

cat tales

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FELINE FRIENDS NETWORK

Season's greetings

by Sharon Morrice, FFN President

Warmest greetings to all of our *cat tales* readers! The COVID-19 pandemic has made 2020 challenging, frightening, and frustrating in new and unexpected ways. With vet clinics putting non-emergency surgeries on hold for several months, FFN experienced a backlog of cats and kittens waiting to be spayed and neutered and being unable to get vet appointments while the number of foster cats and requests added up was extra stressful for our volunteers. We had to cancel the annual FFN Wine Raffle, which has been a major fundraiser for us in the past, as we did not feel we could safely sell tickets in person, or ask community businesses for prize donations at a time many are struggling. Our Low Income Spay/Neuter Assistance Program was disrupted both because the House of Blessing and Salvation Army were unable to do intake assessments for us while their offices were closed and because clients experienced difficulty and delays getting appointments for surgeries.

Throughout it all, FFN volunteers have continued to improve the welfare of cats and kittens, devoting enormous time and energy not only to running our programs but also to fundraising to pay for them. To those who cared for and socialized kitties, managed FFN's financial concerns, wrote grant applications and reports, attended virtual board meetings (despite technical difficulties), and volunteered in too many ways to mention – words are not adequate to express my appreciation.

And a heartfelt thank you to all who have continued to support us through your generous donations of money, food, litter, and many other supplies for foster felines, as well as items for online auctions. FFN truly could not exist without you.

Wishing you the best holiday season possible under the circumstances. Be kind ... especially to cats. And take care of yourselves and each other.



Tuesday, 1 December 2020 is Giving Tuesday

If you have been thinking about making a donation to FFN this year, Tuesday, 1 December 2020 is the day that your donation dollars will have the biggest impact. Once again, Mike Vancea from Vancea Financial Group has generously offered to match up to \$500 in donations and a second anonymous donor has offered to match an additional \$1,000!

This means that if FFN receives \$1,500 in donations on Tuesday, 1 December either by e-transfer to info@felinefriends.ca OR through FFN's **Canada Helps page**, we will receive an additional \$1,500 in matching dollars! Please help us take advantage of these matching offers by donating on Giving Tuesday!



An astounding auction

FFN has just wrapped up our biggest online Christmas auction to date and is thrilled to announce that it raised just over \$4,000 to support our TNR, foster/adoption, and low income spay/neuter assistance programs.

FFN's Facebook auction fundraisers have been a lifesaver when many of our other fundraisers had to be cancelled due to COVID-19. Our thanks to the businesses and individuals who donated so many great items and to everyone who bid (and bid again) for your support. We look forward to hosting spring, summer, fall, and Christmas auctions again in 2021.



Spays and neuters top 3,000!

Feline Friends Network is happy to pass on some good news – we have now spayed/neutered over 3,000 cats and kittens since our inception! Since it is estimated that one cat can have 180–200 kittens over her lifetime, this achievement has

prevented the birth of many thousands of homeless kittens. The special designation of being the 3,000th cat 'fixed' goes to Rasmus, a young male found in Stratford. As you can see from the photo, Rasmus came to FFN with part of his tail missing. When he was taken for veterinary care, the vet said that nature had healed it well. Neutered on 24 August 2020, Rasmus was adopted and lives with his family and other animal friends – including a dog and rabbits!

Safe & easy Christmas shopping for cat lovers

At this time of year, Pat, the fabulous creator of hand-made Puddy Products, is usually spending time selling her wares at farmer's markets. Sadly, that's something else that has been put on hold due to the pandemic.

Luckily, you can still get great gifts for cats and cat lovers! Sample cat toys, children's toys, children's sweaters, hats, mitts, and more can be viewed online at <https://www.felinefriends.ca/puddy-products>. For more information or to order, please contact Pat at 519.271.0657. Puddy Product proceeds support FFN's spay/neuter and foster/adoption programs.





A little Hobo

by Jemica Hallberg Brick

Hobo, sometimes affectionately referred to as “the little kitty” by our three-year-old daughter, appeared on our porch as a mangy-haired, hungry, and very scared kitten in the fall of 2019.

As the temperature dropped we built a kitty house on the porch and even set up a heated pad hoping the kitten would “warm up” to us. But it was quite feral and only visited for survival provisions.

