

# LEVEL UP YOUR CAT HOUSING: Game-Changing Upgrades Are Within Reach

UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program

Dr. Becky Stuntebeck

Dr. Denae Wagner



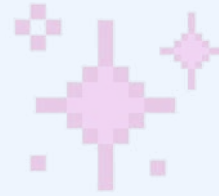
# Meet Our Experts



Becky Stuntebeck DVM,  
Facility Design Veterinarian  
Koret Shelter Medicine Program



Denae Wagner DVM, MPVM  
Facility Design Veterinarian  
Koret Shelter Medicine Program



# Presentation Resources



## Website list

At the end of this presentation



## Resources tab on Maddie's University

- Recorded webinar & slide deck
- Online course
- Links to helpful websites and documents

# Special Thanks to...



[www.sheltermedportal.com/smp-mmpc-home](http://www.sheltermedportal.com/smp-mmpc-home)

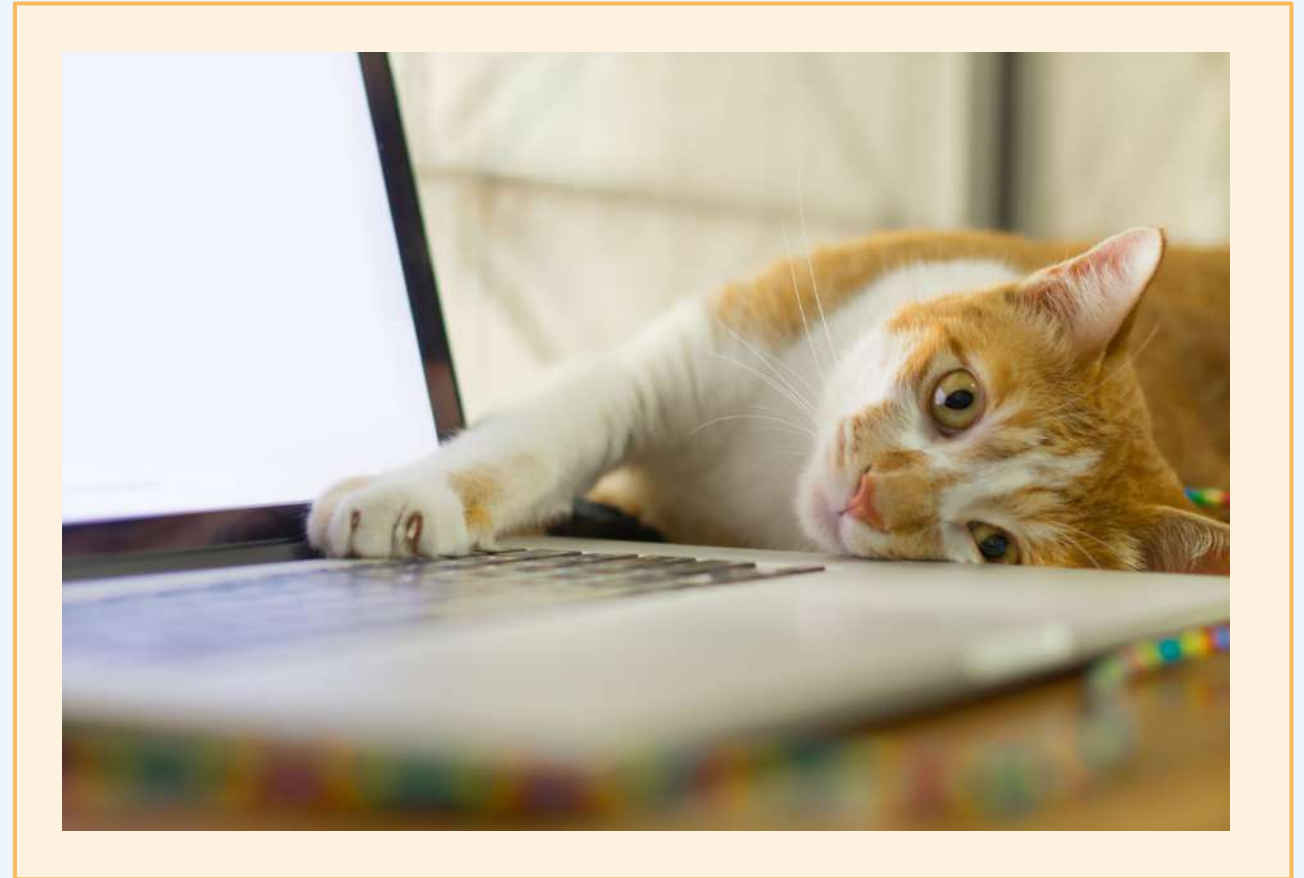


[www.maddiesfund.org](http://www.maddiesfund.org)

# What We're Sharing Today



- Why cat housing matters to cats, you, and your shelter
- What are the qualities of good shelter cat housing?
- A range of ways you can make your cat housing better, now and in the future



# Poll Question: What's Your Role?



# Poll Question: What Are You Hoping to Learn?



# Skittles Dreams of Home

Meet Skittles, a kitten who dreams of finding a forever home. She just entered Valley Shelter.

We'll follow Skittles through her stay at Valley Shelter.





# Dedicated Cat Care Attendant Angie

Meet Angie, a dedicated cat care attendant at Valley Shelter who took a liking to Skittles when she came in.



# Shelter Experience Through a Cat's Eyes

**ACK!**

Confinement,  
restricted  
activity/choices

Unpredictable  
events  
(routines)

Unfamiliar  
smells, sounds,  
sights, food

Handling by  
unfamiliar  
people



# Many Inputs Affect Shelter Cats' Well-being



- Housing quality
- Facility design, use, maintenance
- Population management, Length of stay (crowding)
- Staffing capacity (time and skills)
- Assessment and care for medical and behavioral needs
- Sanitation and biosecurity
- Intake/outcome policies (barriers)
- Community engagement and support
- And so much more...

# Many Inputs Affect Shelter Cats' Well-being



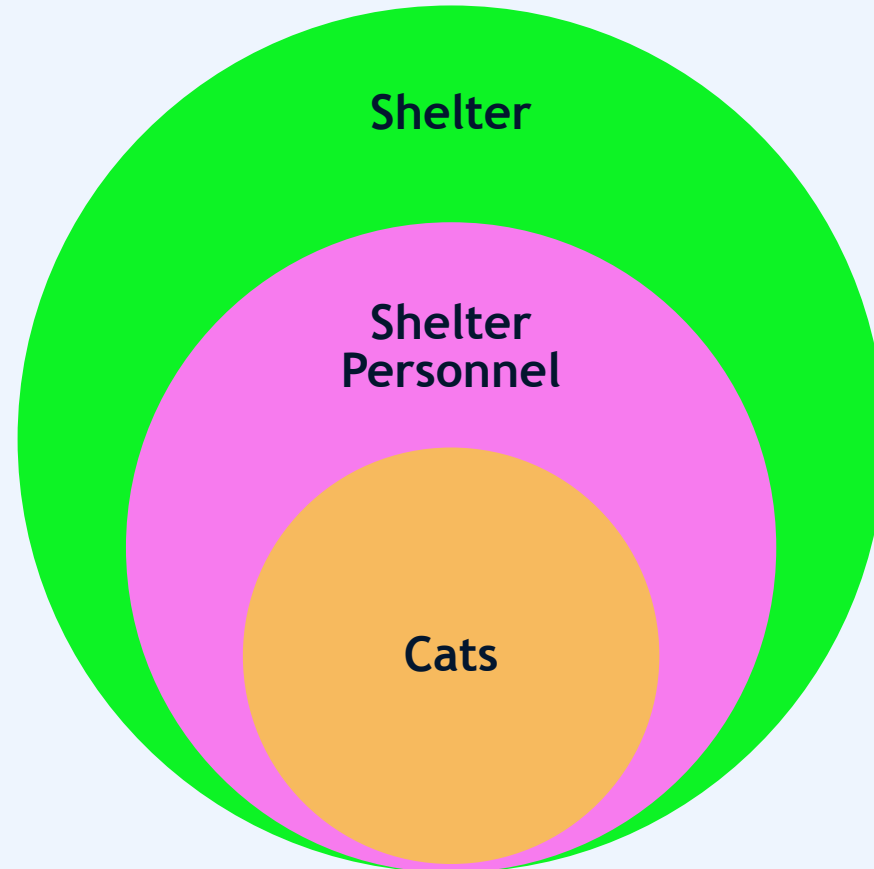
Housing is just one factor contributing to a cat's shelter experience.



*It's a crucial one.*

# Housing Matters

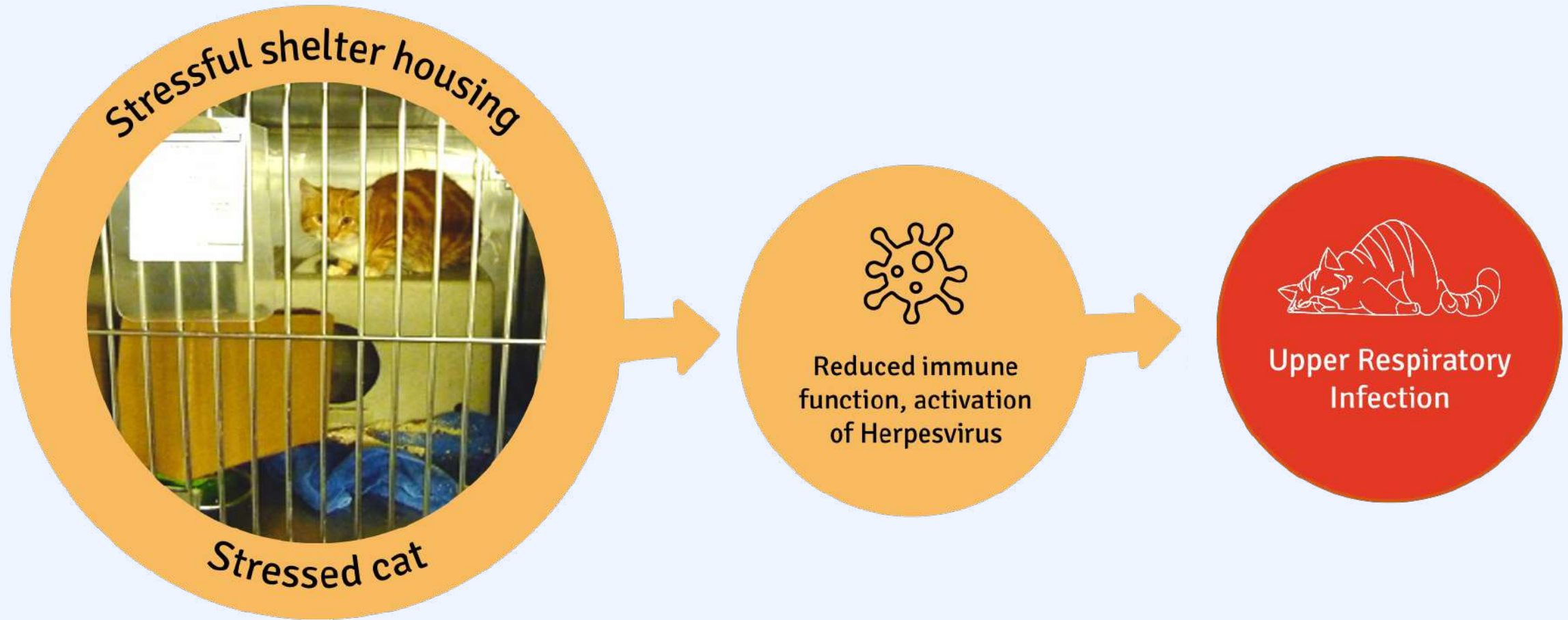
To the cats, to you, and to the shelter



# The Problems With Poor Housing Multiply

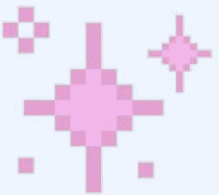


# Poor Housing, Poor Health



Endemic Feline Upper Respiratory Disease

# The Benefits of Good Housing Also Multiply



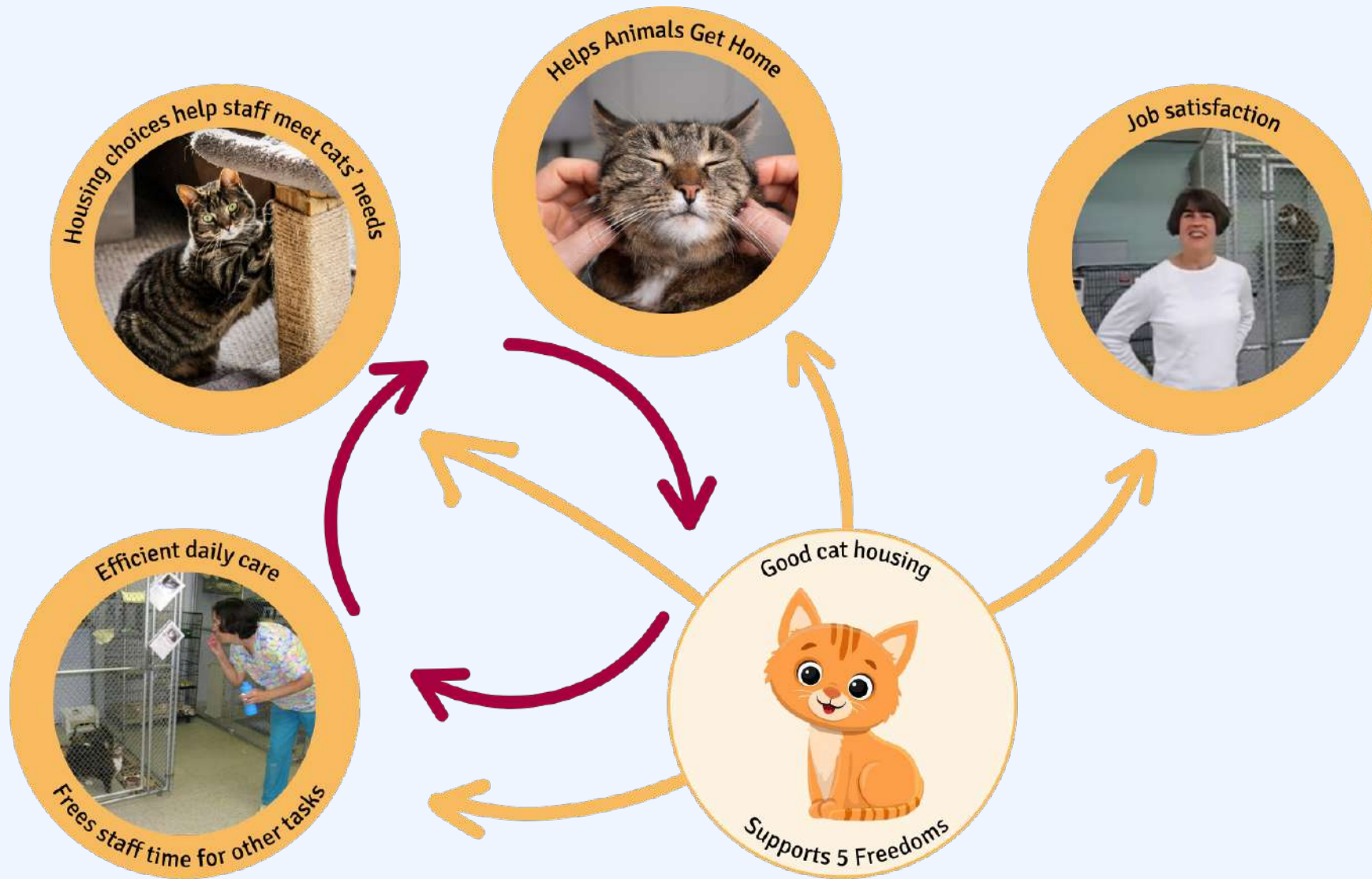


# Good Shelter Housing Supports Staff



*Video:* a cat caregiver explains how cat housing affected her experience working in the shelter.

