

Foster Focus

An American couple introduces feline fostering to Japan.

By Cimeron Morrissey

Susan Roberts and David Wybenga anticipated that moving to Japan to teach English for a year or two would be a life-altering adventure. The Michigan couple expected to be awed by the ornate temples and bustling train stations, but what changed their lives was that which lived in the shadows of these iconic structures: countless homeless cats and kittens in need of help. The couple's adventure has morphed into a 16-year odyssey that led them to create Japan Cat Network, one of the country's largest fostering, rescue and trap-neuter-return (TNR) organizations that's changing the way the Japanese people address their homeless cat challenges.

"We saw many cats around town that were in various stages of poor health," says Roberts who lives with her husband Wybenga in Hikone, a town in central Japan. "It was shocking to us that the community could completely ignore what seemed to us such an obvious problem."

****Get the June 2009 issue of CAT FANCY to read the full article.****