

# cat tales

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FELINE FRIENDS NETWORK



## The cat of many names

by Colleen Ireland

When is a failure really a big win? Here is the story of my failed foster of Scooter, the cat with many names.

My first encounter with this wee girl was hearing a tiny, plaintive mew from inside a carrier when she was brought to me after her spay. It was so lost and lonely and scared, it broke my heart. In those days, her name was Scout. Scout the terrified.

Scout started out life with us in the privacy of my home office. And private she was. She was so traumatized that she lived inside a box that was inside a big dog crate that was inside a room with a closed door, and only came out of her hidey box when I slid food into the crate. She hissed and growled when I tried to touch her, and covered away when I took her litter

box out for scooping. She had been abandoned, starved, and frozen so I didn't blame her one bit for thinking humans were untrustworthy.

It was suggested that I use something with a long handle to stroke and pet her through the bars of the crate, just to get her used to being touched. I used a spoon. She savaged it the first couple of times, but I persisted. Eventually, she grudgingly came to accept that the crazy food lady was going to touch her with her damn spoon and she might as well just glare balefully and let it happen. That's how she got her second name. My daughter and her friends were amused by this technique and renamed her "Spoons." Spoons the angry girl.

At last, I found the key to her heart, and it was toys. I would sit at the mouth of the big dog crate and roll a ball into her hidey box, and – bam – she would lob it back to me. We'd discovered the jingle hockey game. We still play. She's a mini Carey Price, believe me. Then one day, finally, she was out, and I could entice her up onto the couch for her food ... and then ... she let me touch her. At first, it was only if I had food or treats, but one magic day it was just her, looking for that human touch. When it all became a little too much for her, she would still

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suddenly flash away beyond reach. So we started calling her Scooter.

So why is this a failure? Here's why. When you foster, you put a blockade around your heart because you know your job is to keep kitty safe and warm until their forever people make their way to them, and then you say goodbye. Well, little Scooter's forever person was my husband. As she came out of her shell and started to live in the big house with us, show the dogs who was boss, play her endless games of jingle hockey, gain confidence, and demand her fifth meal of the day in her teensy little voice, I could see very clearly the love hearts in his eyes. He was crazy about her. One morning, as we had coffee together and she rolled in his lap looking for belly rubs, he said "I can't let her go" – the blockade in my heart collapsed in a split second and a tsunami of all the emotion I had been storing away flooded out.

So, now she is ours, Scooter the loved.



*Cats are glorious creatures – who must on no accounts be underestimated ... Their eyes are fathomless depths of cat-world mysteries.*

*– Lesley Anne Ivory (from *Glorious Cats*, *The Paintings of Lesley Anne Ivory*)*





## Wine Raffle winners

Congratulations to the winners of FFN’s annual Wine Raffle, drawn 18 October 2019: first prize was won by Mitisha Smitjes (above left), second prize by Louise Allard (above centre), third prize by Judith Sept (above, right), and fourth prize by Dorcas Till!

Special thanks to our prize sponsors: Stratford Festival, CR Plastic Products, BrokerLink, Peter Maranger & Associates Inc – The Co-operators, Julie Heitbohmer – Sutton Group – First Choice Realty, Warehouse Clearance Outlet, MacLeods Scottish Shop, Edison’s Café Bar, Nancy Hotson – Buzz Stop, Covet – The Community Closet, Boomer’s Gourmet Fries, Stephanie

Theodoropoulos – Sutton Group – First Choice Realty, Illume Wellness Spa, Foster’s Inn, the Red Rabbit, AO Pasta, Patricia & Larry Burnell and, last but not least, Rasmus Fahraeus & Brendon Lyoness – Re/Max. It’s because of your generosity that FFN is able to offer such wonderful prizes!

Also, we are truly grateful for the contributions of everyone who bought and sold tickets, and the volunteers who handled the behind-the-scenes organization: obtaining prize donations, distributing and tracking all 2,800 tickets, and everything else you all did to make this draw happen! This year’s raffle raised \$8,995 (up from \$8,735 last year) to support our spay/neuter and foster/adoption programs – another roaring success!

## INSULATED SHELTERS FOR OUTDOOR CATS

Cooler weather is here, and with it we think of our outdoor feline friends. If you already have an insulated shelter, now is the time to give it a fall cleaning and make sure that it’s in good condition. Remember to replace old bedding material with clean straw.

If you want a shelter for outdoor/community cats in your care or neighbourhood, building your own

is easier than you might think! See the following link for an episode of “Cheap and Green,” featuring FFN volunteers building insulated shelters: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Gvijlvck8I>. Thanks to video creators Rachelle Redford and Garner Haines!

Or, if you would like to buy a winter cat shelter built by our volunteers, please contact Pat Burnell at 519.271.0657. FFN offers shelters for \$25 each.