# How the Benefits of Good Housing Multiply





# SHELTER MISSION ACCOMPLISHED



SHELTER

MONEY SAVING/  
REVENUE



AGENCY  
RESILIENCY



CREATIVITY  
PROBLEM SOLVING



PEOPLE

PERSONNEL



ADOPTERS/VISITORS/COMMUNITY



CATS

GOOD HOUSING



HAPPY CATS



# What is Good Housing?



# Good Housing Supports the Five Freedoms

Freedom to express normal behavior



Freedom from fear and distress



Freedom from pain, injury, or disease



Freedom from hunger and thirst



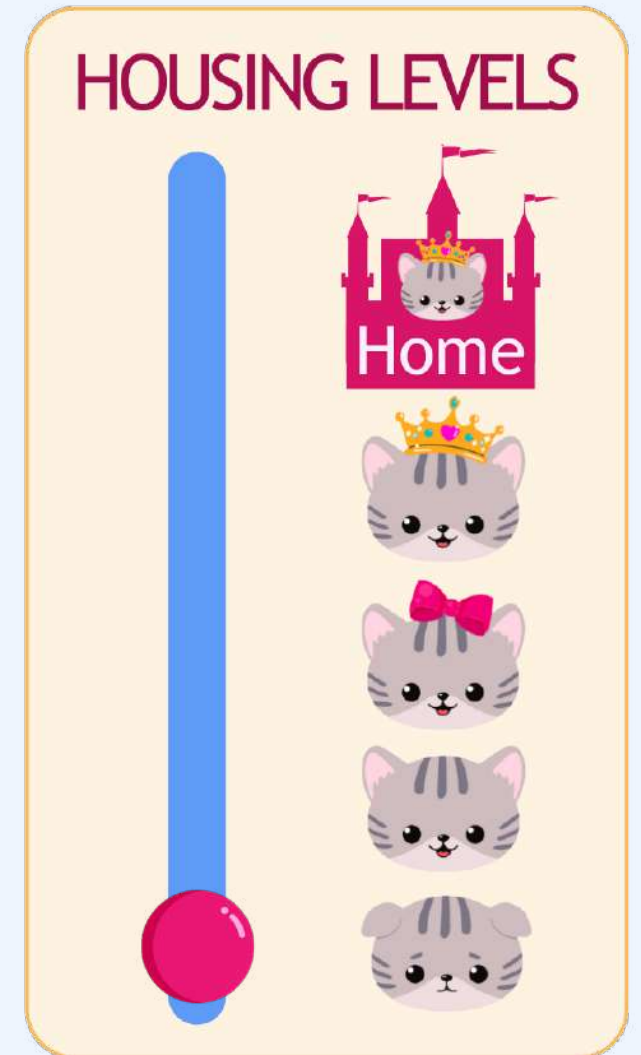
Freedom from discomfort



# Range of Housing Levels

As we follow Skittle's journey and explore what makes good cat cage housing, we'll use this slider.

The best housing for pet cats is a home, but we can provide good short-term housing that meets cats' needs in the shelter environment.



# One of These Cats Is Not Like the Others...



Cat 1



Cat 2



Cat 3



# Good Housing: Individual Considerations



Length of stay



Personalities vary

# Every Cat Is an Individual

Each cat experiences fear, anxiety, stress, and length of shelter stay differently.



# Variety of Housing Types

It's important to have a variety of housing types to better meet individuals' needs.



Individual cage housing

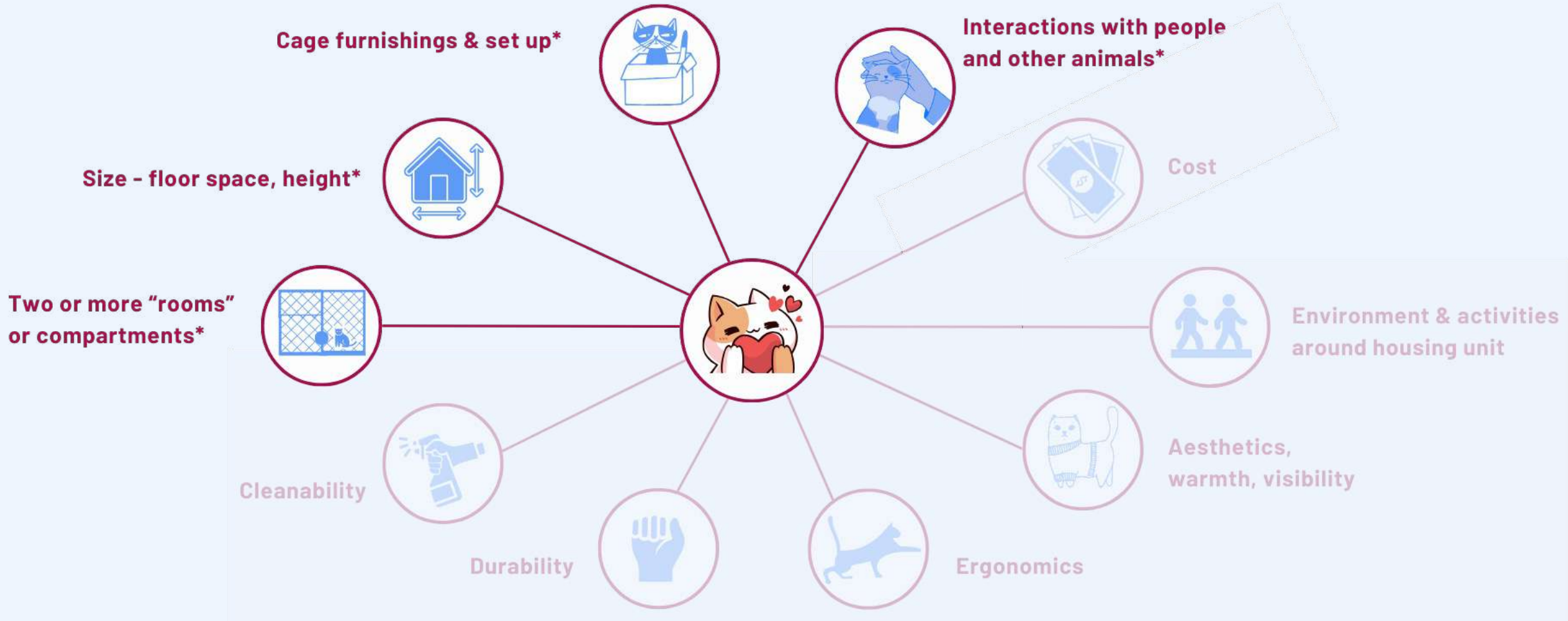


Individual room or run



Group housing

# Features to Consider for Cage Housing



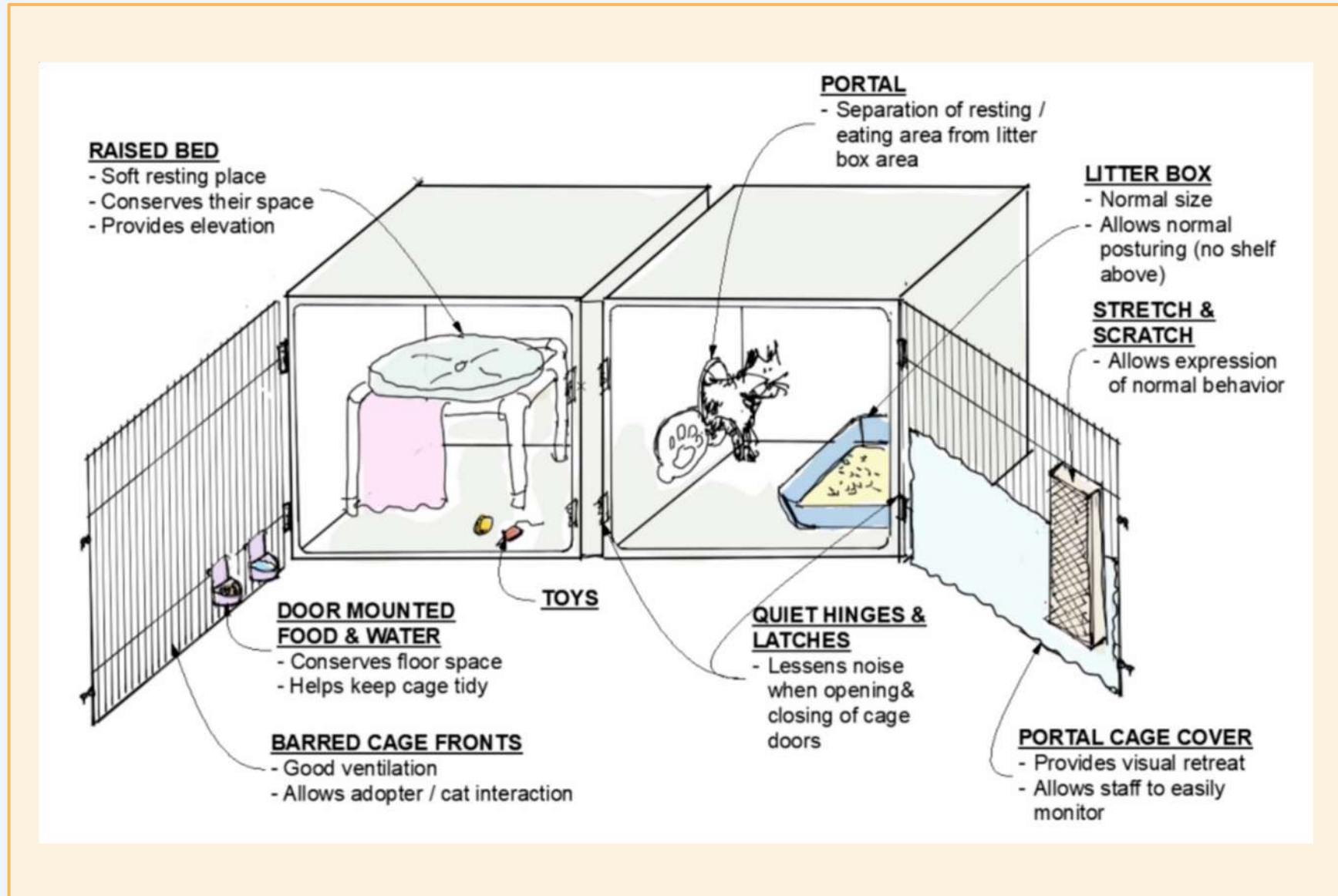
# Poll Question: Housing in Your Shelter

Before we get into details of good housing, we'd love to know which of the following you provide for cats in your shelter. Select all that apply.



