivered, free of charge, 51,113 blankets to animal shelters across the US and three in Canada. This year they are on track to ship almost 12,000 blankets. "I probably work with 300-400 volunteers total, with a different set helping each month," explains Linda. "Some of them bring their blankets to local shel-

ters. The rest of the blankets come through headquarters (my home in Glen Ellyn)." The blankets provide comfort for all the different pets that end up at shelters. Linda even tries to top each box with a handful of pet toys, like catnip bundles or braided yarn "pull toys" that are made from leftover materials.

Comfort for Critters is a super-flexible organization, so it is easy for busy individuals to get involved. Blankets can be made when they have time. They can make a few or a few dozen (knit, crocheted, tied-fleece, quilts, etc.). Linda also has a bin outside her front door that is always stocked with bags of yarn for volunteers to use for their projects. If you don't have time or the expertise to make a blanket, they are always grateful to receive donations of yarn and fleece. You can learn more about Comfort for Critters at www.comfortforcritters.org.

Mindy's January Giving

Inspiration: Visit a local animal shelter with donated supplies (and maybe a blanket).

ABOUT THE WRITER

Mindy Kyle is the owner of Be Inspired Studios and is passionate about helping people discover what brings them joy and to live a full, healthy and happy life. She has her Masters in Fine Arts degree in creative writing from DePaul University and lives in Naperville with her husband, three children and the cutest dog in the land.

