



corokitty

GIVE ME SHELTER

OPEN-SOURCE SHELTERS FOR FERAL CATS



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The care and control of feral cats is a major issue around the world. Here in the United States, there are millions of these cats trying to survive in brutal urban environments. They face many dangers outdoors and depend on humans for survival. Winters are especially harsh for cats as many lack a warm shelter and cannot survive.

Feral cats tend to group in colonies. Some of these colonies are fortunate to have a caretaker or group of caretakers that feed them, have them spayed/neutered, and look out for their health. None of this care is free so there is little money left to build shelters once food and vet bills have been paid. Shelters that are typically made for the cats are cobbled together in a completely utilitarian manner.

The purpose of this project was to take an open-source approach to design. Low cost and available materials were identified and paired together in a design that is durable enough for the outdoors and easy to make. A website was created to host the designs which are provided to caretakers via national advocacy groups including Alley Cat Allies.

Feral cat problem



Teaching local animal rescue groups



A local animal rescue group hosts a winter shelter event called ProjectWARM. Here they are being shown how they can utilize simple materials to make inexpensive yet functional shelters for the cats in their care.

The hexagon shelters shown were created by children with the help of a maker group in Virginia. They downloaded plans from the website and added a personal touch.

Corokitty website - DIY shelter plans

The Corokitty website (www.corokitty.com) hosts multiple plans for low-cost cat shelters. Alley Cat Allies, the nations leading advocate for feral cats, provides a link to Corokitty on their website. The website has been visited by over 15,000 people from over 20 countries proving their is a national and global desire to help homeless cats.



Corokitty

This design is the most expensive and complex. It uses \$10.00 in materials and is best done on a CNC.



Corokitty2

This design is less expensive at around \$7.00 for materials. It can be made at home with basic woodworking tools.



Corokitty3

This design is the least expensive using only \$5.00 in materials. It can be made with basic woodworking or craft tools.



Hexagon Caverns

This is similar to Corokitty best done on a CNC and around \$10.00 each to make.

TNR: ADDRESSING THE FERAL CAT ISSUE

TNR EXPLAINED

TRAP

After adequate preparations, including educating the community about the TNR process, colony cats are trapped using humane traps.



1

3

RETURN

After recovery from surgery, feral cats are returned to where trapped and are supplied with ongoing access to food, fresh water, and shelter.

2

NEUTER/SPAY

The captured cats are brought in their traps to a spay/neuter provider. Typically, TNR programs also provide vaccinations against certain diseases, like rabies.

EAR TIPPING

is the universal sign of a neutered feral cat. The procedure involves removing about 1/4" off the tip of the cat's ear (typically the left ear) while the cat is anesthetized for spaying/neutering; healing is rapid. The mark will help prevent unnecessary surgery, confinement, or euthanasia.