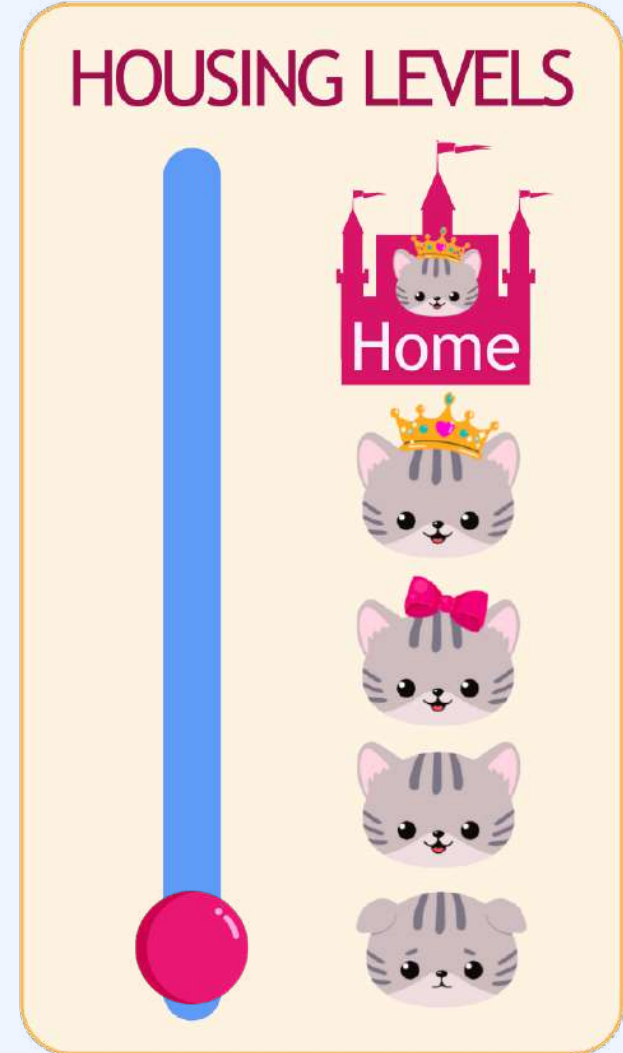


# Double Compartment Cage Housing



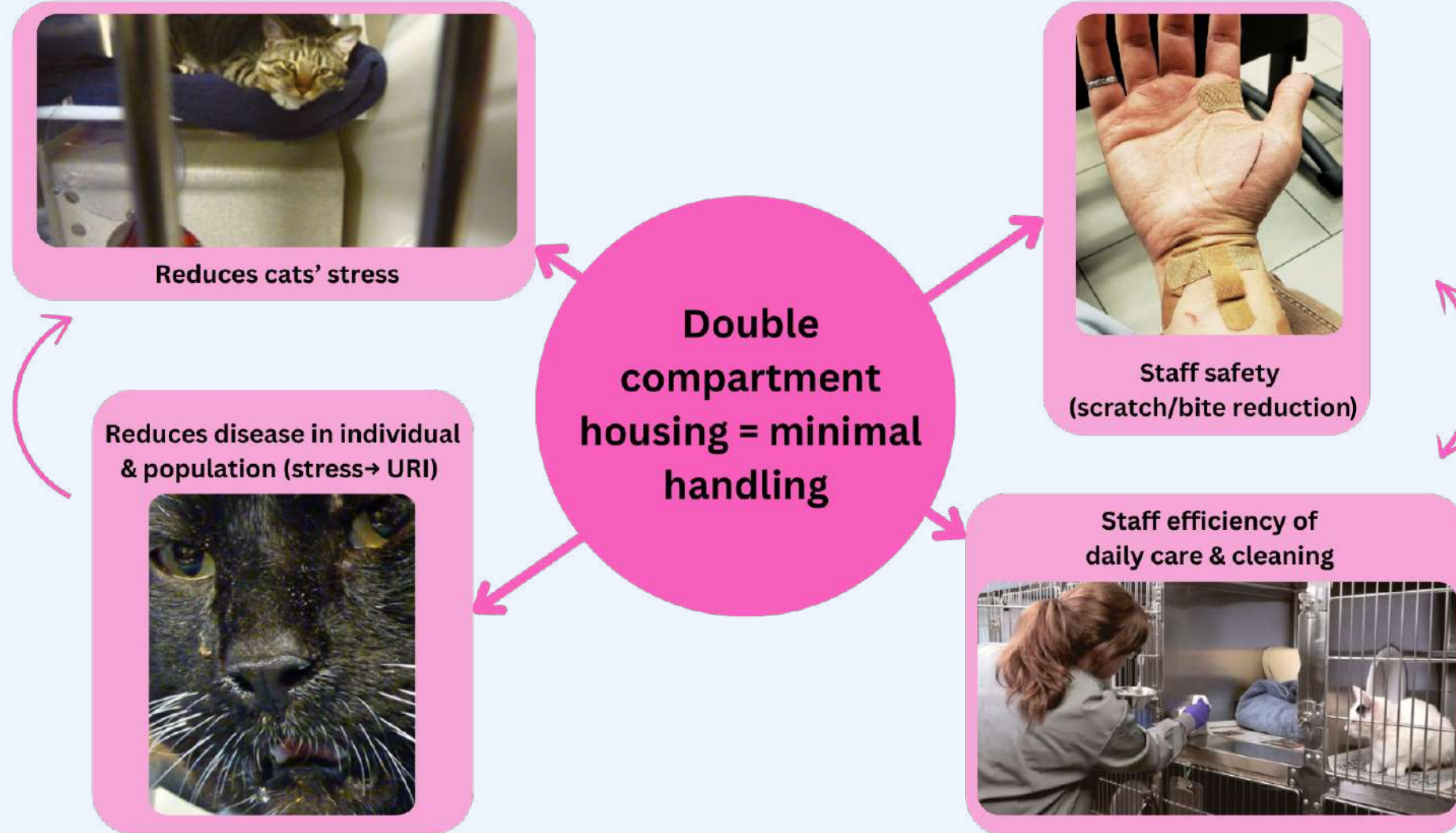


# Double Compartment Cage Housing





# Double Compartment Cage Housing





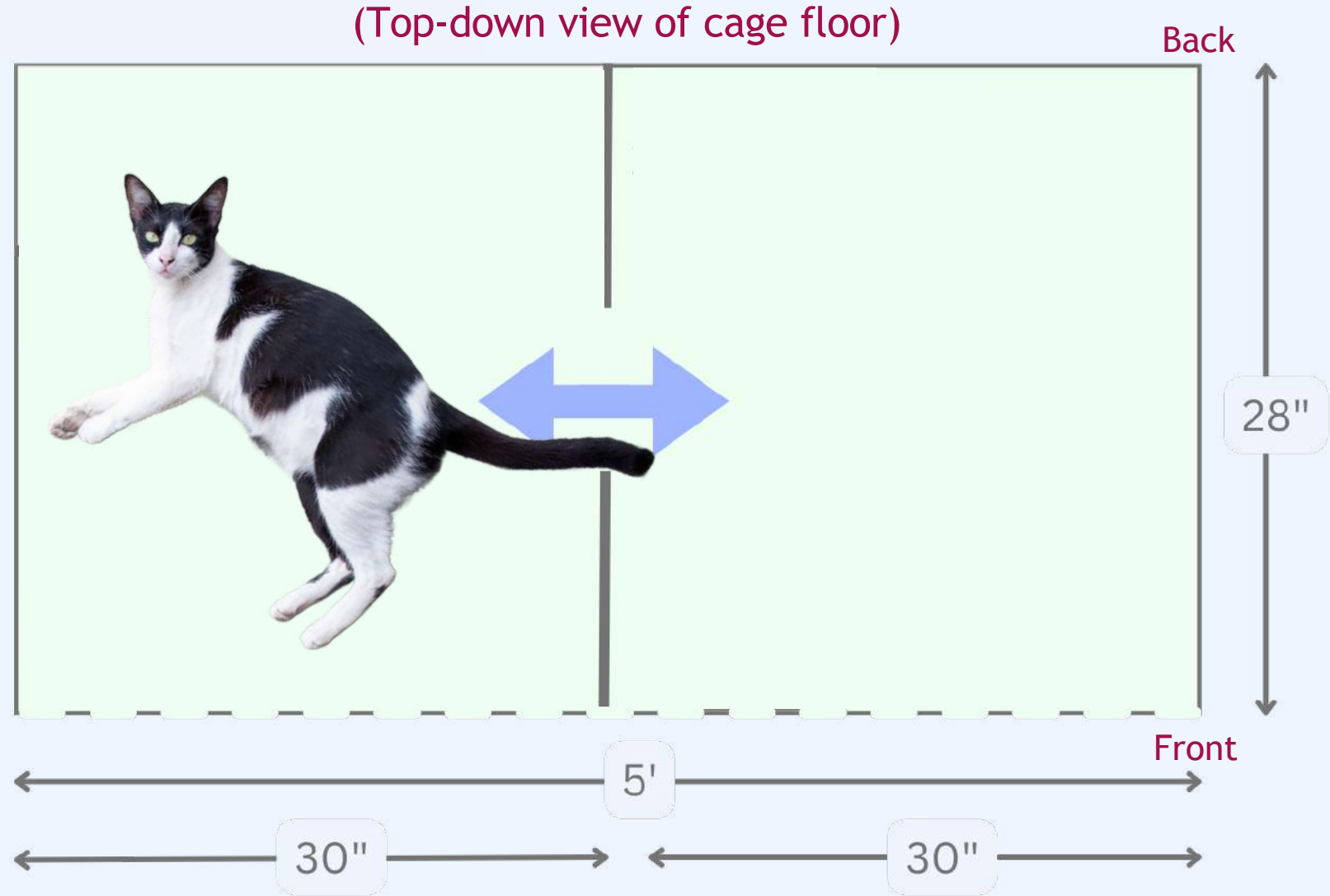


# Cage Size

Cats individually housed:  
11 ft<sup>2</sup> floor space\*

- Width  $\geq$  30", depth 28"  
(--> Diagonal 41" )
- Height: 28-30"

Cats can posture normally in  
litterbox, scratch, stretch out,  
retreat, say hi, etc