Concerned about the kitten’s survival as winter came on and worried that she might even be pregnant, we reached out to FFN. They helped us trap, fix, chip, and release Hobo – who we discovered wasn’t pregnant but a male! – and we came to terms with the fact that he would be our feral friend.

But as time went on and the weather got even colder, our feral friend became braver until I could pet him – but only for short bursts while being fed. Then, after months of tiptoeing into the doorway, we tricked him inside our house with some treats. Another month passed where he hid in the basement, coming out only to be fed. But bit by bit, he began to endure my pets a little longer and longer.

Finally, one miraculous evening, he came out and mewed away! He let me trim away the matted fur around his neck and even purred. We had turned a corner and the feral cat in our house became my pet.

It took another few months until he accepted my husband and our daughter and, eventually, even our new baby’s attention.

Hobo is now a fully-fledged member of our family. He plays with our other rescue cat of seven years, lets us know which food he prefers, and loves all kinds of snuggles from all two-legged family members equally. It has been a slow and steady race to gain his trust over this past year, but he has made 2020 brighter for us.

Help us reach our goal of 100 Feline Friends Who Care

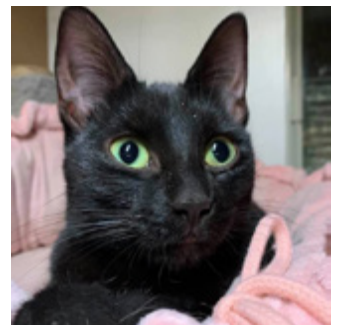
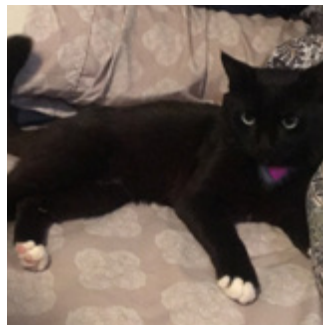
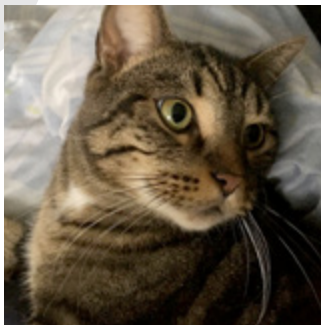
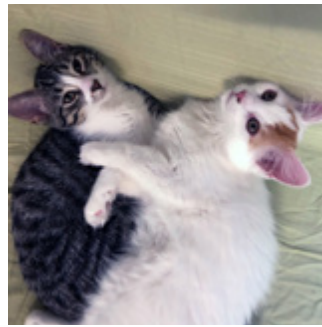
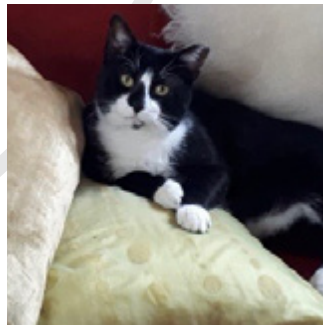
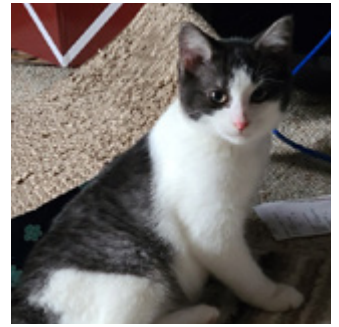
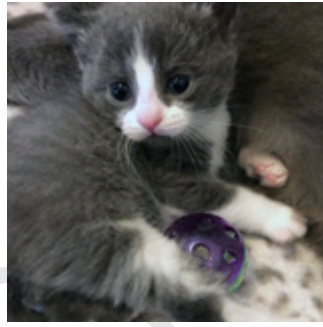
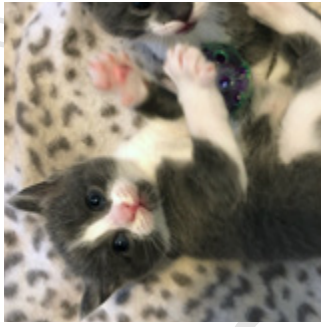
At the time of writing, FFN has reached 72% of its goal to find 100 Feline Friends Who Care. We need only 28 more very special friends willing to support our spay/neuter and foster/adoption programs by donating \$100 each in 2020!

