

cat tales

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FELINE FRIENDS NETWORK

Many hands ...

by Cheryl Simpson



Cheryl and the gang, clockwise from top left, Sabrina, Banshee, and Foster

In January 2016, the Feline Friends Network will be 10 years old!

FFN was born from my fervent wish to find a way to “help the cats.” As a volunteer at the OSPCA, I had realized how many cats were being euthanized simply because of lack of space and felt strongly that there needed to be another way.

From those early beginnings to now, it has been truly heart-warming to watch FFN grow, accomplishing more and more each year, but yet remaining a totally volunteer organization staffed by people passionate about our mission and vision to one day see “each cat respected and protected.”

As we’ve grown, however, requests for our services have grown apace. At times, that has put pressure on our volunteers to run faster, work harder, and people have burned out. Not so

/continued on page 2

DECEMBER/JANUARY
2015/2016



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THANK YOU, THANK YOU ...

To everyone who donated on Giving Tuesday! Because of the generosity of our donors and of our two matching partners – CP Plastic Products and Mike Vancea from Vancea Financial – we raised \$3,122 on Giving Tuesday 2015! That money will go a LONG way to helping us to help more cats!

Cheers to all of you who donated, as well as to those of you who donate your time to help out with our programs, drive cats to/from vet appointments, and foster cats for us. Cheers also to everyone who has adopted a cat through our programs ... our heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you! Happy holidays and all the best in 2016!



FFN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sunday, 28 February 2016 | 2:00 pm
Optimist Hall (downstairs)
72 Water Street, Stratford

/continued from page 1

long ago, we had to make the tough decision to limit the scope of our Trap/Neuter/Return program because of it.

Then a wonderful thing happened ... We put out a plea for more TNR help and some pretty amazing volunteers stepped forward to join us. Thanks to their commitment, TNR outside of the cities is now “back in business”!

I want to take this opportunity to thank ALL of you special volunteers – from those who have been here from the very beginning right up to those who have just come on board. Truly, without your dedication and passion, FFN would simply not exist.

I also need to make a plea for one more type of volunteer. Because of a lack of foster homes, there are sometimes needy cats we aren't able to help. Please read foster parent Brenda Ford's story below to see just how rewarding this job can be. Then consider opening your heart and home as she and others have done.

The old adage “many hands make light work” still holds true. If you haven't already, I urge you to join hands with our circle of committed volunteers today. It just feels good.

The rewards of fostering

by Brenda Ford

FFN's mission is to conduct spay/neuter programs to humanely end cat overpopulation. While we are not a rescue, we sometimes come across friendly abandoned strays in our trap/neuter/return program. Although these cats may be frightened, they are NOT “feral” and will not survive in a feral colony. To help such cats, Feline Friends Network needs volunteer foster parents.

Two of the cats that I fostered this year had survived outside during the terrible winter. The first one hid under the bed and displayed hostility when I tried to get close to him. Then, one day, without being coaxed, he tentatively

walked towards me. It took still more time and patience before he let me pet him. But, when he did, I felt so grateful that the frightened creature of a few weeks earlier had become this trusting, lovable cat. He was later adopted into a wonderful home.

My second foster was a beautiful, long-haired cat who was so scared that he wedged himself into a tiny space between the couch and the wall. He was slow to trust. The first time he jumped onto my lap and let me brush him, I was ecstatic. It was love at first sight when his adoptive parents came to meet him and take him to his new home.

It is hard to let go of the foster babies but, from the outset, I know that I am a temporary custodian. When a cat begins to purr again and you see the trust in its eyes, your reward is in knowing that you have helped it along the way to finding a new home where it will be safe and be loved. Without fosters, these cats might still be scrounging for food in terrible weather, or may end up at the local shelter, huddled in a corner of a cage and considered unadoptable.

If you'd like to know how you can help FFN help more cats by fostering please call us at 519.301.5735. We need you!



This beauty is Symone, currently in foster care with FFN and looking for a fur-ever home. Her sisters, Sadie and Sasha – who are just as adorable – are also available for adoption.



The amazing return of Puffy Kitty

by Dawn Bell

Last May 2015, as my 13-year-old's friends gathered at our home before heading to school, our black Maine Coon cat escaped. One of the boys attempted to catch him, the postings went up, but our sweet black Puffy was not to be found.

Puffy Kitty came to our home many years earlier with the help of Cheryl and Paul Simpson, who arranged to let me use one of FFN's live humane traps. I had heard about the great work that FFN was doing to help with cat overpopulation, and I used the trap to bring this kitty in.

Although I initially took him to the shelter, after a couple of weeks, I had talked my family into letting me adopt him. I knew our other cat, Dot, and our two weiner dogs would learn to fall in love with this sweet black cat too!

