**The Importance of Cat Enrichment**

Even with the budget and space limitations that animal shelters face, we can provide cats with ways to express their natural cat behavior by starting a basic feline enrichment program.

**Enrichment, at a minimum, is a way to meet both the mental health and emotional needs of cats at HAWS.**

**Benefits of Enrichment**

By reducing stress and creating more confident, happy cats in our shelter, we can improve a lot of things, from making staffs jobs easier to having less cats in our care.

The following page has examples of how we (staff and volunteers) can provide the cats and kittens in our care the items and experiences they need to be

emotionally strong and healthy during their stay with us at HAWS… and carry with them into their forever homes.

**Sound:**

* Using a “white noise” machine or radio to cancel out extra shelter noises, providing soundtracks intended for cats
* Using a pleasant, soft tone of voice when interacting with the cats
* Placing plush or soft items (stuffed animals, blankets) in the environment to absorb noise

**Sight:**

* Creating interesting settings for the cats to enjoy, such as a bubble machine or a television playing a video intended for cats
* Providing moving toys that can be seen by the cats
* Playing with a wand toy outside the kennel for a group of cats

**Smell:**

* Placing novel smells alongside toys
* Providing catnip
* Giving scratching posts or blankets to allow collection of a cats scent
* Using pheromone products such as Feliway to provide relaxing and secure scents

**Taste:**

* Ensuring that bowls are clean with no residue or old food
* Offering food as treats
* Offering new flavors of treats and foods

**Touch:**

* Providing a variety of soft textures
* Regularly changing soiled or wet bedding
* Giving cats access to different toys for a new tactile experience