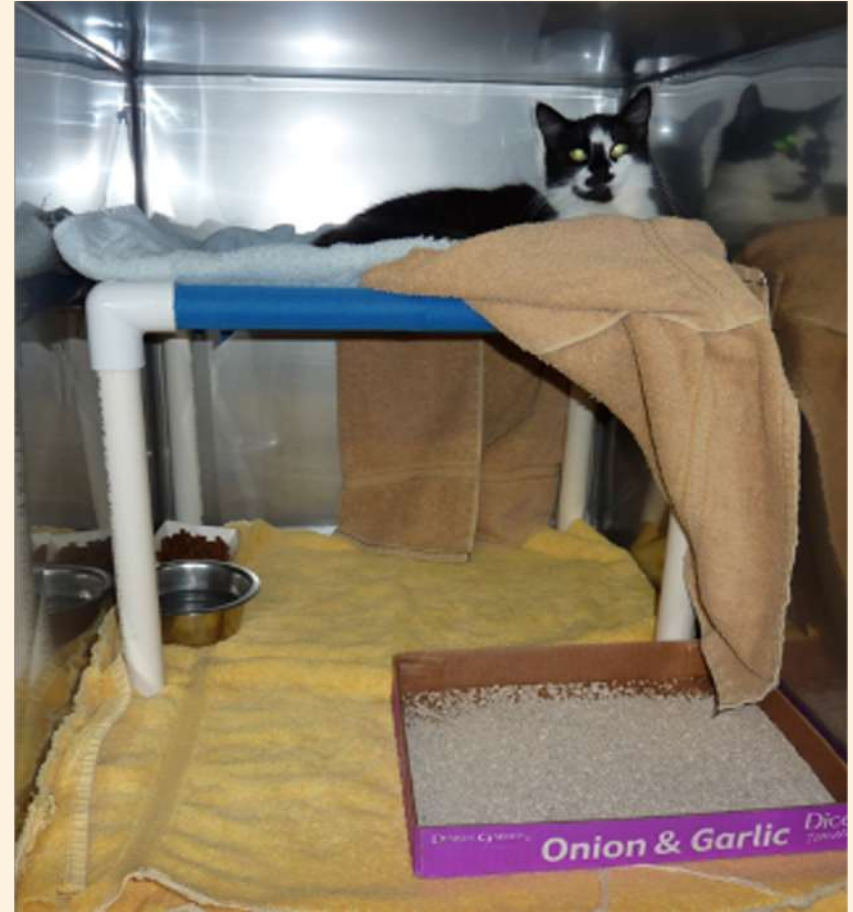


# Cage Set Up and Furniture





# Cage Set Up



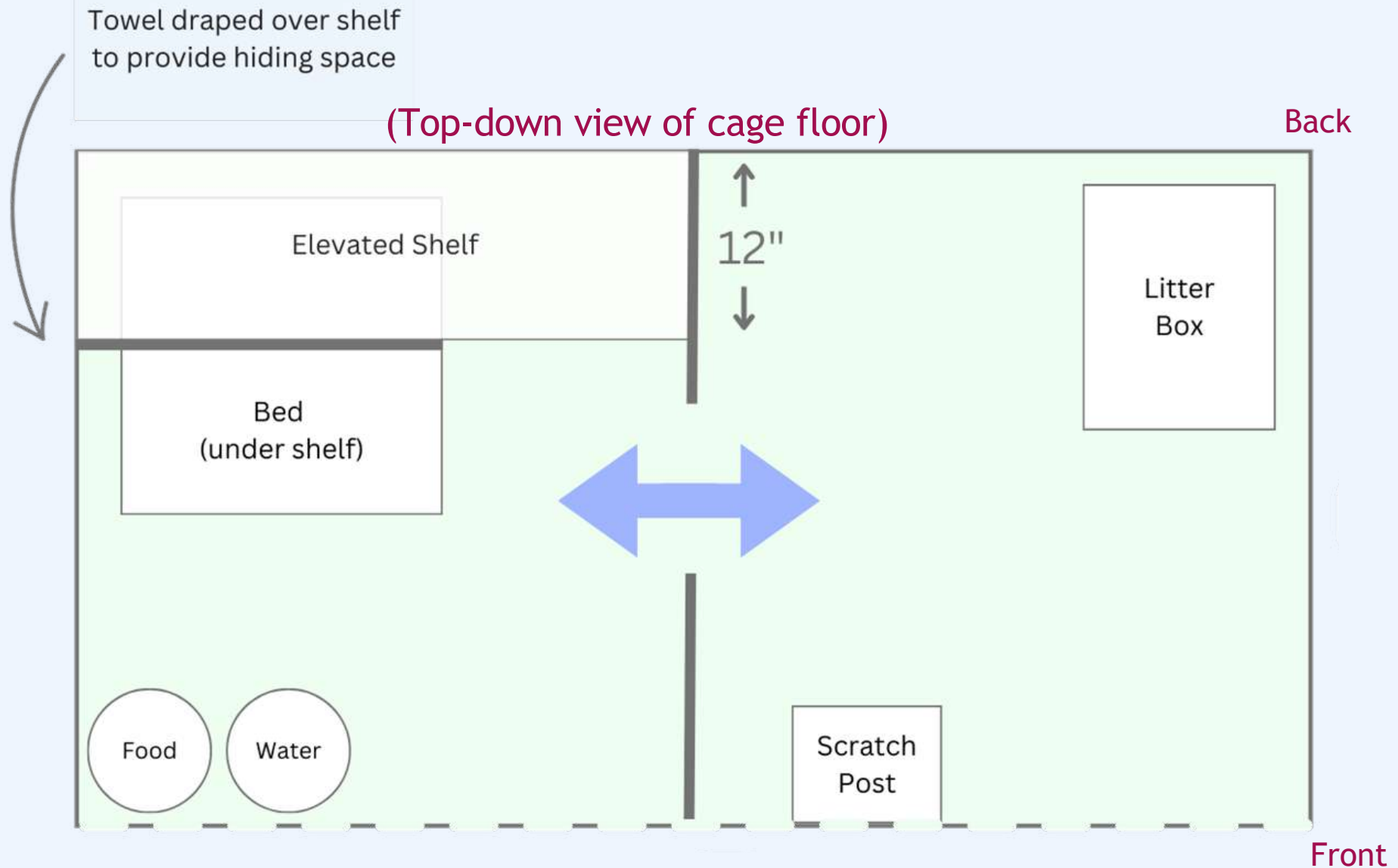


# Furniture





# Cage Set Up and Furniture





# Interactions





# Interactions



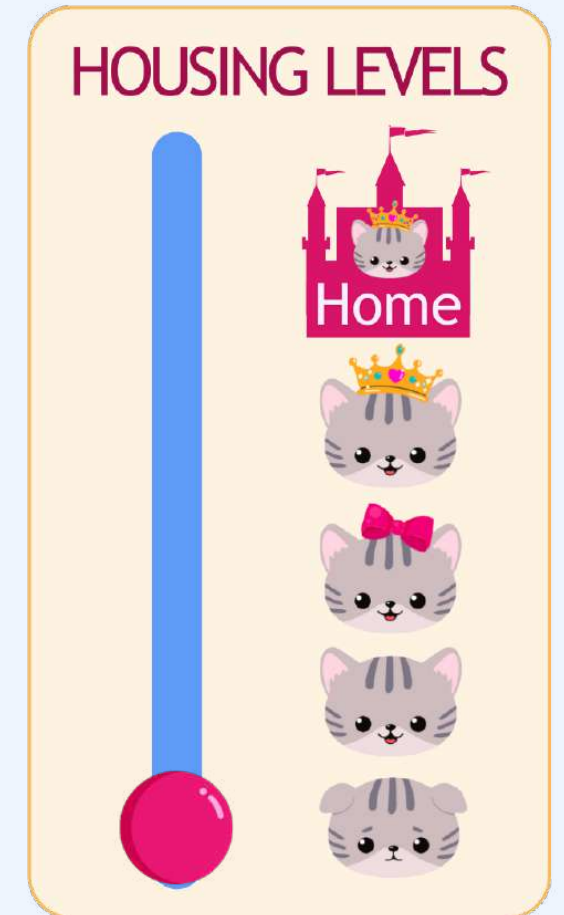
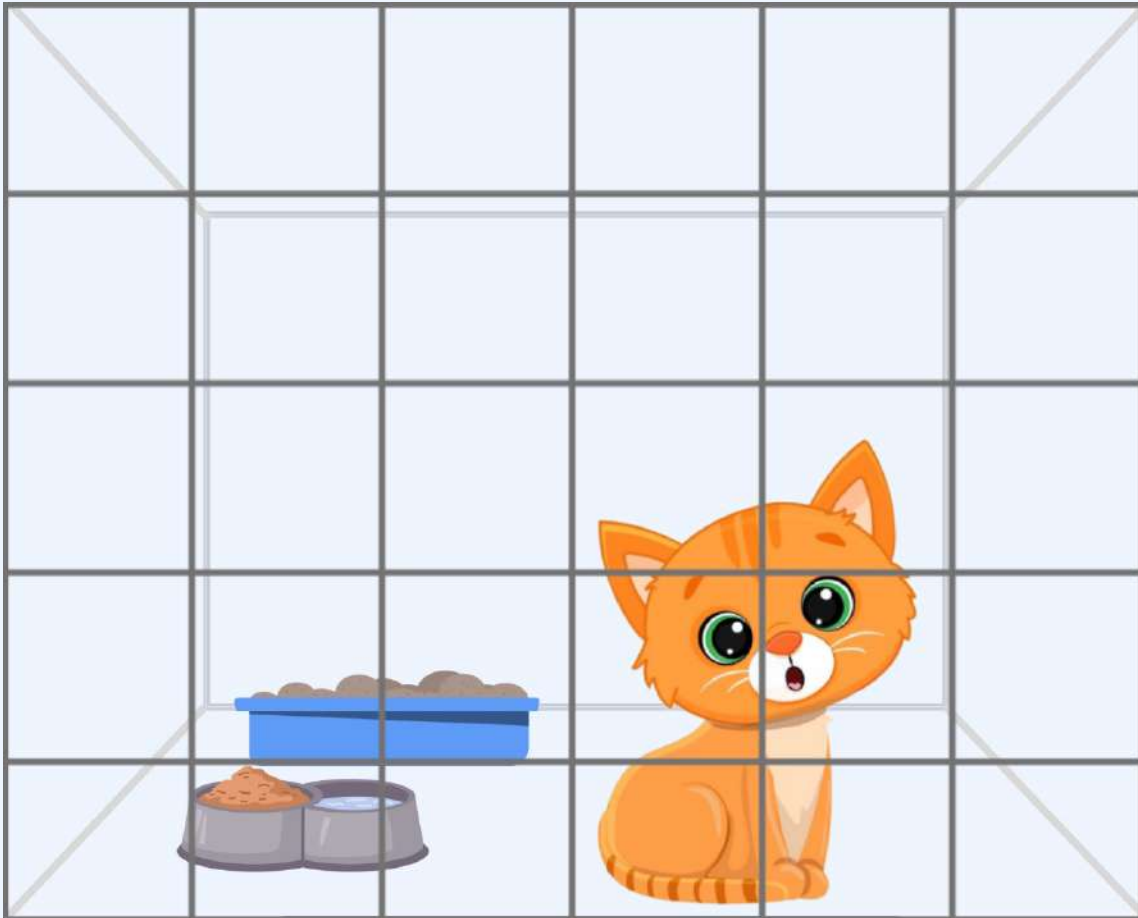
Visitor



Caretaker

## A Kitten's Shelter Journey

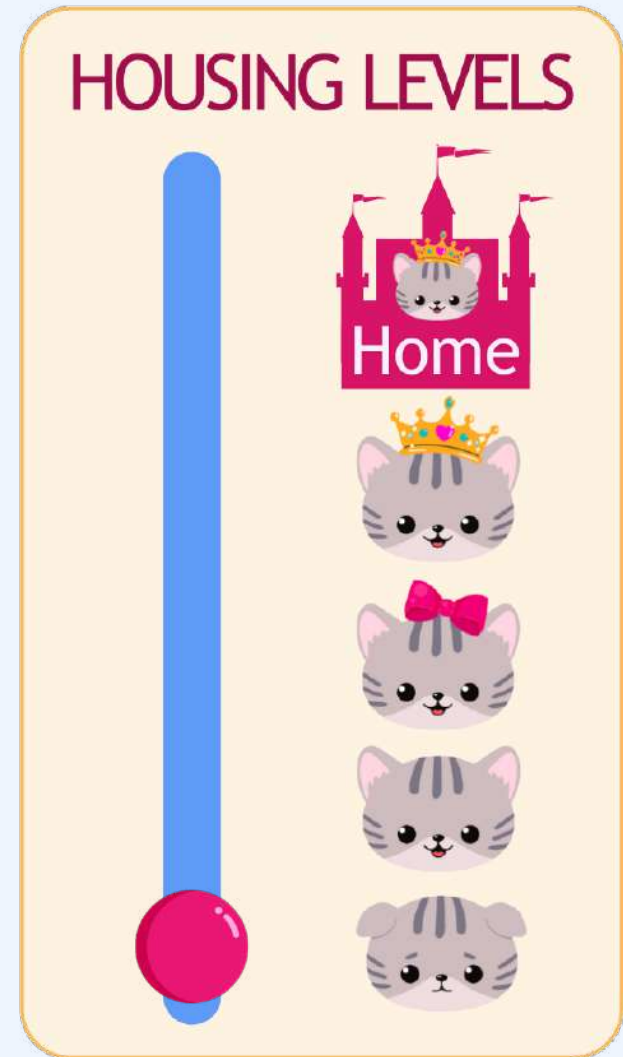
# Day 1 - Skittles Gets Housing





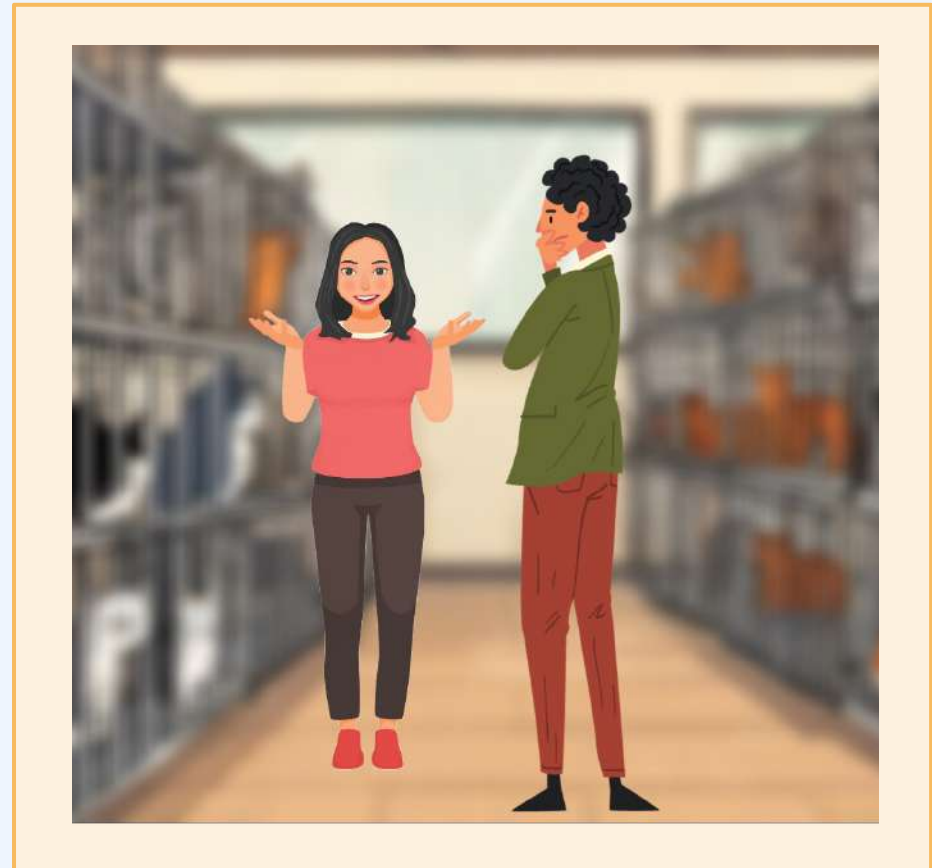


# Double Compartment Cage Housing

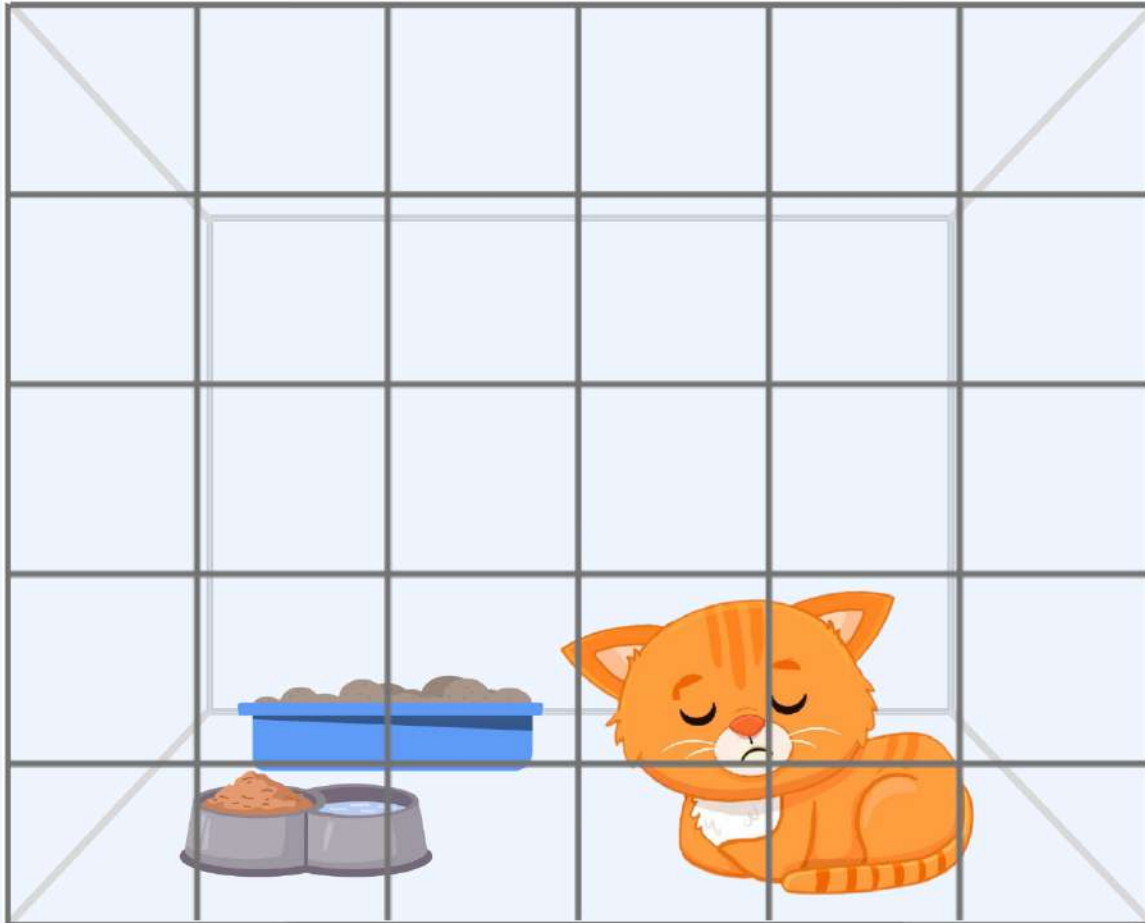


# Angie Asks for Portals

Angie asks her manager Philip if they can install portals to help the cats. He says that's their goal but it's not in the budget for this year. It's a no for now.

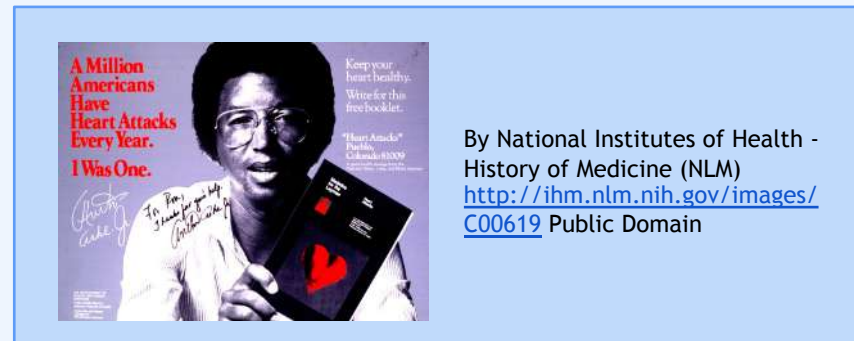


# Day 6 - Skittles Gets Sick



"START WHERE YOU ARE. USE WHAT YOU HAVE. DO WHAT YOU CAN."