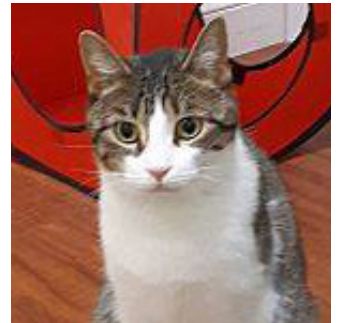
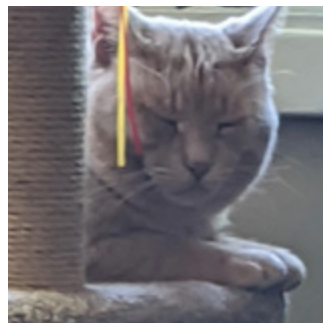
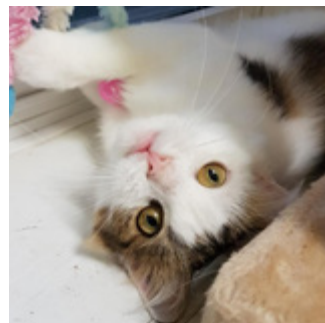
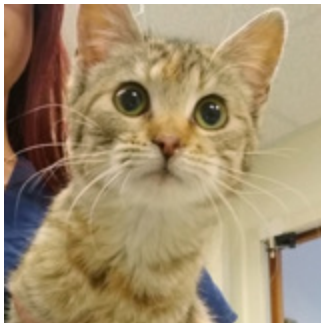
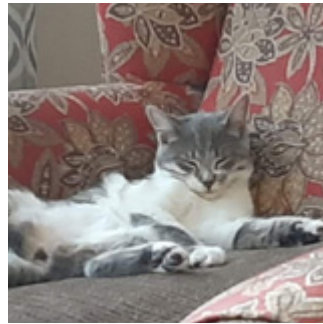
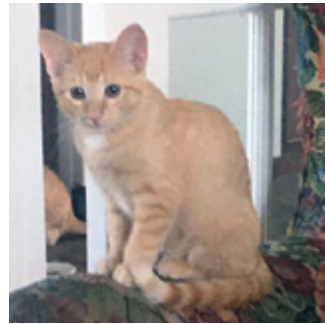
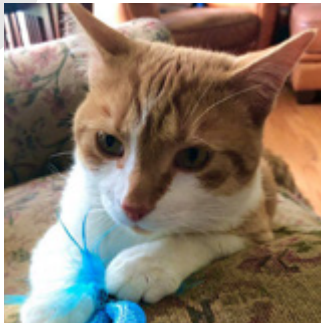
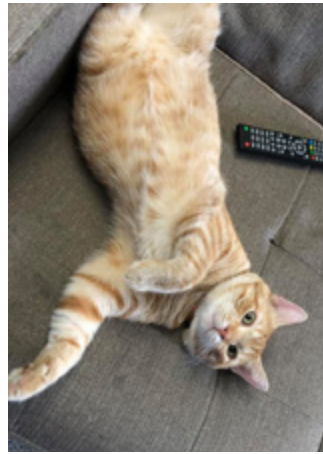
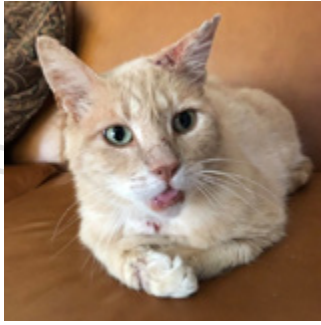
We know you get many requests but, if you are reading this newsletter, we hope the welfare of cats and kittens is something that you care deeply about. If you are thinking about making charitable donations before the end of the year, please consider this fundraising campaign and help us spay and neuter more cats to save lives and prevent homelessness and suffering. To sign up, please visit <https://www.felinefriends.ca/join-100-feline-friends>. You will receive a tax receipt for your donation.



The cats and kittens of 2020

Our annual round up of furry faces helped by FFN.





Found ... five months later

When FFN first met Cali, she was living the happy life of a shop cat with an endless supply of food, a loving caregiver, and a warm bed whenever she wanted it. Concerned about kittens, her caregiver entered Cali in our TNR program and she was spayed in 2018.

