

cat tales

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FELINE FRIENDS NETWORK

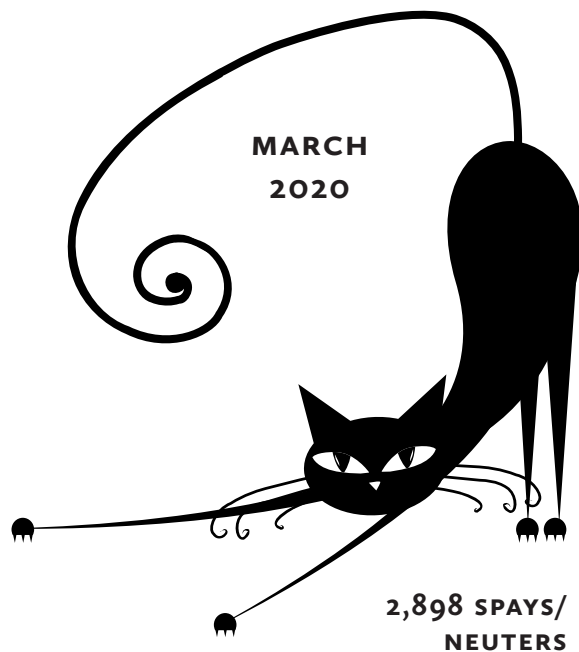


Zeke, our hero

The suffering endured by some of the homeless cats we help is unimaginable. Meet Zeke, who has been in our care since November 2019. Zeke was brought to FFN's attention by one of our volunteers who had noticed him struggling. She was able to trap him and he was placed in our Foster/Adoption Program. Zeke is estimated to be at least ten years old, but hard times have made him appear much older and – who knows – maybe he is.

When Zeke came to us, he was definitely favouring his back end. After X-rays showed that he has arthritis, the vet started pain management. Even with the pain management, however, Zeke still favours his back legs and often looks uncomfortable, so he will visit the vet again for more X-rays and to discuss his ongoing care. Our main objective is to have Zeke live his life pain-free, and we are hoping to accomplish this with medication and therapy.

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AGM recap

by Sharon Morrice, FFN President

FFN's Annual General Meeting was held Sunday, 23 February 2020 at the Falstaff Family Centre. It was lovely to see everyone who turned out to hear our 2019 reports – thanks for joining us!

2019 was a difficult but rewarding year. Difficult in that the need for our programs is great. There was more strain on our Foster/Adoption program as we see fewer truly feral cats and more scared, abandoned pets that often need a lot of medical care and volunteer time to overcome their fear and trauma to trust people again. It was also difficult due to the small number of volunteers carrying the bulk of the workload to run the Foster/Adoption and TNR programs.

The past year was rewarding because we have reached an all-time high in public awareness and support. We saw this in the growth of donations, which went up significantly. But it also seems that the community is offering more, in many cases without FFN having to ask. The support comes from individuals holding their own mini-fundraisers and businesses reaching out to us.

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We don't know how long Zeke was outside but we do know that it's taken this guy a long time to feel safe. He is finally starting to trust, playing, purring, and not looking despondent thanks to FFN volunteer fosters who have worked with him for hours, petting him, giving him gentle play sessions, and just sitting with him. Thank you, Hilary, for being the first contact and for getting Zeke into our program. And thank you to our volunteers for helping this old gentleman. When ready for adoption, Zeke will need a special person to spend time with him. He may be on pain management for the rest of his life, but we know there is the perfect someone out there for Zeke.



Zeke was shy and in pain when he came into FFN's care

No amount of time can erase the memory of a good cat, and no amount of masking tape can ever totally remove his fur from your couch.

– Leo Dworken

Question of the day: Is there an “appropriate” time to adopt again after the loss of a beloved pet?

I was recently reading letters to the editor in the Sept/Oct 2019 issue of Best Friends magazine, and read a letter from Barbara Caplan-Bennett that hit the nail right on the head. In other words, I couldn't have said it better, so I wanted to share her letter below. Thank you, Barbara, for your insight! – Holly

My twenty-year-old cat Greta, was in decent shape until her last year of life. While the vet said she wasn't in pain, she had grown mostly deaf, somewhat blind, and was showing some signs of dementia. Her kidneys were failing and I knew her days were numbered. The last few months of her life were basically me already mourning and grieving – trying to appreciate every day with her, but keenly aware that we were slowly saying our good-byes.