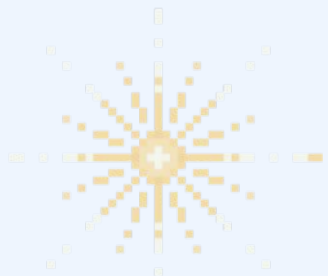
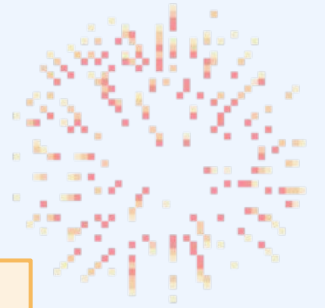
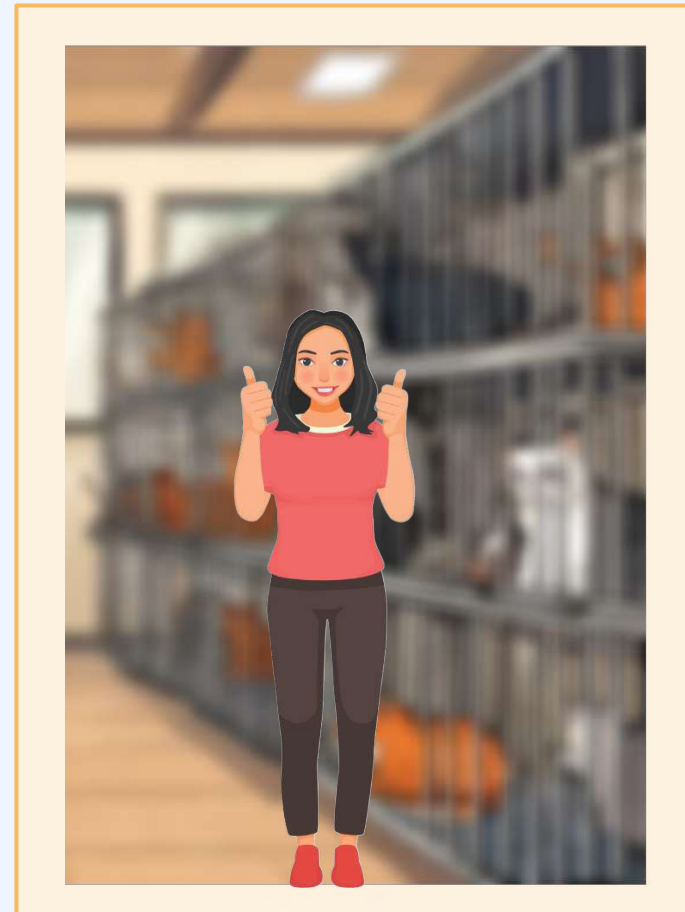
-ARTHUR ASHE



Easy Changes to Improve Cat Housing

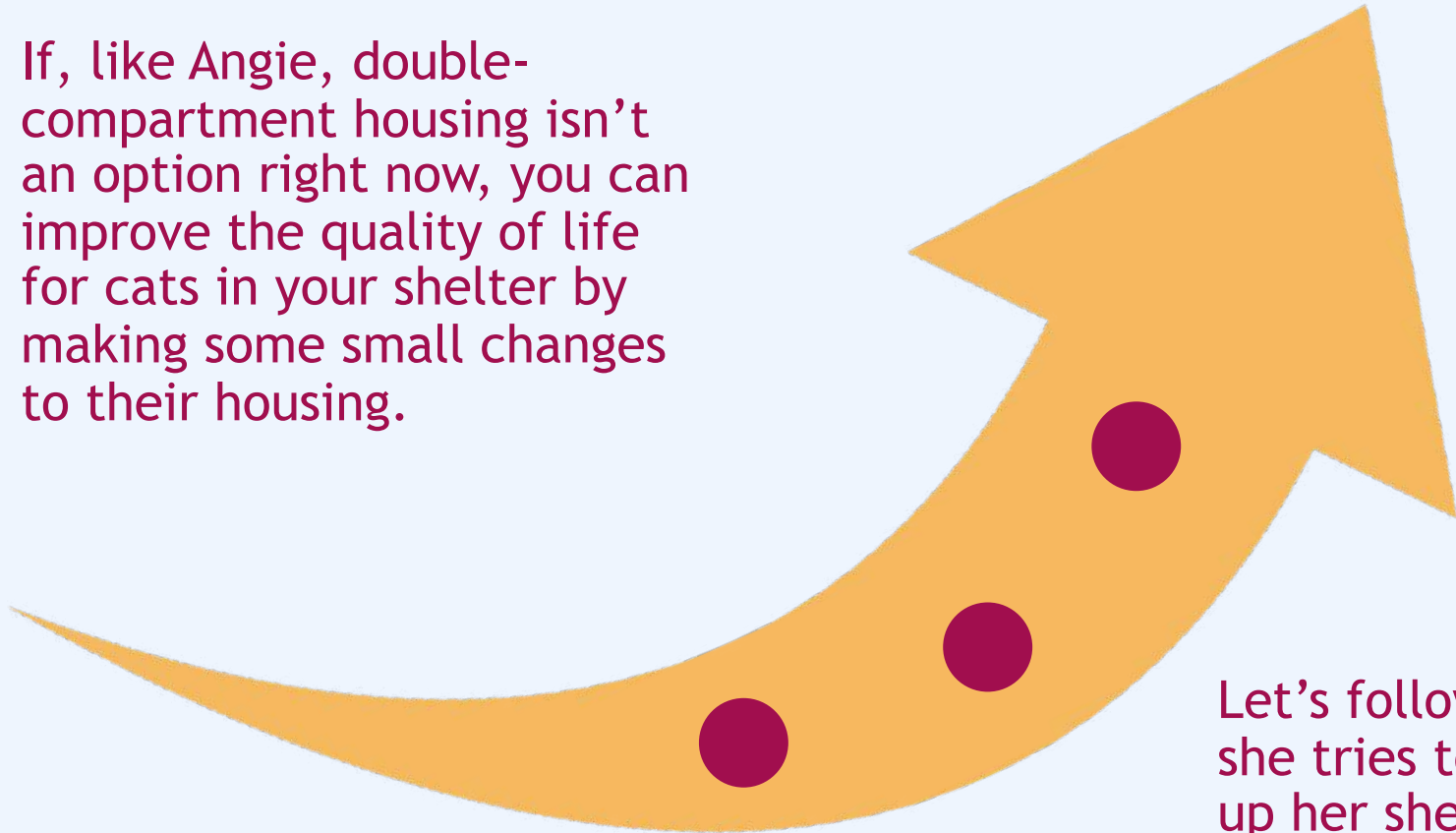
# Angie Gets Approval for Changes

Angie isn't giving up yet. She's found some low-cost ways to improve shelter cats' cages.



# Things You Can Do Now

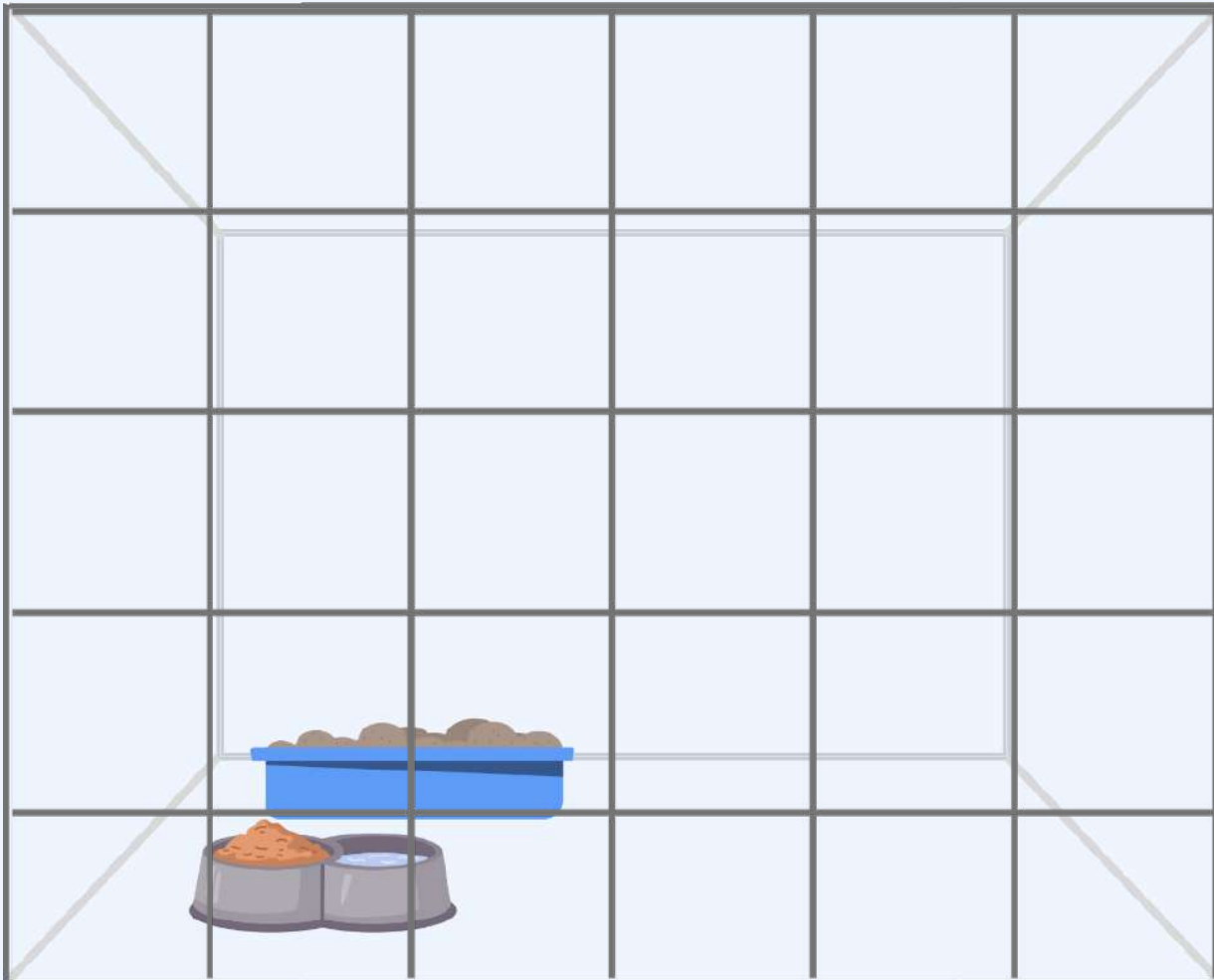
If, like Angie, double-compartment housing isn't an option right now, you can improve the quality of life for cats in your shelter by making some small changes to their housing.



Let's follow her as she tries to level up her shelter's cat housing, starting with Skittles.



# Cage Furnishings and Set-Up



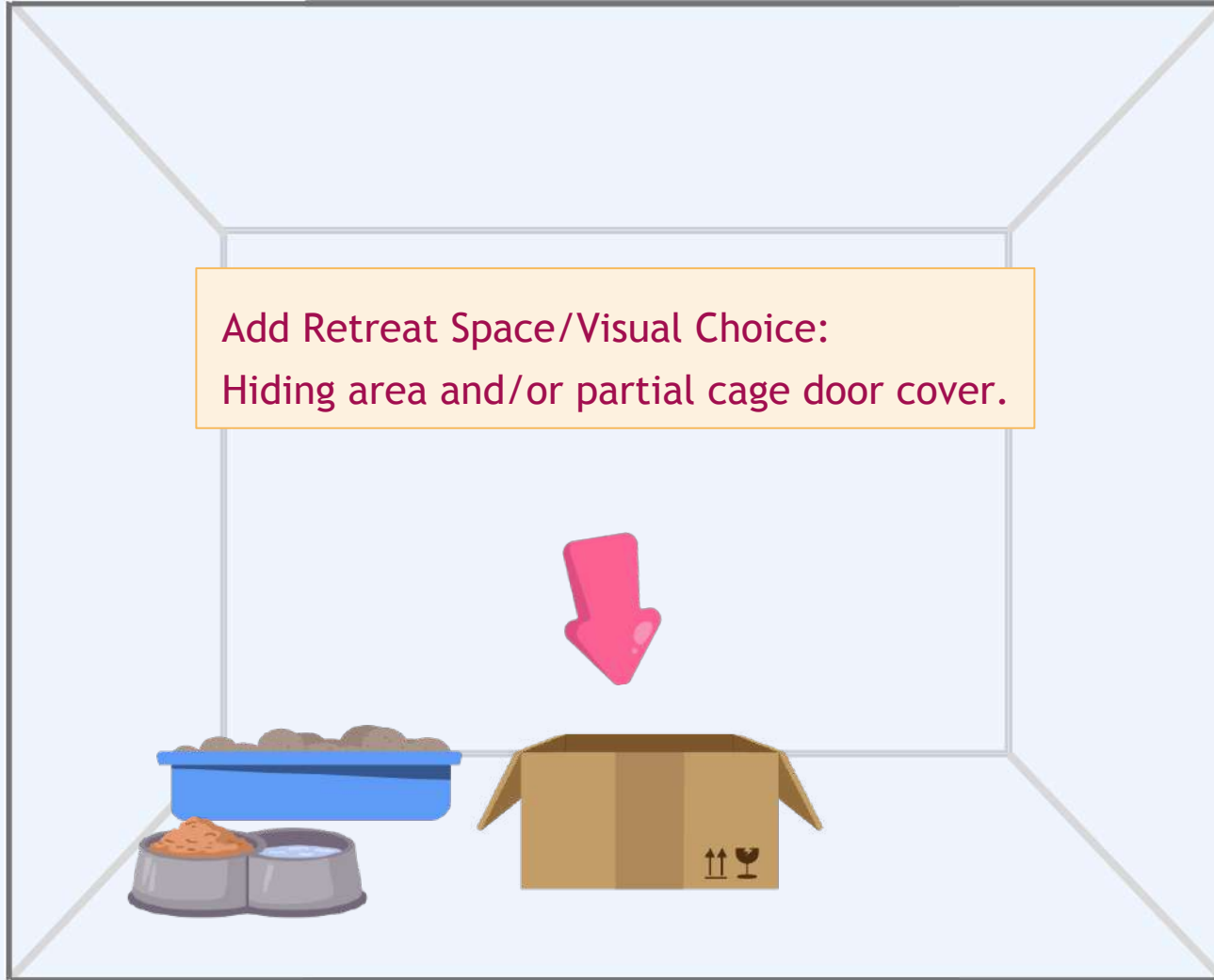
There's a lot you and Angie can do to make shelter cats happier with a few small changes.

## **IMPORTANT NOTE:**

The cage and objects in it on the next few slides are **not to scale**. Litterboxes are much larger in real life and take up much more space in the cage than shown, while still allowing for cats to have normal posture of standing up while using them.

# Angie Adds Retreat Space

Add Retreat Space/Visual Choice:  
Hiding area and/or partial cage door cover.

