

EVERY CHANGE STARTS WITH US

WE STARTED IN THE CAT'S HOUSE

On Friday, April 12, 2024, the sixth-graders of the Šmarje pri Jelšah Primary School, attending the BFF (Best Friends Forever) club, took a train to Celje. We visited the Cat's House. We notice a lot of abandoned animals on the streets, which are treated badly. Therefore, we want to investigate this problem and find solutions. Shelters for abandoned animals are one of them. The closest to us is the Cat's House, a non-profit institution for cat care and awareness. It is a registered voluntary organization with the status of an organization operating in the public interest. It has been an active member of the EU Dog & Cat Alliance since 2014.

They received us kindly. We split into groups and thoroughly disinfected our hands and the soles of our shoes. Hygiene is very important and they make sure no disease spreads among the cats. Each group went to different rooms where we looked at and petted the cats, played with them and fed them. We liked that the cats were not aggressive or attacking. We also changed rooms and always disinfected our hands and the soles of our shoes. Since we were kindly welcomed to the Cat House free of charge, we brought toys, bowls or other accessories for the cats. After a good hour and a half, we said goodbye and left.



Figure 1: Cats resting, Mila

Mrs. Anja and other employees at the shelter told us many interesting facts. We found out that the shelter has six full-time caretakers, two full-time veterinarians, the head of the shelter, and a part-time employee for administrative and personnel matters. The shelter also cooperates with five to eight permanent volunteers - caretakers. Their number depends on the number of animals in the shelter.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO THE CAT'S HOUSE



There are currently 274 cats and four dogs in the care of the shelter. Not all animals are housed in the shelter, some are housed with temporary guardians. Last year, they took in 701 cats; 342 found new homes, and 253 were free-living cats, which were given veterinary care and returned to locations where they live and are regularly fed.

Figure 2: I'm sleepy. Zoja

After being admitted to the shelter, cats are placed separately in quarantine rooms for at least 14 days or until they are cured if they are sick/injured upon admission. After the quarantine period and the necessary veterinary care (deworming, vaccination, examination under WOOD's lamp, testing for leukosis and feline AIDS, sterilization/castration), they are placed in common rooms. They combine them according to age, character, and spatial

capacity. They try to establish harmonious groups, but they prefer to see the kitten go home immediately after completing the quarantine or wait for a home in temporary custody, where it gets the experience of (co)living in a household.

DAY IN THE CAT'S HOUSE



First thing in the morning, they feed all the animals and distribute morning medicine to those who are sick. Then they walk the dogs, work in the clinic, clean the cages and individual rooms, socialize with the animals and check their well-being. They ensure that the washing machines, dryers and dishwashers are always busy. They respond to calls in the field when necessary. Upon arrival, the afternoon teams carry out a visit, and then the afternoon walk with the dogs follows. They continue working around the premises, disinfecting dirty toilets and shovels, and taking away garbage. They also have adoption appointments in the afternoon. When the entire shelter is cleaned, all the corridors are washed, evening feeding and medication follow, and the day ends with an evening walk of the dogs.

They are most affected by human irresponsibility in all its colours and forms. On the other hand, their greatest satisfaction is animals, their joy for life and their freedom from the banalities of everyday life. They say the best thing is when the animals find the home and the guardian they need.

Figure 3: Cutting claws, Monja

THE ANSWER IS IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND

They want to tell everyone, children and adults, that every change starts with us. Every individual can contribute to the kindness and beauty of the world for himself and other beings through his actions. If we understand that we all want to live peacefully, lovingly, in compassion, coexistence and understanding of each other and if we also live this understanding, the answer is in the palm of our hands.« (A. Ivakič)



Figure 4: Every change starts with us; Anja

It was a special day for us, full of emotions, even tears. We went home with the wish that every abandoned animal would find its place under the sun and someone who would love it. We are determined to take the message of the employees of the Cat's House to the world and start living by it today.