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## East End celebrates homes, garden, rescue

*Post staff report*

It's just one of those humble little Cincinnati streets that veers down toward the river from the street they used to call Eastern Avenue, now Riverside Drive. But the people who live on Strader Street have much to celebrate.

This small East End neighborhood boasts several newly renovated houses, and a community garden nearly a block long. It is also the site of the successful rescue of more than 60 "foreclosure" cats and kittens found abandoned at a Strader Street home after the owner was evicted.

Last Thursday, Strader Street neighbors, gardeners, rescuers and veterinarians gathered to celebrate the saving of the "Foreclosure Cat House," the installation of a new water line for the adjacent East End Veterans' Memorial Garden, the rescue of all the cats, a fund-raising project by nationally known artists creating multi-media portraits of the cats and the launch of a new adoption Web site at [www.ForeclosureCats.org](http://www.ForeclosureCats.org).

The house was so nearly destroyed by neglect and by the overwhelming number of sick animals, it was featured in a Business Week story about "foreclosure's filthy aftermath." Neighbors speculated that demolition was the only option.

"I had quotes from three wrecking companies," said Michael Bolan, who purchased the house from Fannie Mae after a bank foreclosure, and is hosting the celebration. "While the condition of the house was sound, the smell was horrific, and I thought it would be impossible to eliminate it."

But Bolan, who is fond of houses close to urban centers with open vistas, found a Cincinnati-based company, OdorXit, whose products are designed for such challenges. Now, Bolan says, the house has been saved and, with planned renovations, can be inhabited.

The rescue operation began when the cats were discovered by a rescuer in early May, apparently weeks

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after the evicted man walked away from his home without telling anyone about the cats and kittens trapped inside.

When the sick cats were discovered, several small rescue groups organized a rescue effort. A Web site, [www.ForeclosureCats.org](http://www.ForeclosureCats.org), was created to solicit donations, volunteers, and to accept foster and adopter applications.

More than 40 "foreclosure" cats and kittens are still looking for homes, and well-known artists around the country are helping. From Disney animators to greeting card artists and children's book illustrators, they are creating portraits of all of the foreclosure cats, and donating the work to raise funds and help find adopters.

The portraits and artists are featured on the newly revamped [www.ForeclosureCats.org](http://www.ForeclosureCats.org), along with photos of the cats, each of their stories, adoption and foster applications and a donations link.

The new pride of Strader Street neighbors is the block-long community garden - the East End Veterans' Memorial Garden - sponsored by the Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati.

Joe Corcoran and his wife, Beth, live on the block and take care of the garden. The installation of a city water line and freeze-proof faucet two months ago make upkeep significantly easier, and came in time to allow the vegetation to thrive during the long drought and summer heat.

The garden is dedicated to the memory of Steve Corcoran, Joe's brother and a Vietnam vet, and to all other East End veterans.

According to Corcoran, Strader Street is a neighborhood where people walk a lot, and know each other and what is happening on the street.

"Most folks I've talked with are pretty relieved that all those cats were saved - and surprised and pleased that now the house is saved, too. With all that, and the garden thriving and beautiful, we have a lot to celebrate."

*East End resident Gail Silver of Silver Bells Rescue released this report.*

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