We called him "Othello" – aka "Puffy Kitty" – and Sarah, the gal at the OSPCA, microchipped him before we brought him home. He settled in beautifully. Almost seven years went by.

Fast forward to this past November 4th, almost six months after his sudden escape. I was working at the Festival's Avon Theatre store helping set up for Christmas when my husband called with the amazing news – Puffy was on his way home from Perth Veterinary Services!

He had been taken care of over the past six months by Donna Powell, a wonderful lady down on Albert Street. Donna has a paper route and, apparently, our Puffy loved to tag along on summer days, "helping" her do her work. He had been a welcome guest on Donna's sunny back porch and spent the nights in a little bed she made for him in her garage.



Donna had decided to adopt Puffy permanently and, in preparation, had taken him to the Perth Veterinary Clinic – where the lovely Sarah now works! As a matter of routine, they scanned him for a microchip – and the MICROCHIP led Puffy back to us!! Naturally, our new friend Donna has visitation rights to her "Blackie" (our Puff) forever!

It's a real miracle, thanks to FFN, everyone who helped search, Sarah and the Perth clinic, and, especially, Donna Powell, Puffy's "other" Mama. But most of all, the credit goes to Puffy's microchip – without the microchip, Puffy might never have been returned to us.

Thanks for letting us share. And don't forget to microchip your little friends!! The above photo is of our dear Puffy Kitty, so that you can all fall in love too.

*Dawn, Donald, Hunter, Sachi, and Puffy Kitty
(aka Blackie, the paper route kitty)*

REMEMBER! A microchip is only as good as the information it contains, so if you move or your contact info changes, let the microchip company know immediately ...

TNR VIDEO IN THE WORKS

We're excited to have had the opportunity to work with some local film and theatre professionals to produce a video appeal for more TNR volunteers. Filming is complete and editing is underway. More details to come in the next issue.



YouTube video features FFN

Rachelle Anne Redford and her husband, Garner Haines, are the creators of a YouTube video series called "Cheap and Green." Their latest episode features Feline Friends Network volunteers building insulated cat shelters!

In addition to detailed how-to information, the video explains FFN's work, the difference between feral and stray cats, and – yes, city folks! – the difference between straw and hay. Rachelle and Garner are devoted animal-lovers themselves, with four cats and one dog sharing their Stratford home. Many thanks to them!

To watch the video, click on this url:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6GvijvcK8I&feature=youtu.be>

EXPENSE REPORT FOR REIMBURSEMENT/TAX RECEIPT

Just a reminder to our colony feeders/members who have saved cat food receipts/related expenses. If you plan to submit for a donation tax receipt, the itemized expense report and original receipts are due 15 January 2016.

4th annual Feline Film Festival : Save the date!
Friday, June 3, 2016 at Knox Presbyterian Church, Stratford.

Paws of Perth County Adoptathon

Saturday, January 30 | 10 am to 3 pm
Global Pet Foods (684 Ontario Street)

For further info, contact Paws of Perth County
519.949.1695 | 519.272.0848 |
pawsofperthcounty@gmail.com

Paws of Perth County will not be having an adoptathon in December due to the holidays, but they would be happy to arrange home visits with the fosters for anyone interested in adopting.

Don't be late for these very important dates!

*To market, to market, to buy a catoque
Or if we don't buy one, we'll just take a look*

*And then, in the New Year, it's to the Upscale
Truly the best kind of winter yardsale!*

Mark these dates on your calendars because you will NOT want to miss the available goodies, the purchase of which will greatly support your favourite charity ... FFN!

On Saturday, 5 December 2015, Puddy Products will have a table at the market. Check out the wares, buy something for your favourite human or feline, or order something to be picked up on either of the two following Saturdays – 12 and 19 December. Yep, you read it aright! Feline Friends Puddy Products will be at the market for an unprecedented THREE Saturdays in a row. Plan your lives accordingly. ;)

Once January hits, start putting aside those books in excellent condition (no text books, please), that jewellery you no longer wear, and anything else you consider an appropriate donation for FFN's annual UPSCALE YARDSALE. The 2016 incarnation of the yardsale will take place on Thursday the 10th of March. Howzat for forward planning?

As the date draws near, watch this newsletter for further details, including what delicious foodstuffs will be available for pre-order.

It is all happening with Feline Friends.

How nice it is to think that feline dreams, like our own, are painted with creative brush strokes from time to time. Perhaps my cats and I even share the same dream: a world where all kittens are wanted and loved, and where every cat has a safe, warm place to sleep ... and to dream.

– Barbara L. Diamond

NEWSLETTER EDITOR
garet markvoort

