

cat tales

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FELINE FRIENDS NETWORK



Sweet Alba

by Sharon Morrice

It was a raw March day when FFN received a phone call from a woman who was concerned about a cat she'd been feeding on and off for five years. The cat that she called 'Sweetie' lived outdoors and the woman had never been able to pet her. The kitty appeared to be injured – there were large areas of fur missing on both sides of her body and she wasn't eating. We believed Sweetie was a feral cat, so we made a plan to trap her so that we could get her checked out at a vet clinic.

Even though there was yummy cat food waiting inside, Sweetie refused to go into the trap. She was not giving in and it looked unlikely that we would get her. Then, a call from the feeder – she had got her! Not in the trap but in a pet carrier she had baited with food and quickly shut when she saw kitty go inside. Success! The plan was to get Sweetie examined the

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Sometimes simpler is better

Statistics show that cats belonging to lower-income households are much less likely to be spayed or neutered. Although people want to do the right thing and 'fix' their cats or kittens, for many the cost is just too high. Because of this Low-Income Spay/Neuter Assistance has for years been one of FFN's core programs.

With the goal of spaying and neutering more cats and kittens, the FFN board of directors recently reviewed our Low-Income S/N program. We wanted to simplify the process while making it more fair and transparent. The changes that we have put in place are:

1. All applicants must be assessed by representatives at House of Blessing or at the Salvation Army locations in Stratford, St Marys, Mitchell, or Listowel. Applicants must provide proof of identity, residence, and income. Agency representatives will provide vouchers to those who qualify, along with a list of participating vet clinics. Applicants will contact the vet clinics to make a spay/neuter appointment and give the voucher to the clinic at the appointment. The clinics then invoice FFN for the procedure.

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next day, have her injuries treated, spay her, and release her back to her outdoor home as part of FFN's Trap-Neuter-Return program.

I was very relieved when the Doctor told me that Sweetie was not injured. Fleas – an easily treatable problem – had caused the fur loss. If it's possible to be happy to have a cat with fleas, I was! However, our original plan for her was not to work out so simply.

While her skin was healing, we kept Sweetie in a large dog crate in our basement. I checked on her frequently, always talking quietly so she could get used to my voice. Little by little, she was becoming more secure. She initially hid in her pet carrier, inside the dog crate, coming out to eat and use the litter box when no one was around. This small, skinny girl was gobbling up all of the food I put in front of her – there was no end to her appetite! She loved cat treats, and found them so irresistible that slowly, cautiously, she inched closer to me to get them. Then finally, she took some gently off of my fingertips. I had the briefest contact from this cat, who I had thought I would never get to touch. Sweetie was not a feral cat. Now she was a foster cat.

My husband agreed that we should move her into a spare bedroom. The new plan was to care for her until she could be spayed and a forever home could be found for her. During this time, we made achingly slow progress to gain her trust. Hiding under the bed in her new room, she was a very fearful girl. Shamelessly bribing her with treats, we were thrilled when she began to come out from under the bed, and allow herself to be touched on her head and face. One step at a time, we were discovering her gentle, affectionate nature. Eventually, she began to lie on my legs as I sat on the floor with her. She let us pet her more and gave us loud purrs. Her playful side emerged – she loves balls and toys, especially Pat's Puddy Products catnip mice!

The day of her spay appointment was full of surprises. I received a phone call from

the veterinarian who had prepped her for surgery and discovered a scar on her belly. Sweetie had already been 'fixed', so obviously she had once been someone's pet. The vet also found that her teeth were in bad shape – some broken so that only the roots remained. The vet extracted six of her teeth that day and she came back to our home to heal.

Not long afterwards, Sweetie developed a bad cough that didn't respond to steroid or antibiotic treatment. After further testing, the vet found that she was suffering from lungworm, a parasitic infection that had to be treated by syringing medication into her mouth daily for more than two weeks. She has since tested negative for lungworm, but still has occasional coughing episodes that we hope will clear up in time.

My husband and I have both fallen in love with our 'foster cat' and we still wonder how this beautiful animal went from having a home to being homeless and neglected. Having become more fond of her at every stage of her journey with us, we decided that she needed a proper name (Alba seemed to suit her) and have adopted her permanently into our little tribe. We are still working on getting our other female cat to accept her – yet another challenge – but we're so happy to have found our Sweet Alba.

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A MESSAGE FROM AN FFN ADOPTER ...

I recommend Feline Friends Network to anyone wanting to add a kitten or cat to their family. They care deeply for these cats and [give them] the best of care. I love my kitten Stella and she is so sweet-natured and social due to the wonderful volunteers who spent their time with her. Keep up the wonderful work Feline Friends!!! God bless you.

Gina Hookey-Brown
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One small cat changes coming home to an empty house to coming home.

– Pam Brown



NEW FFN MEMBER DISCOUNT

FFN is thrilled to announce that Mark Fitzgerald, the new owner of Ruffin's Pet Centre, and store manager Tracy Dickenson are showing their support for FFN by offering a 10% discount to our members on cat-related products.

To take advantage of this offer, you must present your membership card each time you make a purchase.

And if you don't see a product that you want, let them know! Dickenson says Ruffin's is on a mission to give all customers excellent care.

We'd like to thank Ruffin's for being the most recent pet store to demonstrate their support for FFN. We certainly appreciate it and we know our members will too. Please drop by the store and say "hi" from FFN.

Ruffin's is located in the Festival Marketplace shopping centre at 1067 Ontario Street, near the LCBO.