Fast forward to 2020. The caregiver was moving and needed to find a new home for Cali. FFN arranged a foster home where Cali, shy at first, adjusted more quickly than expected, even becoming friends with the foster's resident dog and cats. In a short period of time, Cali found a forever home and settled in.

Unfortunately, Cali accidentally escaped from her new residence. The search for her became a group effort, with her forever family, neighbours, and even her former foster caregiver looking for her. Posters, notices in mailboxes, social media posts and calls to the SPHS – no stone was left unturned. But she could not be found.

While Cali was likely in the immediate area a few days after her escape, a territorial male was also around and, based on the sounds of fighting that were heard, may have frightened her off.



The search received the occasional call of sightings but they all proved to be dead ends.

Then, a local veterinarian called and we knew it must be Cali. FIVE months later, she was found. Cali had made her way two kilometres from her adoptive family to the home of a kind gentleman who fed and cared for her. He gained her trust, fell in love with her, and took her to the vet clinic for a check up. We're sure his heart skipped a beat when he discovered that she had a home and would possibly not be able to stay with him. But everyone involved felt that Cali had picked her own home and adopter and we are all thrilled with this very happy ending.

FFN Annual General Meeting

SUNDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 2021 AT 2:00 PM

It won't come as a surprise that, due to the pandemic, FFN's 2021 annual general meeting will be virtual. FFN will present its annual reports at a Zoom meeting on Sunday, 21 February 2021. As always, all are invited to attend, but only those with valid memberships for 2020 can vote. If you wish to attend, you **MUST** pre-register by e-mailing the following information to info@felinefriends.ca by Friday, 5 February 2021:

- your first & last name (you must register using your real name – no nick names please),
- the e-mail address to which you wish us to send the meeting link, and
- your phone # (in case we need to reach you)

A “practice” meeting will be held between 5 and 21 February (date and time to be announced) to allow you to check in and get assistance if needed.

Everyone attending the AGM will be eligible to win a mystery door prize! Please save the date and join us!

Finally, please note that we have asked an experienced IT professional to help us run this online meeting. Your contact details will be shared with that individual for the sole purpose of facilitating the AGM.

We're full of thanks!

We are so grateful to Pet Valu Stratford for their whopping \$1,036 donation to FFN! Thanks to manager, Kimberley, and to all of the customers who made in-store donations. FFN is very fortunate to once again have been chosen as Pet Valu Stratford's PAW month recipient.

A hearty thanks to Waterloo Region Street Cats for an exceptionally large donation of cases of wet cat food. They have helped us stock the cabinets and then some. Thanks for sharing!

Kudos to Pat Burnell (of Pat's Puddy Products) for some delicious quiches that sold out quickly and raised \$192 for FFN.

Many thanks to Royal DeJong of Bird and Bear Shop for donating \$396 – the proceeds of her custom cat-print masks (sold out) after the cost of fabric – to FFN to fund surgical costs for cats. Visit her store at <https://birdandbearshop.com>.

A big thank you to Val at Feed-All Pet Centre for making masks and donating all the proceeds towards the medical costs of cats in FFN programs. Since Halloween, she has raised \$150. Christmas masks are now available at Feed-All.

We love the generosity and creativity of the students in the Community Outreach Club at the Ontario Veterinary College! For the second year, club members built insulated cat shelters, decorated them with fun graphics, and delivered them to Stratford as a donation to FFN. The 'Hat Shack' shelter is pictured at right.



In memory of...

Our deepest sympathy and heartfelt thanks for the donations FFN has received in memory of loved ones. Since our last newsletter, donations have been made in the memory of George Eisler, Shawn Murdoch, and Peter Keeler. We are greatly honoured that you have chosen to remember these friends and family members by helping FFN carry on our spay/neuter and foster/adoption programs.

TAX RECEIPT REMINDER

To our volunteers who would like a donation tax receipt or reimbursement for cat food/related expenses, please submit the original receipts and an itemized expense report by 15 January 2021 to 134 Brunswick St., Stratford, ON, N5A 3M1. Don't forget to include your complete mailing address, phone number, and e-mail address if you have one so that we may contact you if we have questions.