CAT & CAREGIVER NEEDS

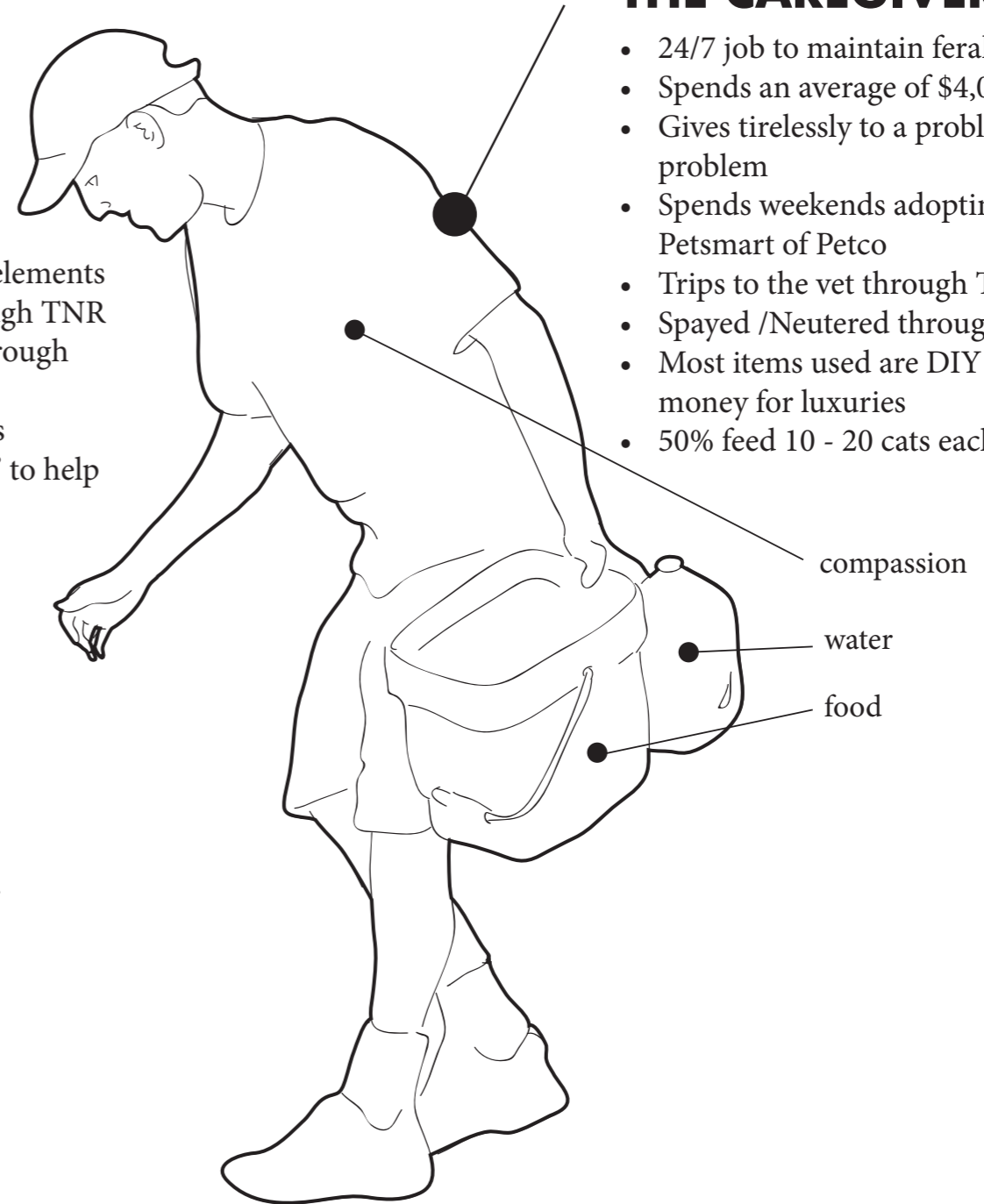
THE CAT

- Food & water
- Protection from the elements
- Trips to the vet through TNR
- Spayed /Neutered through TNR
- Safety from predators
- A place to call 'home' to help reduce roaming



THE CAREGIVER

- 24/7 job to maintain feral cat colony
- Spends an average of \$4,000 per year
- Gives tirelessly to a problem huge problem
- Spends weekends adopting cats through Petsmart or Petco
- Trips to the vet through TNR
- Spayed /Neutered through TNR
- Most items used are DIY as their is little money for luxuries
- 50% feed 10 - 20 cats each day



SHELTER ATTRIBUTES



feral cat needs



caretaker needs

Cost:
Caregivers have minimal funds. Finding volunteers is easy.

Space:
Cats sleep a maximum of two to a shelter. It should be no larger than 2' x 1' in width and length.

Weather:
The purpose of the shelter is protection from bad weather; therefore, it must be good for both the winter and summer keeping out rain and retaining heat.

Camouflage:
Doesn't need to blend in. Can be highlighted or made to hide in plain site.