# Alley Cat Café

Wow, fifteen of our fosters (pictured on page 5) have been adopted at the Alley Cat Café since it opened in August! A big thank you to owners Carl and Silke, their staff, and wonderful cat-wranglers for proving so much TLC to our kitties while in their care. It has been fantastic seeing the kittens adjust to the cat room so quickly and, even better, seeing them get adopted! Little Orion (pictured at right) is now being featured there along with some kitties from Hearts4Paws Animal Rescue.

Haven't been to a cat café before? Visit <https://www.alleycatcafe.ca> to discover what it's all about.



## WAITING FOR HER MATCH

Baby Orion is a sweet girl who was found living all alone under a dumpster. TNR volunteer April was able to quickly trap her and she was placed in foster care. Orion has now graduated to the Alley Cat Café to hang out with Carl, Silke, and the cat-wranglers. She is a shy kitten who may take a few days to adjust, but it's so worth the wait. If you are interested in meeting her, drop by the Alley Cat Cafe. For more information, please fill out FFN's adoption inquiry form and the next available volunteer will be in touch. [https://felinefriends.ca/ffn\\_adoption\\_inquiry.php](https://felinefriends.ca/ffn_adoption_inquiry.php).

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## FEED-A-FERAL FOOD DRIVE – DONATIONS NEEDED!

Will you help feed our ferals? Alley Cat Café is running a food drive for FFN colony cats! Donations of wet and dry food are being accepted throughout the month of November. Please drop food donations off at the café at 1 Market Street in Stratford or email us at [info@felinefriends](mailto:info@felinefriends) if you're able to help.

*Cats look beyond appearances – beyond species entirely, it seems – to peer into the heart.*

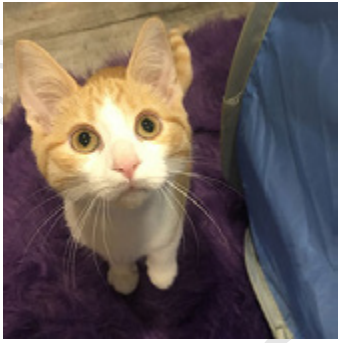
– Barbara L. Diamond



Carl and Silke, owners of Alley Cat Café



# FFN foster kittens adopted at Alley Cat Café so far ...



Clementine



Hazel



Tahnee



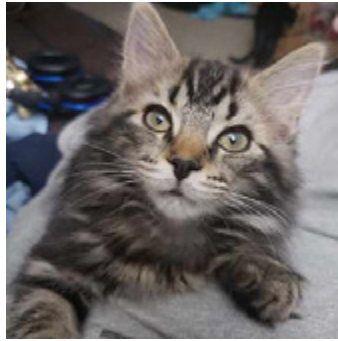
Corey



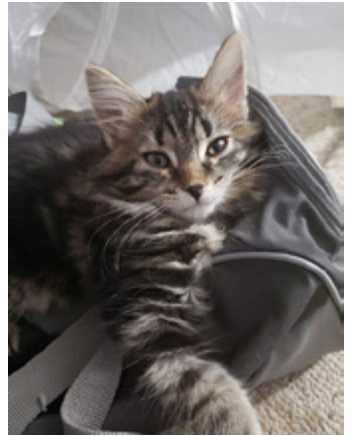
Lucy



Lily



Breezie



Fern



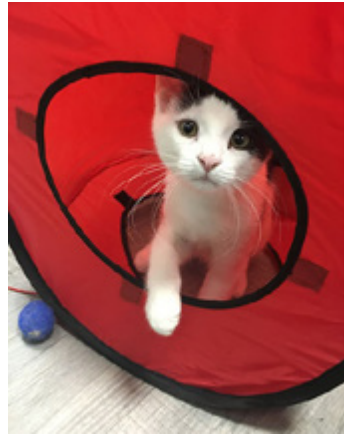
Flynn and Hemi



Neville



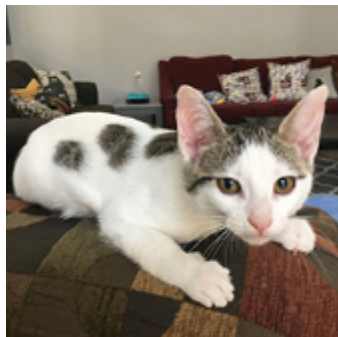
Suki



Desi



Ricki



Pete



## Local pet supply stores give back

We are so fortunate to have the ongoing support of local pet supply stores. Helping Feline Friends is one of the ways they give back to our community.

This month, we would like to thank **Pet Valu Stratford** for the donation of food for the foster and colony cats in our care, and **Ruffins Pet Centre Stratford** for the donation of litter for our foster cats!



Thanks also to **Feed-All Pet Centre** for showcasing FFN foster cat, Georgie, for adoption.

