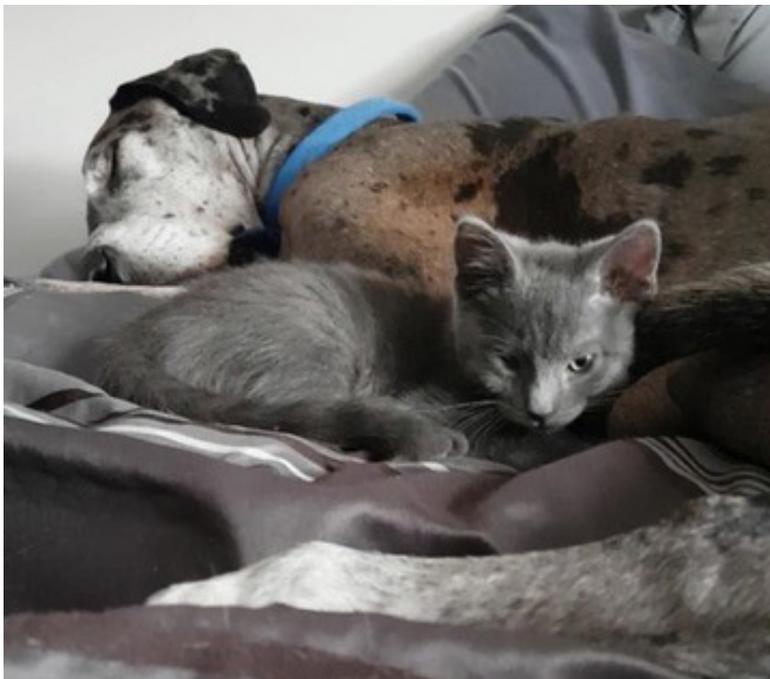


cat tales

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FELINE FRIENDS NETWORK



Saving a pirate

The spring and summer of 2017 provided FFN with a bumper crop of kittens and a reminder of the importance of spay/neuter. So many of the kittens born outdoors do not survive and far too many suffer terribly. Pirate was one of them.

When FFN stepped in, Pirate's mother, a kitten herself, was struggling to care for five babies all of whom had very painful eye infections and upper respiratory infections.

Mom was trapped, spayed, vaccinated, and returned to her caregiver. All five kittens were placed in the same foster home. Pirate's siblings quickly began to recover, but despite numerous vet visits and special care from foster parents Andrea and Tom, Pirate's right eye could not be saved and surgery was required.

Perhaps it was his rakish appearance but Pirate has been the **FIRST** of his siblings to be adopted and he is now enjoying life in his new home with a very special dog buddy. Thanks to Andrea and Tom and the donors who made it possible.



Illuminating my life path

By Kristen Thomson

"What do you want to be when you grow up?"

It's a question we don't always have an answer figured out for by the time we should. Time catches up to us before we find a way to make a living doing what we love. Many of us just aren't lucky enough to turn our passions into profit. The bills have to get paid somehow. I think that one of the secrets to adulthood is realizing your job doesn't have to define who you are. What you're going to be when you grow up can be found outside of that.

A couple of years ago, I started following Hannah Shaw, better known as Kitten Lady, on Instagram. She's an advocate for all good cat things: adoption, spay/neuter, don't declaw, TNR, and fostering! She specializes in neonatal fostering, but sometimes while trapping community cats, they find what she calls "Hissy Kittens." These are kittens old enough to be weaned, but young enough to tame. A light went on – I could do that! I only spent every summer of my childhood taming all the barn kittens we could find – and I was inspired. It didn't even matter that I was 30 at the time and

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suddenly idolizing a woman younger than me because I finally knew what I wanted to be.

I heard about FFN from a co-worker, and started following on social media. I decided that this was the organization I wanted to work with when I had the room. That was the final hurdle. My boyfriend's metal band practiced in our basement. It was not an ideal environment to be turning feral cats friendly. Thankfully, this past summer, the band moved to a new jam space. We began the renovations and soon my foster room was ready.

I received my first kittens on Thanksgiving weekend. Three tabby siblings who were actually born in foster care in July. Needless to say, they were far from "hissy". Their time with me was short and sweet; in just over 2 weeks they all went to their forever homes. It was a fun way to get started and to see how the process works, but I'm looking forward to taking on more challenging cases if need be.

When I first started telling people I was doing this, many said that it would be hard to give the kittens up, that I'd get too attached. First of all, we've already got 5 cats who were strays or from the barn, AND we adopted a dog. I'm pretty maxed out on my pet rescuing!

Secondly, it's uplifting to be a part of something that is making a difference. It's easy

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GLOBAL CAT DAY DRAW

In celebration of Global Cat Day on 16 October 2017, FFN held free draws at participating pet supply stores in Stratford: Feed-All Pet Centre, Global Pet Foods and Pet Valu! Each winner took home a delicious "clowder" of three chocolate ear tipped kittens (white chocolate, milk chocolate & dark chocolate) made especially for FFN by Chocolate Barr's Candies.

The lucky winners are Kevin Lalonde, Matthew Maynard, and Jonathan Carson!



