

LoveWay welcomes two rodent responders to the team

By LAUREN ZEUGNER
Associate Editor

Recently, Loveway Inc. a therapeutic riding center in Middlebury, lost Cole, its priceless 14-year-old cat. Soon after, staff realized they had a mouse issue on their hands.

A volunteer suggested LoveWay call Catsnip etc., a local non-profit that specializes in trapping, neutering and returning community cats.

According to Gail Monroe of Catsnip etc., the organization has trapped, neutered and returned 4,000 colony cats during the last five years. One of Catsnip etc.'s programs is "Rodent Responders." Monroe explained the program is for warehouses, personal barns, offices, "Just about anywhere that needs some rodent protection," Monroe said. "There are a lot of friendly cats that want to be outside."

Usually Catsnip etc. places two cats for a rodent responder request, but can do as many as five or six. There is no cost for the cats, who come fully vetted. They do need to be contained for about four weeks to become acclimated to their new home.

LoveWay Inc. acquired a sibling duo as its rodent responders. Monroe said the original owner had slated for the cats, who are about a year old, to go to the shelter when Catsnip etc. intervened. The two cats came from a colony and the home owner who cared for them had to move.

"The timing was perfect, absolutely perfect," Monroe said explaining Shelley Baker, executive director of LoveWay, called two days later looking for help.

When the cats arrived at LoveWay, Arica Freshour, volunteer coordinator, sent word out to LoveWay's volunteers asking for name suggestions. "We asked any

and all followers/friends of LoveWay to suggest names for us via email, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Approximately 60 people sent suggestions, including even a few of our riders whose parents/guardians gave them the exciting news and so they wished to participate as well," Freshour said in an email.

Three name combinations were then selected by staff and approximately 80 volunteers voted with the winning names being Piper and Jack.

The two join Pickles, LoveWay's other barn cat. Pickles was dumped on LoveWay's driveway a few years ago, pregnant with kittens. She quickly found a new home at LoveWay and all her kittens were adopted by volunteers and staff.

Pickles has ventured over to the new cat's crate to check them out. Freshour said the encounter was a friendly one. "... She knows



SIBLING DUO — Shown are Jack and Piper soon after their arrival at LoveWay. The two young community cats recently joined LoveWay's staff as "Rodent Responders," tackling a mouse problem in LoveWay's hay barn. The sibling felines came from Catsnip etc., who took the cats in after the homeowner who was caring for their colony had to move. (Photos provided)

they are there and they will all be able to interact with one another very soon. Pickles will be a great big sister," she said.

Jack and Piper are allowed to explore and find adventure in LoveWay's hay barn in order

to establish that area is their home.

Anyone interested in learning more about Catsnip etc.'s Rodent Responder program can send an email to contact@catsnipetc.org or call (574) 202-1996.