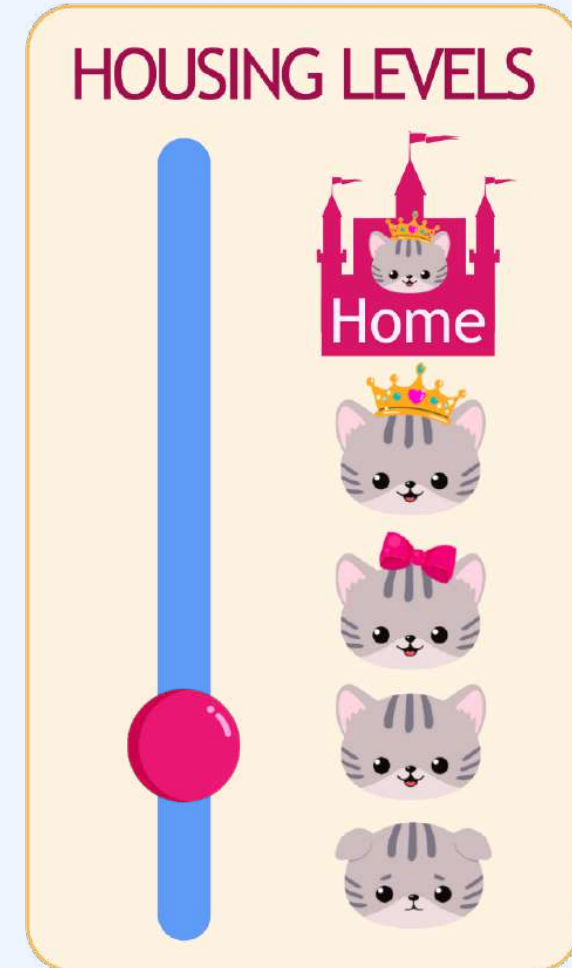
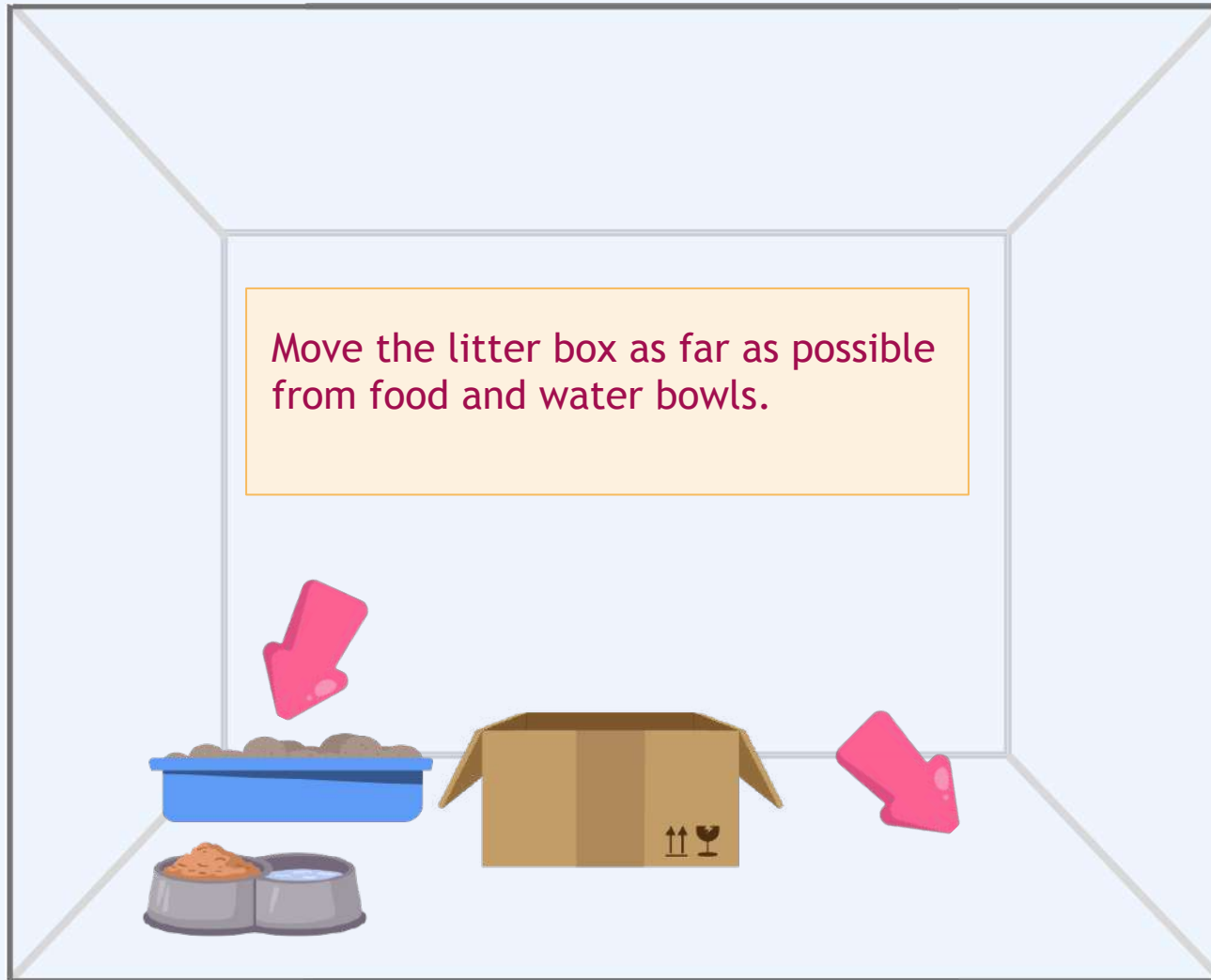


## HOUSING LEVELS

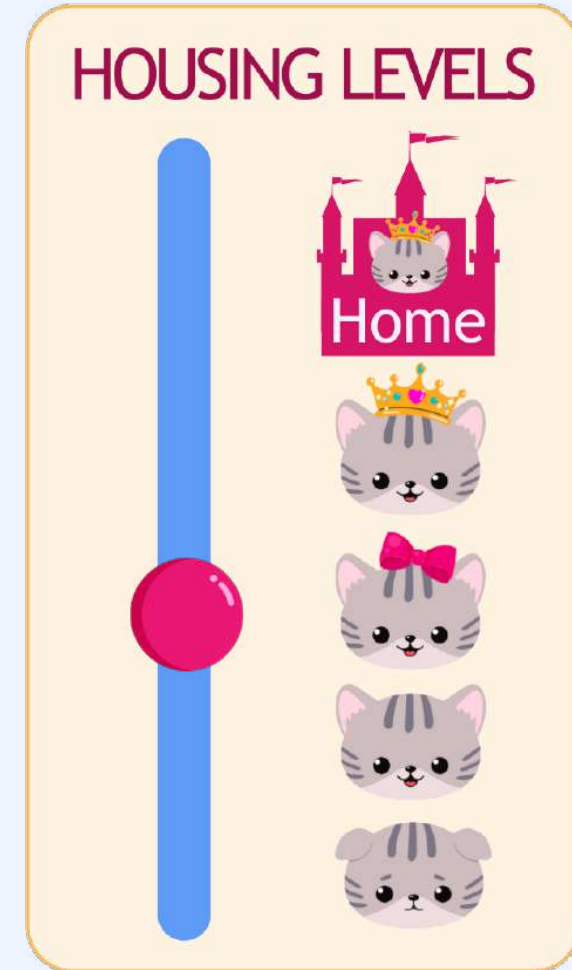
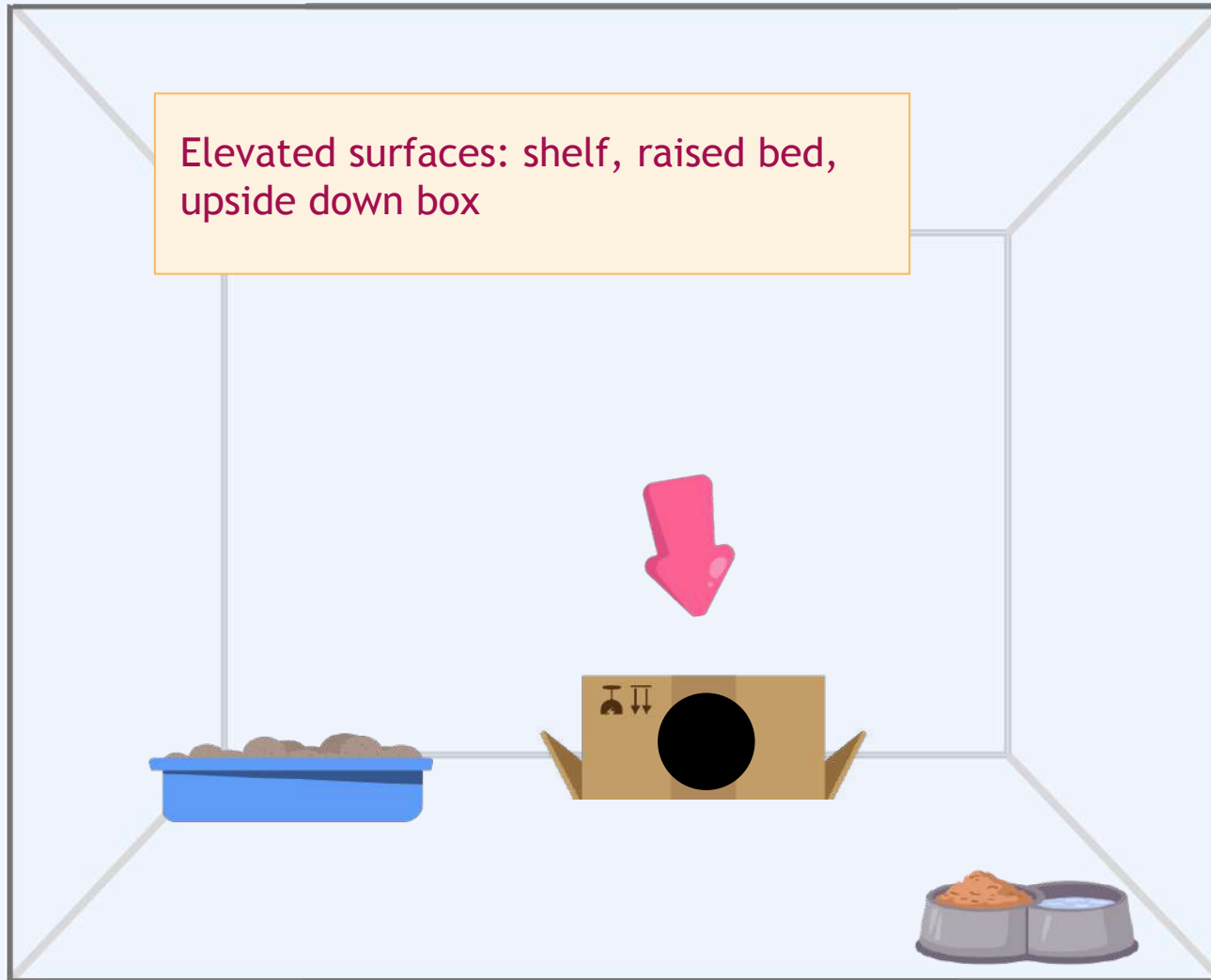