Kristen and one of her first fosters

to feel helpless when you know there are so many animals out there hungry, sick, neglected, abandoned. The world can get awfully dark, awfully fast. Actively participating with people who are changing that feels really good. It isn't sad for me when a kitten leaves here with their new family. Instead, it's like a little light goes on because I just met some cat people who are awesome enough to adopt. Maybe they've got kids who will cherish that kitten and grow up to be responsible pet owners too.

As Kitten Lady says, "Goodbye is the Goal." Adoption is the whole point of fostering so that you are ready to help who needs you next. This is what I want to be. I've found my path, and I will help as many cats and kittens as I can to find the forever home they deserve along the way.

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Global Cat Day is an annual event reminding us that the cats in our community, including those who call the outdoors their home, need your protection. Please join us in advocating for compassionate policies that protect every cat in our community. Kindness for all catkind!

SO MANY THANKS ...

to Feed-All, Global and Pet Valu for continuing to help us get cats and kittens adopted out when they have space in their stores.



FFN is gearing up for #GivingTuesday

by Laura Strathdee

As readers of this newsletter may know, #GivingTuesday is a dedicated day of giving back to organizations around the world following Black Friday and Cyber Monday. It harnesses the power of social media and the generosity of people worldwide to bring real change to our communities and around the globe. In 2017, #GivingTuesday is on Tuesday, 28 November and FFN is taking the opportunity to raise money to support our feral colonies and our foster/adoption program in Stratford/Perth County.

Why donate on #GivingTuesday? Thanks to the generosity of local businesses and supporters, donations made that day work harder for FFN – and offer bonuses for you.

FFN has lined up donors who will match donations made on 28 November dollar for dollar. Donate \$25 and – puurrrrrrrr – FFN cats receive \$50! Help us double our money by sharing our Facebook posts with your friends and family throughout the month of November.

And take advantage of the lovely perks these local businesses are offering to anyone who donates to FFN on #GivingTuesday:

A minimum \$15 donation through Canada Helps on 28 November 2017 will make you eligible for:

- a free milk mintie bar from Chocolate Barrs
- \$20 off a batch of wine at Bell's Winery
- a free large fries at Boomer's Gourmet Fries
- 15% off all services (excluding registered massage therapy) at the Spa Near the Tracks
- free single serving of hot chocolate or flavoured coffee from the Buzz Stop

A donation of \$50 or more entitles you to 20% off all regular-priced merchandise at Nectar.

All these offers are good through the month of December. To take advantage, simply print out and present your Canada Helps receipt.



The fundraising committee is still working on these special offers so watch the FFN Facebook page for all the latest updates.

And, finally, to recognize and thank those people or businesses who donate \$100 or more, we'll take your picture – complete with cat ears and a #GivingTuesday sign – to share on social media and in an upcoming issue of *cat tales*.

We hope you'll kick off the holiday season by donating to FFN on #GivingTuesday, 28 November 2017. To make a donation online, visit the Canada Helps web site at: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/feline-friends-network-of-stratford/>

Together we can make this #GivingTuesday an amazing one – and help more cats in need!

Are you a business owner? Or do you know someone who is? The FFN fundraising committee needs your help. We are seeking more local businesses that might be interested in supporting our #GivingTuesday programs by offering incentives or matching donations. If you have any suggestions or contacts, please email Laura Strathdee at lstrathd@gmail.com

A SPECIAL “THANK YOU”

to Kimberley and staff at Pet Valu Stratford for choosing FFN as the fundraising partner for their October “Thanks for Giving” campaign. Pet Valu raised \$1,420 in food donations for our foster and feral cats!



Wine raffle raises \$8,656

The 2017 wine raffle raised a record \$8,656 for FFN – 100% of which will go to help cats.

Our winners this year were all from Stratford. Sylvia Wright won first prize, while Jen Emery received the second prize. Congratulations! And third-prize winner, Deb Hirdes is a staunch FFN supporter, having been both a donor AND an adopter! Deb had kind words for FFN:

“I am pleased to be the 3rd prize winner of the wine raffle. I did not expect to win, but bought tickets to support this wonderful organization.

Feline Friends came to my attention a few years ago. I liked their page on Facebook and would look at the cats they had for adoption. Jax was one of them. I saw Jax [pictured below] and arranged to foster to adopt. It did not take too long to decide to adopt him. He has grown into a big boy (8.6 kg) He has a wonderful sweet personality. He is still a food hog, but gives so much love to anyone who walks thru the door.

I would love to adopt more cats, but 3 is enough ... lol.

I support the work of Feline Friends with a monthly donation. Such a great organization!”

Congratulations Deb and thank you!



Sweet stocking stuffers

With Christmas just around the corner, it's time for FFN's annual Christmas Chocolate Fundraiser.

We will be selling the oh-so-yummy, individually-packaged Milk Mintie Bars from Chocolate Barrs Candies. At only \$2.00 each, these make great stocking stuffers – if you can stay out of them for that long!

Starting in mid-November, the chocolates will be on sale at Boomer's Gourmet Fries but you can also order them from members of the FFN fundraising committee.

Help us spread the sweetness by taking orders from your friends/family/co-workers. Collect the money in advance and place your order through our Facebook page or by emailing holly@felinefriends.ca. If you order 20 or more bars and live within Stratford, we will make arrangements to deliver them to you.

For more information or to order, contact Holly at holly@felinefriends.ca.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR
garet markvoort