Communicate:
For the promotion of TNR it is important that the shelter be a good representative of the cause.

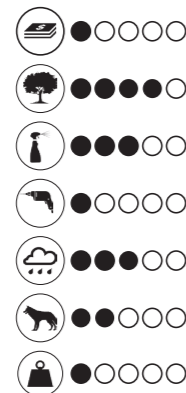
Safe:
Safety is of the utmost importance. However, cats will not typically use this shelter for safety. If they are in danger they will run or climb until the threat is gone.

Clean:
The interior doesn't need to be cleaned often, but should be easy to access at least twice per year.

Build:
Optimally it will take few tools and know-how. The more minimal the skill set required the more up-front work must be done.

Weight:
It must be light enough to carry and place with one person, but heavy enough to be stable. Cats won't trust it if it's not stable. Can be staked.

There are companies that make outdoor cat shelters; however, lack of funds means that most caregivers choose the Rubbermaid shelter as their yearly DIY project.



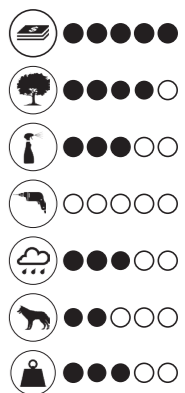
DIY Rubbermaid \$20.00



DIY wood \$50.00



Purchased \$80.00



Purchased \$120.00

HOMELESS CAT SHELTER ATTRIBUTES

Using simple materials Corokitty creates a strong structure that has the form and language for a cat house.

Tail provides a lock for the back piece allowing access to the interior.

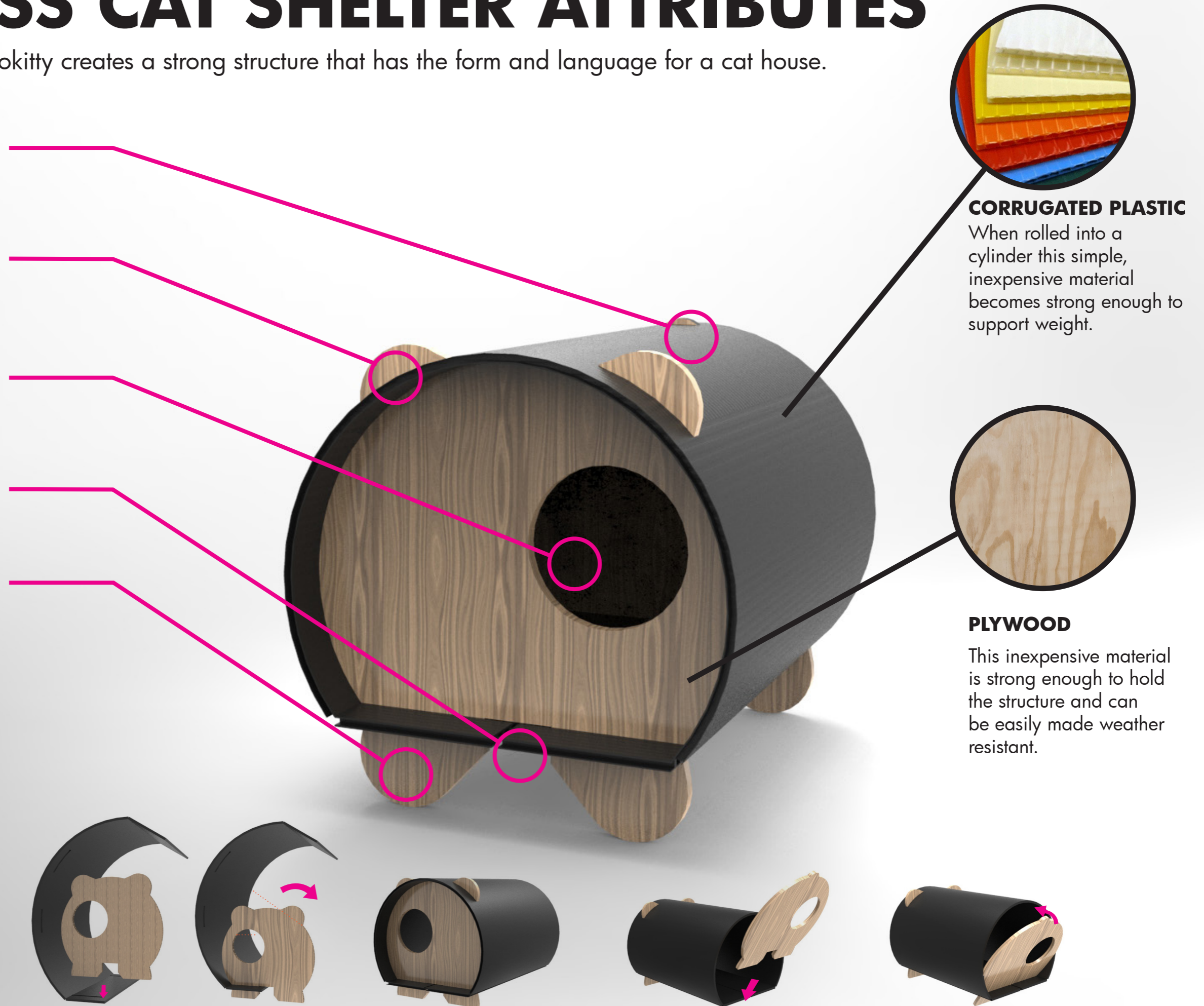
Ears help guide the outer shell during assembly and to hold the pieces into place.