# Litter Box & Food Separated

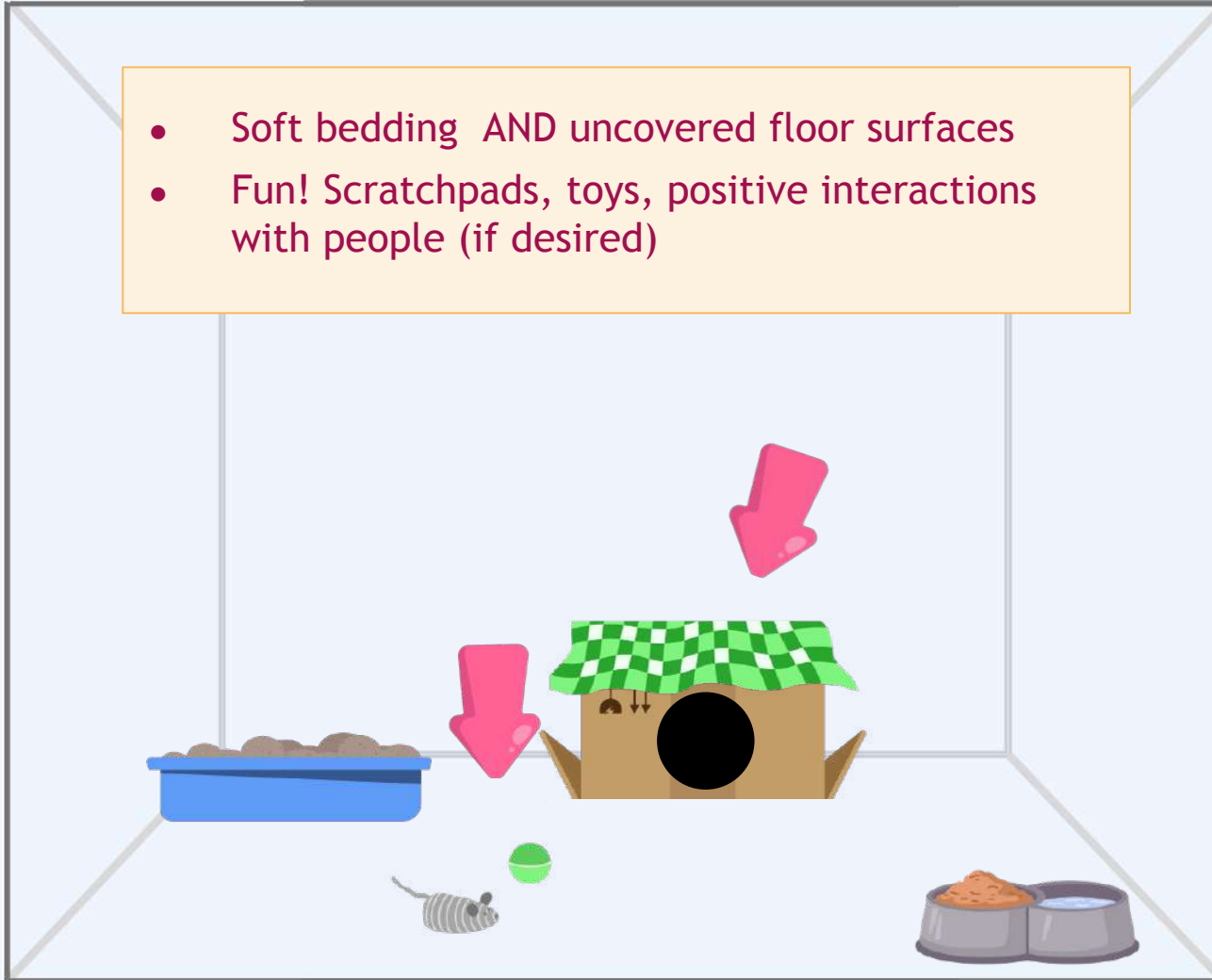


# Angie Adds Elevated Surfaces

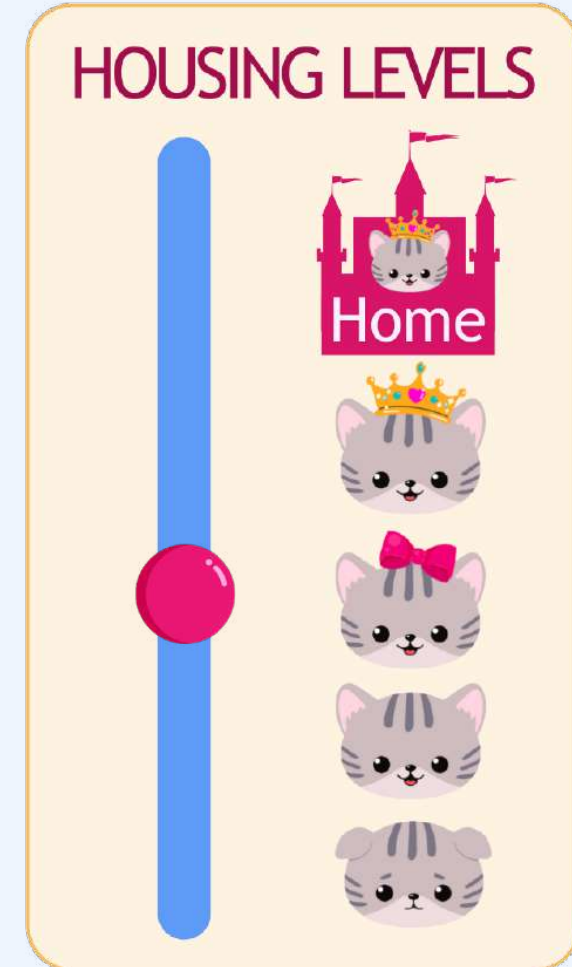


# Angie Adds Bedding and Toys

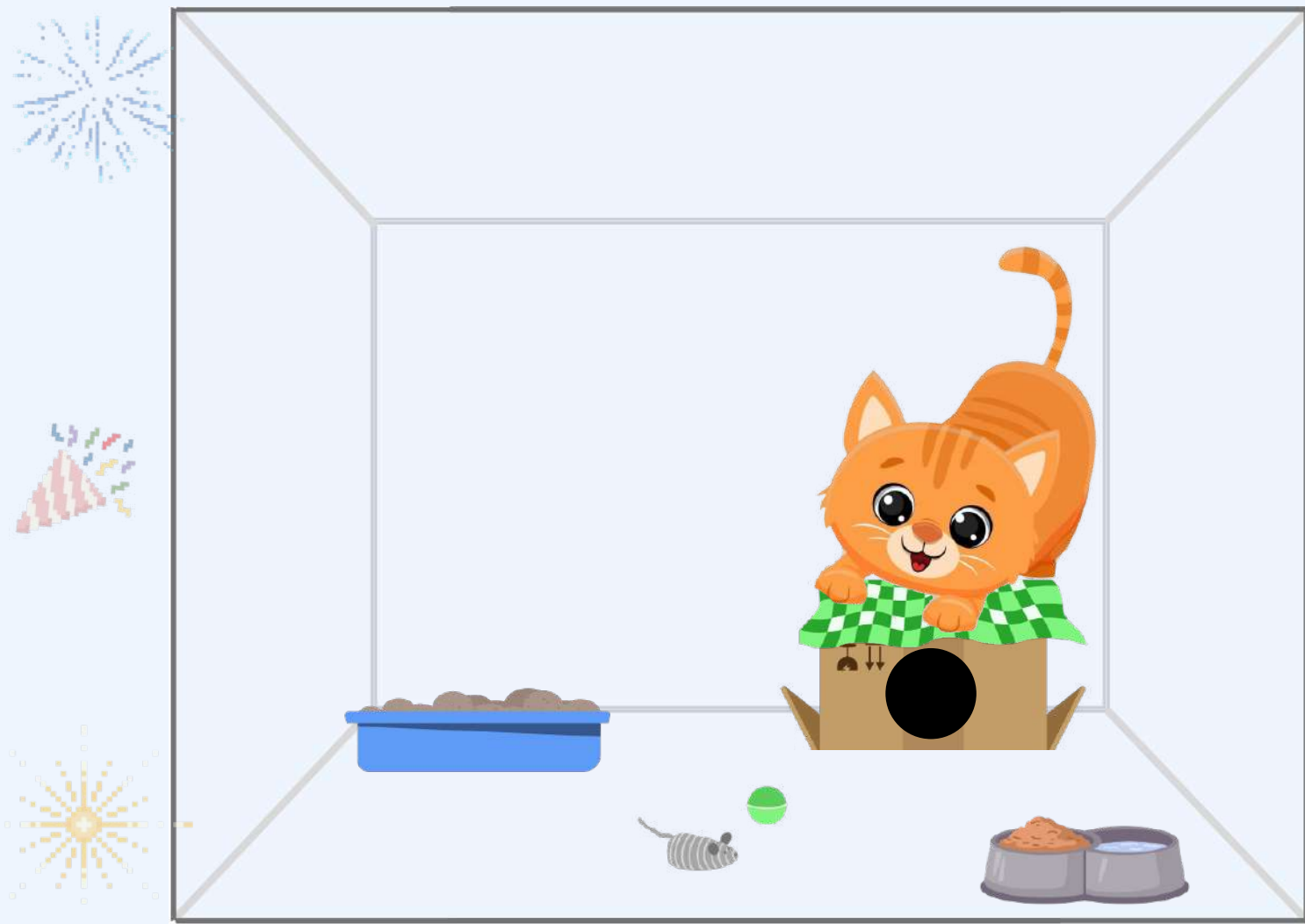
- Soft bedding AND uncovered floor surfaces
- Fun! Scratchpads, toys, positive interactions with people (if desired)



## HOUSING LEVELS



# Skittles Gets Improved Housing



**HOUSING LEVELS**

Home

# Make These and More DIY Accessories

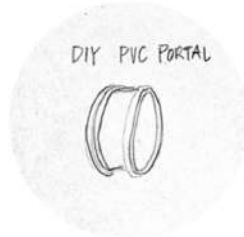


## FELINE HOUSING ACCESSORIES



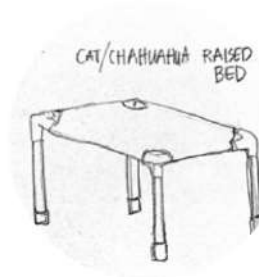
### Curtailments

Some privacy, please?  
I just need a little break  
To be my best self



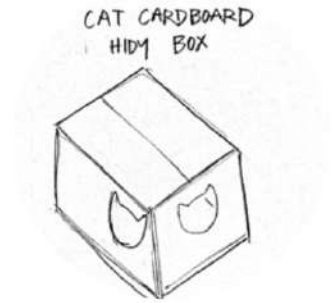
### PVC Portals

I love my portal  
Adopters will fall in love  
Now I can woo them



### Raised Beds

Up on my raised bed  
Down below my hidey-hole  
Raised bed, happy cat!



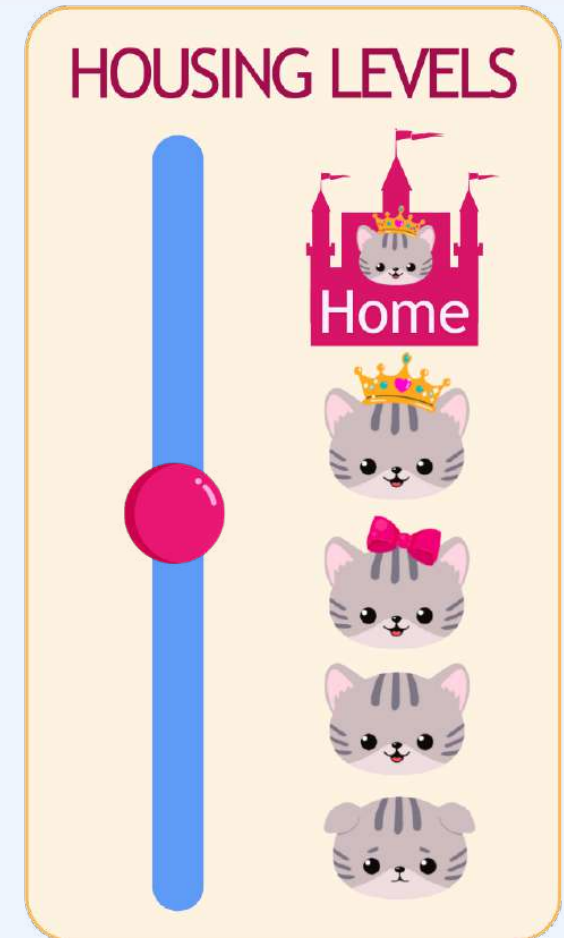
### Hidey Box

Peek-a-boo kitty!  
For sleeping, hiding, or play--  
Forts aren't just for kids!

See our website for step-by-step instructions for making these and more! [tinyurl.com/CatHousingProjectsDIY](https://tinyurl.com/CatHousingProjectsDIY)

# Day 13 Skittles Goes Home!

With all the great changes Angie made to cat housing, Skittles has been playful and happy, and recovered quickly from her URI. She was able to show off her cute personality in her improved housing and was adopted by a nice family today. Good housing contributed to her going home. **SUCCESS!**



## A Kitten's Shelter Journey

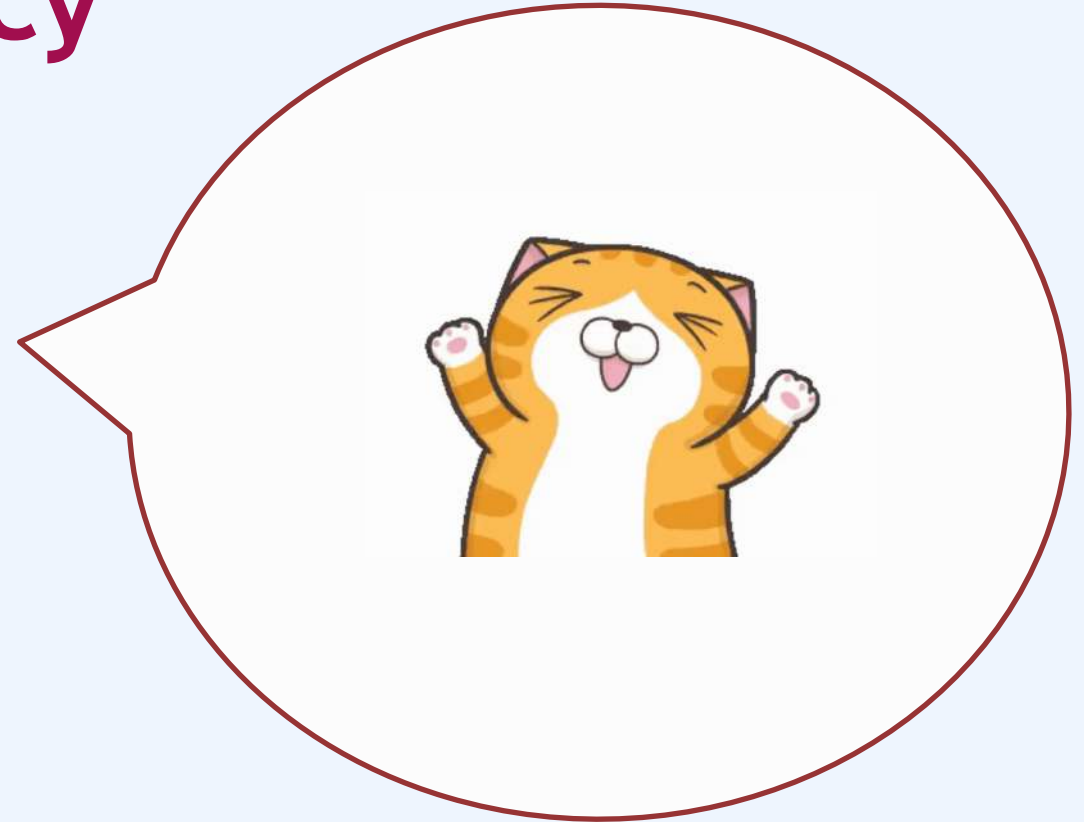
# Day 180 - Skittles' Legacy: the portals are installed!



Where are  
all the  
kittens?

# Day 365 - Skittles' Legacy

Not only is kitten season in full swing, but the shelter has adopted out more this year compared to last year!





# It's Your Turn - What Do You Think?

Now we're going to look at some different cat housing examples.

Applying what we talked about today, take a moment to answer the questions about each housing example shown in the chat.