Two weeks after her passing, I was ready to start looking at cats who needed me now. Everyone thought I was crazy. It was too fast, it was too early. But I had spent so much time grieving Greta while she was still with me that I found myself ready much sooner than I expected. I was so eager to have new life in the house. Three weeks after Greta crossed over the Rainbow Bridge, I adopted Bailey and Amanda.

Every person or family must decide for themselves how long they need to grieve and when they are ready to welcome a new family member. The only thing I take issue with are those who say they will not adopt a pet again because it's too painful when you lose them.

There is no such thing as love without loss, or joy without pain. To believe the value of sharing your life with an animal isn't worth the pain of saying good-bye is the only mistake we humans make.



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The stories of the cats we help are better-known, thanks to our newsletters and to social media and also due to the many people who have received help with homeless cats or who have adopted from us. They talk about their experiences to others, and Feline Friends has come to be known as a caring, compassionate group that can be trusted to do our very best for each animal that we encounter. That trust has mainly been earned by our TNR and Foster/Adoption Coordinators, Marg and Holly, who handle every situation with a great deal of care and skill.

I'm so proud of FFN's accomplishments. To me, success is meeting the needs of each homeless, forgotten cat that would otherwise not receive care. The most heartwarming thing is seeing the transformation of a cat that gets proper medical care and responds to the love and patience of our volunteers.

Thank you to our loyal members. And to our volunteers, I want to say a HUGE thank-you. Your dedication is admirable and I know how much you give to this organization. We have accomplished SO much by working together.

If you are not a volunteer but care about the welfare of homeless felines, please know that, for FFN to keep running into the future, it is imperative that new volunteers step up to take on the responsibilities of managing our programs and the operations of the organization. Whatever time and talents you have to give, please consider becoming more actively involved – the cats need you!

No. of cats spayed/neutered in 2019, by program

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) | 70 |
| Foster / Adoption | 141 |
| Low-Income Assistance | 110 |
| Total | 321 |

For FFN's 2019 financial statement, please see the link in the newsletter email.



Puddy goes to market

Pat is off to market again! Catch her displays at the Saturday morning Stratford Farmer's Market on 7, 14, and 21 March and at the Ancaster Cat Show on 22 March. In 2019 alone, Pat's Puddy Products raised \$4,325 for Feline Friends, adding to an all-time total in the tens of thousands! Pat, thank you for all of your wonderful creations that help our homeless and forgotten furry ones. We're grateful also to Judy Burns for offering Puddy Products year-round at her Stratford Farmer's Market stall. Your dedication to the cause is amazing! View Puddy Products at <https://www.felinefriends.ca/puddy-products>.

A HUGE THANK YOU

to Emily and everyone in her department at Scotiabank. Emily organized a fundraiser for FFN in December. Her department raised \$245.00 AND donated food and supplies for the cats in our Foster/Adoption program. Cheers to you for so generously supporting the endeavours of our volunteers!





IN MEMORY OF SHAWN MURDOCH

Our deepest sympathy to long-time FFN member, Elinor Murdoch and family on the loss of her son, Shawn, in

November. We greatly appreciate having been suggested by the family as a charity of choice for memorial donations and we are very grateful to those individuals who made contributions in Shawn's memory.

MOMMA THE SHOP CAT

Meet Momma, the official shop cat of TSC Store, Stratford. It's so nice when a business takes in a homeless street cat and her kittens! The kittens entered FFN's adoption program and all found loving homes. Momma was spayed and vaccinated through our Trap-Neuter-Return program and decided that she liked TSC so much, she stayed on to become their store mascot. She adjusted well and likes to think she keeps things running smoothly. Thanks to TSC for making Momma one of your team and for your donations of cat litter to FFN.



So much gratitude ...



