

CAT ENRICHMENT OVERVIEW

Pasado's Safe Haven Cat Enrichment Program is designed to provide a more varied experience for our Sanctuary residents, making their stay more comfortable and enjoyable. Interacting with Cats in activities that they enjoy can make them happier, less anxious, and more adoptable!

We have put together this binder so volunteers can easily find things to do with our cats, and to identify specific activities that are particularly beneficial for each cat, otherwise known as *targeted enrichment*. Pasado's staff will maintain this binder weekly, adding and editing sheets.

Always ask a staff member prior to beginning any enrichment activity. Review the activities on the enrichment sheet before working with a cat/room. Upon completion of your session, **please be sure to write down what you worked on and in which room, please leave comments so we can monitor the progress and see what works well for each room/cat.**

Below are descriptions of the activities you will find in this binder (check each room's sheet to be sure that these activities are listed, not all activities will be appropriate for all cats/rooms).

Choice-Control environmental enrichment is all about choice control and options. Having a choice gives a cat control if they are given a choice to control their own environment and behavior you will see positive and happier behavior.

Play- Observe-Record-Adjust

- **LASER POINTER:** Laser Pointers are a great way to engage a cat's natural hunting instincts.
You will Need: a Laser pointer and a soft toy (something the cats can pick up and sink their claws into)
Where: Enrichment closet
How Long: 20 minutes max.
To Play: zigzag the beam in front of the cat and up and down the walls, across the floor. Cats follow at different speeds, so make sure you aren't moving too fast for the cat to see. Periodically, land the beam on the soft toy, encouraging the cat to "catch" their "prey".
The play session endings are as important as their beginnings. Instead of ending abruptly, gradually slow down the beam until it finally comes to rest on a soft toy.
- **WAND PLAYING:** Wands are great for imitation hunting and getting cats used to being near people.
You will need: Any type of wand.
Where: Enrichment closet wall
How Long: 15-20 minutes, it is okay to play longer if the cats are really interested.
To Play: Use the wand to drag the end of the string along the ground. Varying speed and frequency of the string is a great way to get cats interested. Many cats like to hide behind structures and watch the string/feather go by until they feel confident enough to jump out and catch it. Once the cat has caught the string/feather, let them hold it for a moment, then wiggle it around. This imitates the wiggle of prey, and the cats will attack with vigor! Low to high simulate a low flying butterfly, bug, bird on the ground, Let them catch prey walk away with it - drop it on their own -repeat. Don't ever fling the toy toward any cat; move it back and forth in front of them, drag it away from them occasionally, and lightly draw it back toward them to re-engage.

- **PETTING/BRUSHING:**

- **Brushing:** Only a few cats will tolerate being brushed, ask a caregiver and we will be happy to direct you towards the right cat.

- Brushes are located in enrichment closet.

- Petting:** The places cats enjoy being petted are those where their scent glands are concentrated. When you pet a cat in these areas, you're making him feel wonderfully content. And you're also helping him to mark you with his special scent, which makes him even happier.

- Base of the chin. Rub your cat gently along the underside of the chin, especially where the jawbone connects to the skull. You'll likely get the purr-motor running.
 - Base of the ears. Like the area underneath the chin, this spot is great for scent-marking. When your cat bumps his head against you — this is called "bunting" — he's marking you as his own.
 - Cheeks behind the whiskers. Hit this spot right and you can often get your cat to show his pleasure by rotating his whiskers forward.
 - Base of the tail. I call this "Elevator Butt." A gentle caress down the back with pressure at the base of the tail. Repeat, repeat, repeat!

- **TREAT PUZZLES:** Please check with a caregiver for any dietary restrictions before you begin. be cautious too many treats too close to dinner time, may spoil their appetites.

- See print out on treat puzzles in the Overview tab.

- **CATNIP SPRAY OR BOXES:** We have a supply of low walled cardboard boxes in the enrichment closet. catnip and spray is also located in the enrichment closet. Shake loose catnip or pump a few squirts of spray in each box, place them around the room, cats will/ can share boxes but watch for any signs of aggression, you may need to add boxes if you see any.

- **READING:** Awesome for all cats, reading aloud helps the scared nervous cats get used to people as well as different voices. Some of the friendlier cats may even sit on our lap while you read.

- We have several books in the enrichment closet or bring your own.

- **BOXES/FORTS:** We usually have a supply of boxes around just ask and we will find you one. Set a box or two out in the room, either upright or on its side. If you like you can put toys inside or cover with blankets or towels. You can stack, cut holes in them or even tape them together, be as creative as you want.

- **MUSIC:** Great all rooms

- CD's: several cat music cd's are available. - Bird Nature sounds limit to 15-20 minutes at a time.

- radio: Classical Music- NPR-

- All music should be off at night.

Other /trick training: Activities not listed on the daily enrichment sheet, including:

- **clicker training:** see tab marked clicker training

- **Walking cats on harness and leash:** Ask caregiver for instructions.

- **Flavored ice cubes:** Many of our cats love flavored ice cubes. These are made by mixing canned food with water. A supply of ice cubes can be found in the freezer in the Enrichment Room at Old Barn.
- **Paw de-sensitizing:** Help our cats have a better experience when it is time for their monthly nail trimmings - when you are with them just touch or gently, briefly hold their paws and reward with treats and/or praise.