

Feline Heaven: An Epic Cat Fort is Under Construction

A previously vacant church in Tarentum will soon be home to a giant, multi-textured hangout for cats.

BY CRAIG TAYLOR

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF PHILLIP RHODES

Pittsburgh will soon be home to a new fort, officially titled the Epic Cat Fort. The structure will be a temporary exhibit in the Clement, a mixed-use venue renovated from the formerly abandoned St. Clements Church and school in Tarentum.

The structure will comprise of multiple 4-by-4-foot sections designed by volunteer artists. Each section will be connected via catwalks.

The mastermind behind the Epic Cat Fort, Phillip Rhodes, explains the idea came from a place of “pure serendipity.”

“I love kitties ... I love building things and doing something that someone else has never done before appeals to me,” he says.

So far, Rhodes is in talks with Pittsburgh public school art teachers to make the Epic Cat Fort a project for several classes. He’s also looking for additional volunteer artists to design other sections of the fort or to submit their work as part of the event’s silent auction.

Additionally, Rhodes wants someone with a great architectural sense to help supervise the construction. Non-artists who are interested in helping out can apply for the available positions of “cat whisperer”, “parking specialist” and “litter box patrol.”



Rhodes also is looking for additional sponsors and donations. The recycling nonprofit Construction Junction has provided cardboard tubes for building materials, and the Animal Rescue League is bringing in adoptable cats to show-off the Epic Cat Fort in action.

“That’d be fun for different organizations to add their own sort of style to their portion of the cat fort,” Rhodes says.

The feline fortress will be unveiled on March 15 at the Clement. Event staff ask that guests leave their pet cats at home since the fort will already be occupied by the rescue league’s cats.

“It’s gonna be a fun project and if people enjoy kitties and like buildings things and want to be part of a group, I’d say go to our website and check things out,” says Rhodes.

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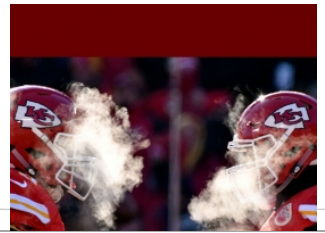
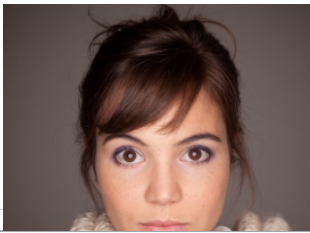
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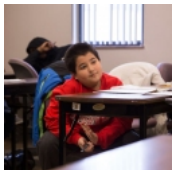
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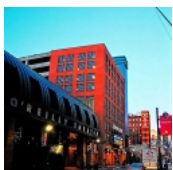
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