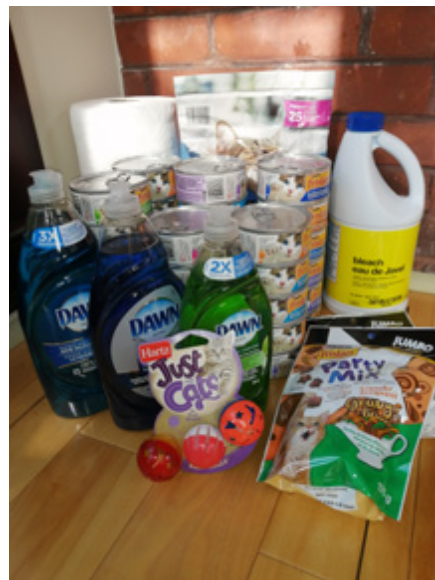
Our beautiful “goth girl” Georgie is approximately 2 years old! Drop by Feed-All to meet her and say hi. If you’re interested in adopting or want more information, please fill out the FFN adoption inquiry form at [https://felinefriends.ca/ffn\\_adoption\\_inquiry.php](https://felinefriends.ca/ffn_adoption_inquiry.php). Georgie’s adoption fee is \$125 and she has been spayed, vaccinated, and micro-chipped.



We’re grateful to the **Red Rabbit** for donating their empties – 38 boxes full!! – to FFN on Thanksgiving weekend. If you don’t know this Stratford restaurant, their amazing food and service have justifiably made them very popular – which is lucky for us, because they go through a lot of bottles. The van-load of empties fetched \$90.20 to help kitties!

Special thanks to Dan, Adam, Jessie, and team. We are looking forward to taking more empties off your hands in the near future!

Thank you so much to **Crunch Fitness Stratford** for the donation of items to help care for our fosters! The overflowing box of cat food, cleaning supplies, toys and treats are very much appreciated. Thanks to all who participated!





## A generous birthday girl

We would like to send a GREAT BIG THANK YOU to **Charlee McFarlane!** For her eighth birthday this year, Charlee asked her friends to give \$10 for a gift – \$5 to donate to FFN and \$5 to buy something for herself. Her mom said, “We were super proud of her for asking for that in lieu of presents.” Thank you, Charlee, for the \$55 donation to Feline Friends Network! And HAPPY BELATED BIRTHDAY!

## 400+ adoptions!

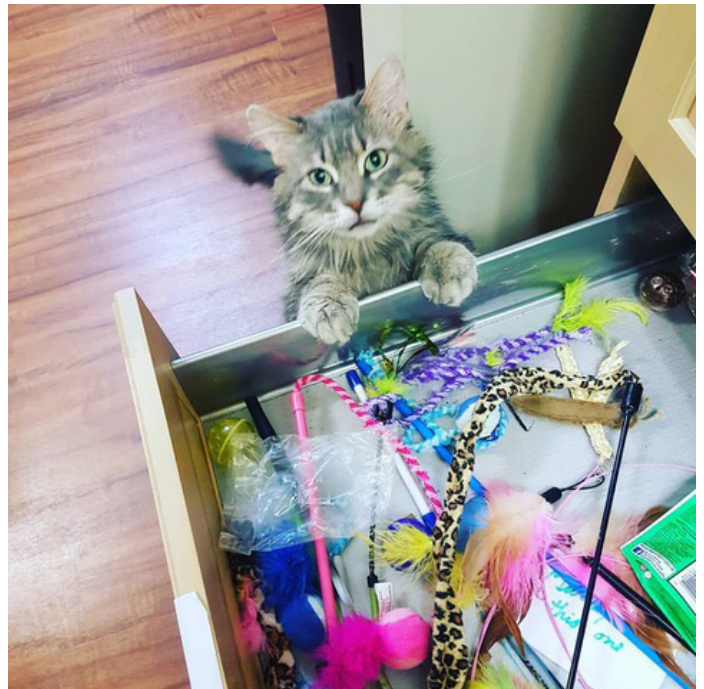
Did you know? Since 2016, FFN has adopted out over 400 cats! All of these were homeless cats! It’s hard – and heartbreaking – to believe that so many homeless cats were out there. And, unfortunately, 99.9% of them were not spayed or neutered. Since one female cat can have an average of 5 kittens per litter, and up to 3 litters per year –for a total of 15 kittens per year! – just imagine the number of homeless kittens that could have been born if FFN had not been able to trap them, have them “fixed,” and find fur-ever homes for them. Spread the word – spay or neuter your kitten before his or her first litter!

## Murray

by Dawn Benson

Since volunteering with Feline Friends, I have witnessed so many cats come into our care, many of whom I feared would never come around or get adopted. Some are with us for so long while others get adopted quickly. Obviously, I love them all, but there are some who I always think about and miss.

Murray is one of those. I miss his face so much! He was so ill when he was found that he couldn’t even walk. He wouldn’t let anyone touch him. After a lot of love, patience, and attention from all the volunteers, he became a little prince – and a bit of a jerk (haha). He is living his best life now. Definitely a special guy!



NEWSLETTER EDITOR  
garet markvoort