Holes are large enough for cats but still small for predators.

Lip provides a ledge to enter the shelter and protects from rain.

Legs keep the shelter off the ground to keep the inside dry and warm. They also serve to anchor the shell during assembly.

This Corokitty2 shelter is made to be extremely easy to put together. All Corokitty shelters are designed to go together with no tools or fasteners.



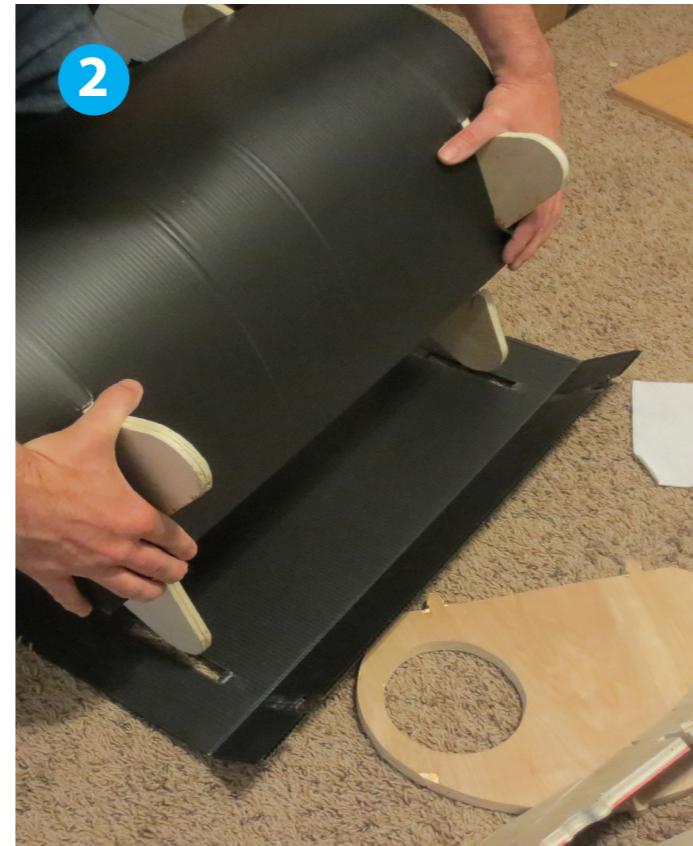
COROKITTY CAT SHELTER ASSEMBLY

Interacting with feral (community) cat rescue groups was important for this project. These photos show practice build sessions and prototypes being delivered for testing. Most caregivers found that their cats started using the shelters, but it did take a few days for the cats to feel comfortable using them.