(above) A van-load of empties from Okazu and Red Rabbit; (below) FFN treasurer Jamie (wearing her catoque) with her brothers Alex and Rob.

TURNING BOTTLES INTO CASH

FFN's bottle drive got a big boost on 7 December 2019! Many thanks to Stratford restaurants, Okazu and The Red Rabbit, for letting Feline Friends take a mountain of empties from both of their premises! We're grateful that the business owners are such lovely, community-minded folks. Refunds from the bottle haul came to a grand total of \$467.80, all of which goes to help FFN kitties! Thanks to our hard-working team of volunteers and their large vehicles!! Thanks also to Okazu's Brittany for her muscle!

THANK YOU – LITTER-ALLY!

To Feed-All Pet Centre and Pet Valu Stratford for donating food and to Ruffin's Pet Centre Stratford for donating litter. The cats & kittens in our Foster/Adoption and TNR Programs go through A LOT of food and litter, so it really helps!



OPEN HOUSE, OPEN HEARTS

A huge thank you to Coventry Animal Hospital and Mitchell Veterinary Services and to everyone who attended their Christmas open house on 4 December. Both clinics graciously chose to thank their clients and at the same time fundraise for Feline Friends. We received a whopping combined total of \$1,715.40! WOW! We were also invited to be part of this special evening and had a great time meeting people, dogs, cats, a lizard, and the most adorable chinchilla all waiting for their photo with Santa. It's through the support of our vet clinics and the community that we are able to help so many homeless cats. We are extremely grateful!

STYLISH AND FUNCTIONAL

In the midst of the winter weather, it was good timing for the donation of eight insulated outdoor cat shelters from students of the OVC Community Outreach Club! OVC is the Ontario Veterinary College at the University of Guelph and the Outreach Club got very creative making and decorating the shelters! Themes included cats in space, under water, and a shelter disguised as a cow. Many thanks to Kyla and all of the other students involved in this project. Your shelters are going to make some cats very happy *and* comfortable – great work!



(above) former FFN foster kittens Potato & Tucker (in hammock) just hangin' out with a pal in the cat room at the Alley Cat Café; (below) beautiful Josie in the cat condo at Feed-All Pet Centre. Potato, Tucker, and Josie were all successfully adopted.

FEATURING FFN FOSTERS

A big, big thanks is owed to Alley Cat Café and Feed-All Pet Centre for providing foster care to so many of FFN's kitties and giving them a venue where potential adopters can meet and fall in love with them!

One hundred percent of the adoption fees from cats and kittens showcased at these businesses comes to Feline Friends. Feed-All and Alley Cat provide the food, litter, creature-comforts, and love out of the goodness of their hearts. We're so fortunate to have caring partners like these!



GIVING TUESDAY SHOUT-OUT

A big thank-you to Stonetown Coffee Co. of St Marys for choosing FFN as their Giving Tuesday charity partner in 2019! Danette and her staff collected food, litter boxes, blankets, toys, pet beds, and bowls throughout December. Pictured below are samples of what we received. Thank you to Stonetown Coffee Co.'s generous patrons for providing all of these great items, which will definitely be put to good use in FFN's Foster/Adoption and TNR Programs.



Our scared kitties and those who aren't feeling well and need to be encouraged to eat LOVE this Squeeze Up paté.



WELL DONE, JASEENA!

Thank you, Jaseena, for putting your creativity to work to help FFN continue our Spay/Neuter and Foster/Adoption Programs!

Jaseena did it again, with your help, she was able to raise \$404.75 & 7 cat beds for Feline Friends Network of Stratford, Ontario, Canada. The catnip pillows are made from scraps of our leftover fabrics. The cat beds are upcycled pillow cases with all our scraps that are not able to be made into something!

– posted on Facebook by *The Busy Momma*, 7 December 2019

AND A ROUND OF AP-PAWS

to Dr Sandra Bhardwaj of Avon Pet Hospital who helped more people “fix” their pets while contributing to helping FFN's homeless kitties by holding a discounted spay/neuter event at her Stratford clinic. Dr Bhardwaj donated \$50 – \$10 from every surgery – to Feline Friends.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR
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