# A. Triple-Compartment Cage



1. *What's good/not good?*
2. *What could we do to make it better?*

*(Write your answers in the chat.)*

# A. Triple-Compartment Cage



# B. Adoption Cages

1. *What's good/not good?*
2. *What could we do to make it better?*

*(Write your answers in the chat.)*



# B. Adoption Cages



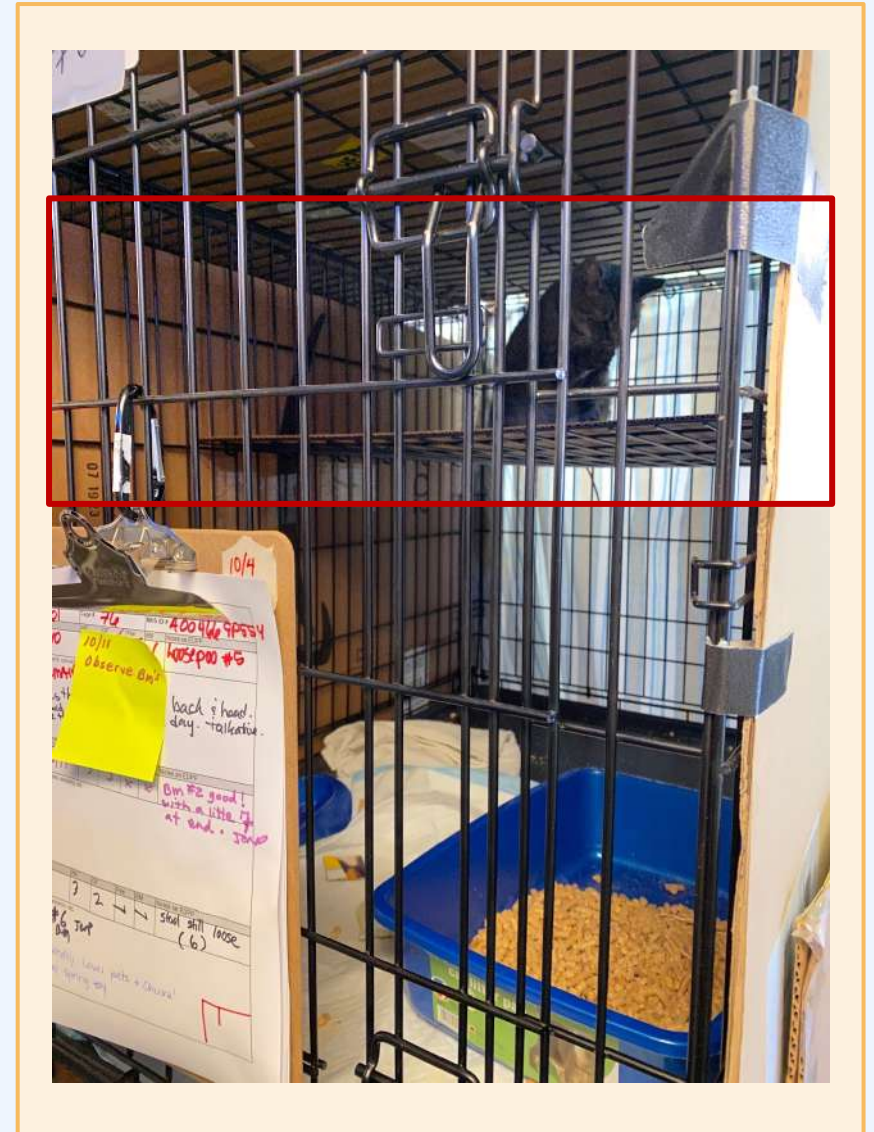
# C. Emergency cat housing: wire popup crate

1. *What's good/not good?*
2. *What could we do to make it better?*

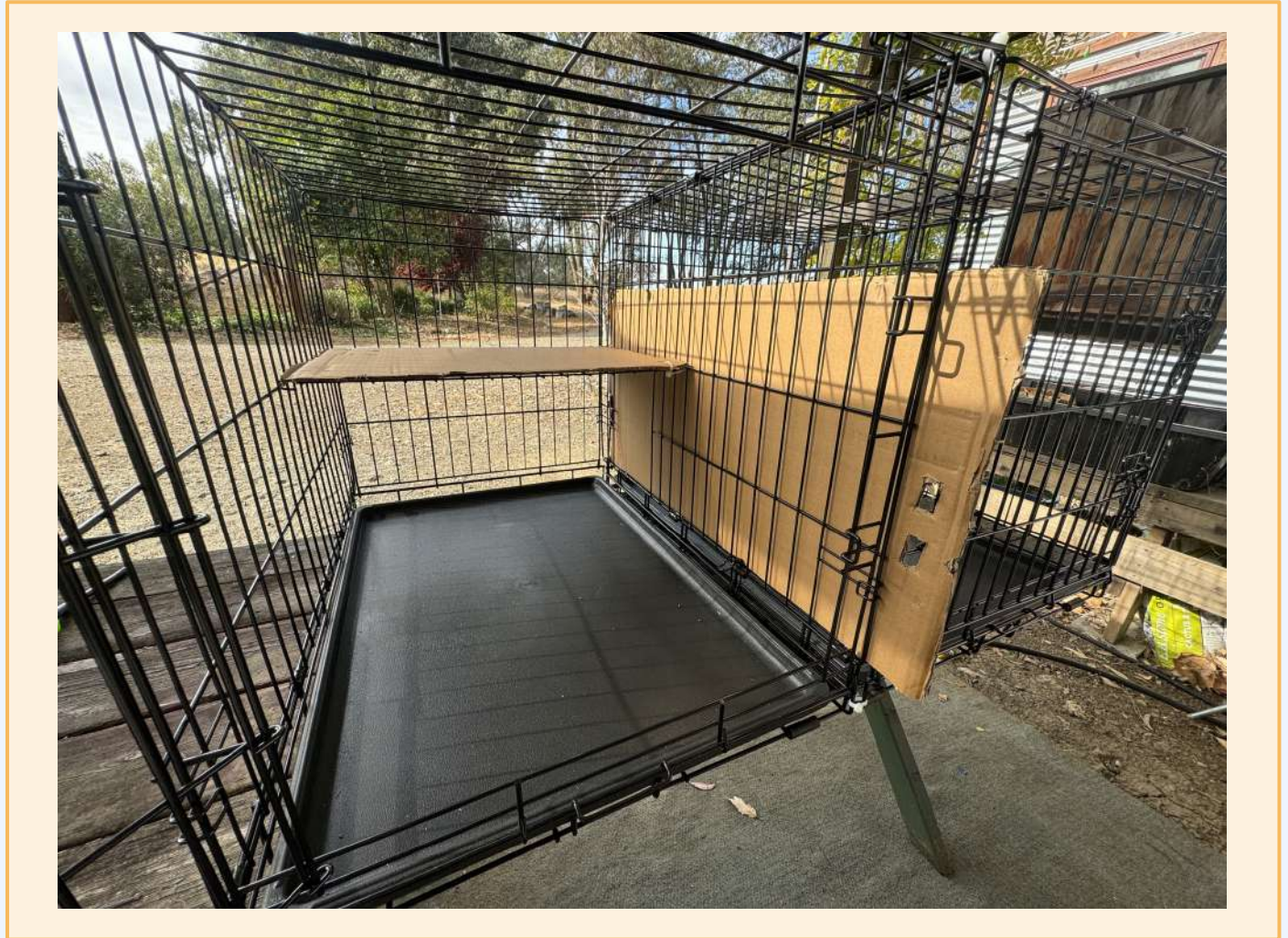
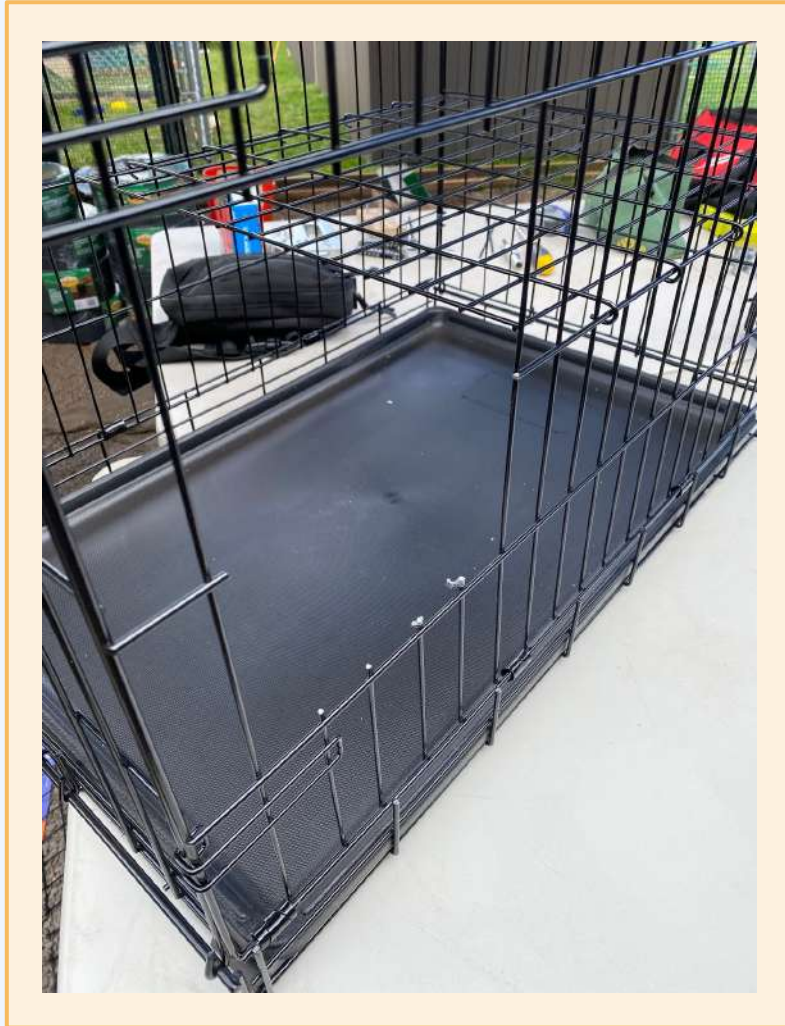
*(Write your answers in the chat.)*



# C. Wire Popup Crate



# C. Wire Popup Crate





# C. Wire Popup Crate



# Resources

**DIY projects for feline housing:**

**[tinyurl.com/CatHousingProjectsDIY](https://tinyurl.com/CatHousingProjectsDIY)**

**Single compartment cage setup video:**

**[tinyurl.com/SingleCompartmentSetUpVideo](https://tinyurl.com/SingleCompartmentSetUpVideo)**

**Double compartment cage setup video:**

**[tinyurl.com/DoubleCompartmentSetUpVideo](https://tinyurl.com/DoubleCompartmentSetUpVideo)**

# Resources

**California portal consultations and grants:**  
[tinyurl.com/CA-PortalGrants](https://tinyurl.com/CA-PortalGrants)

**Cat portals info sheet/installation info:**  
[tinyurl.com/PortalInfoSheet](https://tinyurl.com/PortalInfoSheet)

# Q&A



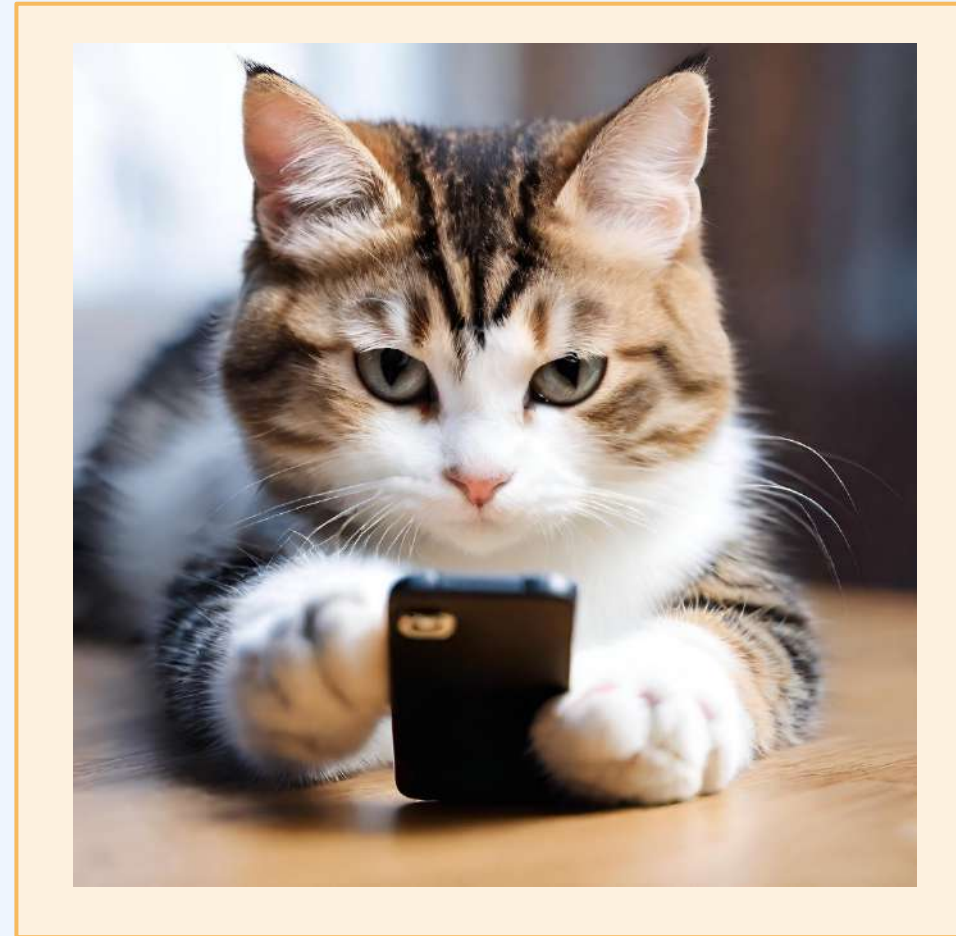
# Thank You and Follow Up

Check out the discussion board on Maddie's University or contact our experts by email:

**Becky Stuntebeck, DVM**  
[rstuntebeck@ucdavis.edu](mailto:rstuntebeck@ucdavis.edu)

**Denae Wagner, DVM**  
[dcwagner@ucdavis.edu](mailto:dcwagner@ucdavis.edu)

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Check out our  
Introductory Online Course:  
Level Up Your Cat Housing  
[tinyurl.com/OnlineCourseCatHousing](https://tinyurl.com/OnlineCourseCatHousing)



## Is Your Shelter Ready for the New Era of Care in California?

Thanks to groundbreaking veterinary telemedicine and vaccine legislation, you can ring in 2024 with fewer restrictions around who can provide essential care and how, freeing up your team to more easily meet medical needs in the shelter or community.

1/24/24 at 10 am PST  
Register here:

[Tinyurl.com/TMVX-Info](https://tinyurl.com/TMVX-Info)



# Telemedicine and Vaccine Clinics in California:

*What Shelters Need to Know About Legislative Updates for 2024*



**Join us for a free online webinar on 1/24/24 at 10 am PST**

Ring in the new year with updates on reduced restrictions for who can provide essential care!

**Register to attend live or to watch later on-demand:  
[Tinyurl.com/TMVX-Info](https://tinyurl.com/TMVX-Info)**

### Our experts:

**Bruce Wagman, Attorney**  
Lead Counsel  
San Francisco SPCA  
Shelter PALS Program

**Cindi Delany, DVM**  
Director of Online Learning  
Maddie's® Million Pet Challenge  
UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program

Presented by Maddie's® Million Pet Challenge and the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine's Learniverse

## Back Where They Belong - An online solution-sharing summit to get animals home faster, easier, better

Our shelters are filling with stray animals — animals who have been separated from their people, their home, their habitat. Animals who very well may have been living their best lives before they appeared in the corner of our kennel card.

Join us to hear staff from the frontlines share how they're getting animals back where they belong faster, easier, and better... and how you can too.

February 21 & 28  
9 a.m.-2 p.m. PT



Register here:

[tinyurl.com/BackWhereTheyBelongReg](https://tinyurl.com/BackWhereTheyBelongReg)

# back where they belong

An online solution-sharing  
summit to get animals home  
faster, easier, better

**Feb 21 & 28 9-2 p.m. PT**