1 Using flat materials means the shelters can be built in place. Here I'm delivering cat shelters to Tomball SOS.



2 Each slot in the plastic helps guide the frame and hold the pieces together. Rolling the plastic increases the strength.



3 A volunteer helps evaluate the ease of putting a Corokitty shelter together.



4 At Friends for Life animal shelter volunteers learn how to put a Corokitty together.



5 Volunteers apply what they learn assembling a Corokitty shelter.



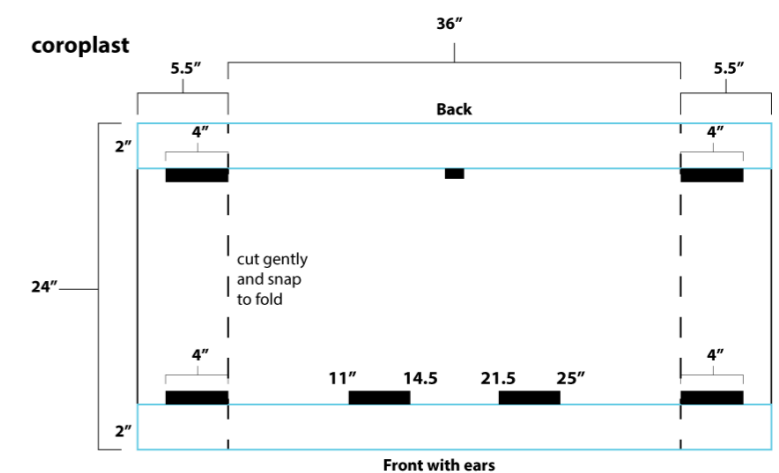
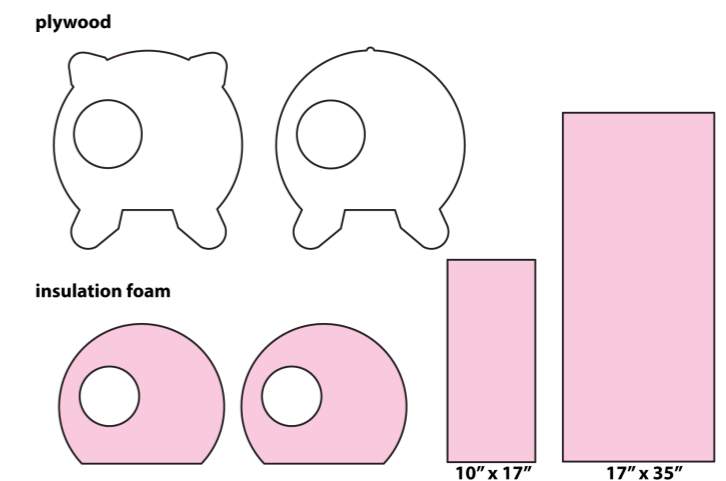
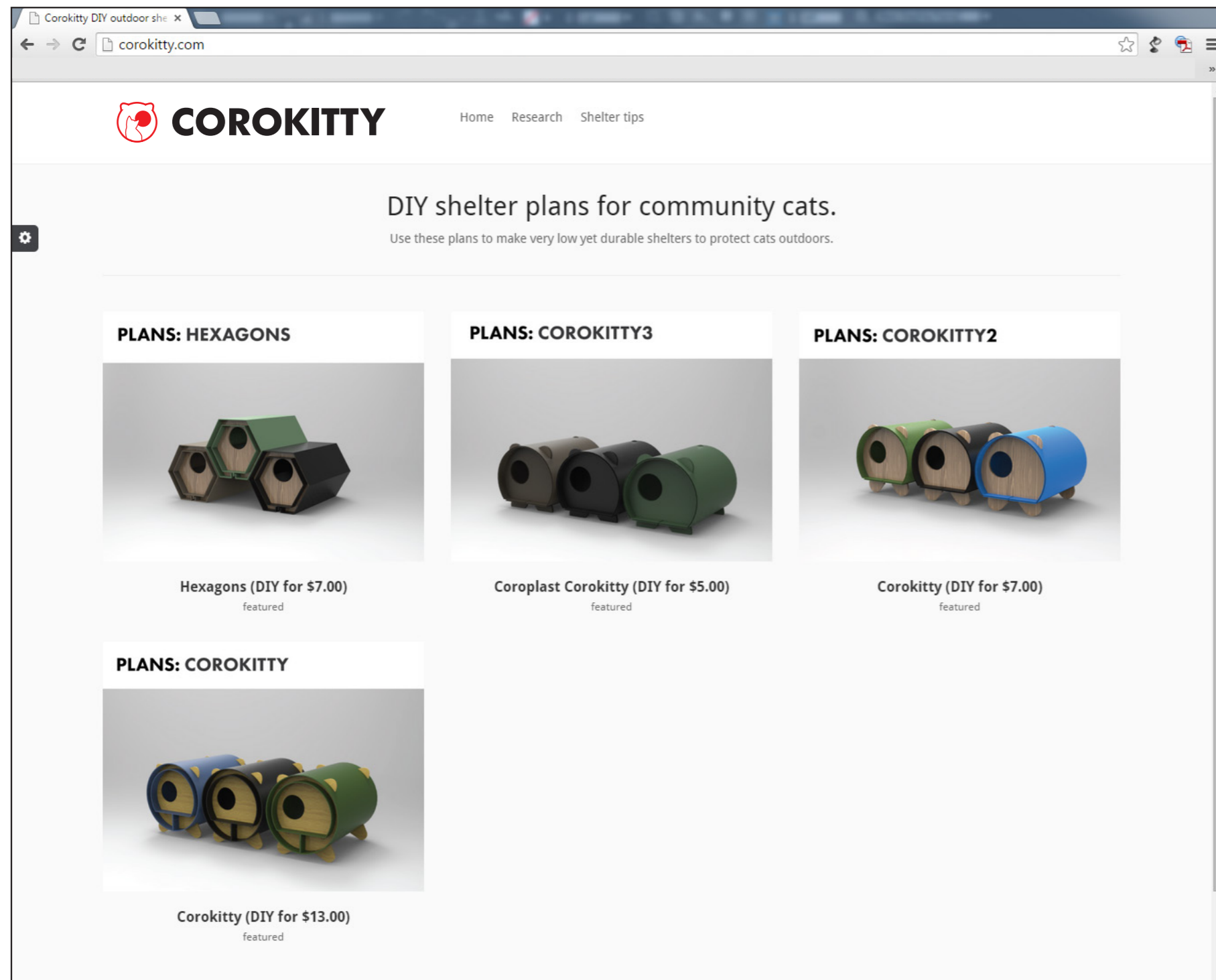
6 Volunteers learn how to make an all plastic Corokitty with do-it-yourself techniques.



COROKITTY WEBSITE

The Corokitty website (www.corokitty.com) hosts multiple plans for low-cost cat shelters. Future plans for this project include exploring the possibility of a production version that can be ordered as a kit or purchased from a pet supply store. Many people have indicated they would like to order one ready to put together.

Along with PDF downloads, the website provides caregivers with instructions and explanations to help them create their own shelters. This is a sample of the Corokitty2 instruction page.



SPECIAL THANKS

Each of these groups contributed advice, testing, and recommendations.
Without their help this project wouldn't have been possible.