WISH LIST

Take advantage of the 10% discount at Ruffin's and pick up a donation for FFN.

- canned Friskies cat food
- Purina cat chow – blue bag
- Purina kitten chow – pink bag
- clumping and non-clumping kitty litter
- new cat toys
- catnip
- Litter Attract
- new wand toys
- gently used or new cat scratch posts/climbing posts

To make arrangements to have your donation picked up or to drop it off, please email info@felinefriends.ca.



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2. FFN has set maximum gross annual household income thresholds to ensure that applicants are assessed consistently regardless of where the assessment takes place.
3. To make the program more transparent for our donors and applicants, we have posted more detailed information on our website at <https://felinefriends.ca/programs.html>

As has always been the case, pet owners must agree NOT to declaw their cats, as we do not fund surgeries where the cat is being declawed. The program is also subject to available funding and budgetary restrictions.

We hope that by simplifying the process, it will be easier for applicants, our own volunteers, and partner agencies to navigate. We feel very fortunate to have the help of the kind folks at House of Blessing (Molly) and Salvation Army (Barry, Jennifer, and Gwyneth) to perform assessments for us at locations throughout Perth County. Thanks also to our participating veterinary clinics, who make it possible for FFN to help more cats and cat owners in financial difficulty.

Cats are dangerous companions for writers because cat watching is a near-perfect method of writing avoidance.

– Dan Greenburg



The how, what, and why of fostering for FFN

by April Wagler

So far this year, my husband and I have fostered nine kittens/cats for FFN. It started when a cat was found in the warehouse of my work. I called FFN and FFN founder Cheryl Simpson came out with a carrier and food to rescue the 8-month-old male kitten. FFN accepted him into their Foster/Adopt program and we agreed to foster him. Just a few weeks later, he was adopted!

A lot of people have asked us why we foster, what fostering entails, and how we can let the cats and kittens go.

The “why?” is simple. To save a life! The more foster cats there are in rescue, the more cats that can be saved. My husband and I know that we can’t save/keep them all but by fostering we can save more.

The “what?” is easy. We give the cats/kittens a safe warm home with all the love, care, and attention they need and FFN provides the rest – supplies, veterinary care, advice, and support. As foster parents, we sometimes need to give medicine or trim nails. We make sure they always have food and fresh water. And the best part? Lots of snuggles and plenty of playtime.

We also try to take pictures or video of the cats in our care so that FFN can promote them. We keep in touch with the Foster/Adoption co-ordinator to give updates or express concerns. And we have meet-and-greets at our home with potential adopters.

And the “how?” – I can’t lie, it *is* hard. No matter how short their stay, I cry every time one leaves. But meeting the adopters and receiving updates from them helps a lot!

Fostering for FFN thus far has been a fantastic experience. We’ve enjoyed the time we’ve spent with each cat that has shared our home. We have loved the amount of contact



A lap full of love – April Wagler with five of the nine kittens and cats she and her husband have fostered for FFN in 2018.

FFN has maintained with us for each foster – the Foster/Adopt co-ordinator always keeps in touch and is so very helpful along the way.

Although we have never set a limit on how long a cat can stay in our care, it has never been very long. FFN has an excellent team that find homes for these cats quite quickly. When doing the meet-and-greet, I always worry that we will have reservations about the potential adopters – but so far we never have. Fingers crossed, we never will!

If you have ever considered fostering, please give FFN a call at 519.301.5735 or fill out an application online at https://www.felinefriends.ca/ffn_foster_application.php. Together we can save a life!

Every contented cat is an “it”.
– Helen Powers on the virtue of neutering





6th Annual 'Best of the Best' Feline Film Festival

Friday, November 9, 2018

Knox Presbyterian Church, Stratford

Doors open at 7 pm | Showtime at 8 pm

Movie night is back! Enjoy a selection of the finest short cat videos – the cute, the funny, the poignant, and the amazing! Come eat, drink, and LOL with us at Stratford's 6th Annual 'Best of the Best' Feline Film Festival!

For the last five years, FFN has put together a selection of the best of each year's crop of fantastic feline films. This year, we're showing the 'Best of the Best'! Only top selections from the previous years – all of the cat videos you loved the first time 'round – will make the cut for our hour-long compilation. You don't want to miss it!

And if that's not enough to make you come out on a November evening, there are even more reasons to attend the Film Fest:

- Silent auction
- Beer, wine, alcohol-free beverages, hors d'oeuvres
- Door prizes
- Great fun!!

Tickets are \$15 for an adult and \$7.50 for a child accompanied by an adult. This year, we'll be offering tickets online in advance of the event, with any remaining tickets available at the door. Please stay tuned – online ticketing will open soon and we'll tell you how to get your paws on some!

"Oh, Auntie, isn't he a beauty! And is he a gentleman or a lady?"

"Neither, my dear! I had him fixed. It saves him from so many undesirable associations."

– D.H. Lawrence, *Puss-Puss*

THE RESULTS FROM OUR FALL ONLINE FUNDRAISING AUCTION ARE IN!

Thank you to all those who placed a bid. After expenses, the Fall Auction raised another \$1,086 to allow us to keep helping more cats/kittens through our TNR, Low-Cost Spay/Neuter, and Foster/Adoption programs. Coming up next – our Christmas-themed online auction!! If you have anything you would like to donate to an auction please contact Holly@felinefriends.ca or Marg@felinefriends.ca.



NEWSLETTER EDITOR
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