

A Walk on the Wild Side

In This Issue:

A Word from Our President_____	p1
County Ordinance_____	p2
Grant Success_____	p4
You've Come a Long Way, Baby: Tiny Timmy _____	p5
Looking for Fur-Ever Home: Raja_____	p5
Happy Tails: Cotton_____	p6
A Buddy Story_____	p7
Eleanor_____	p8
Quintuplets_____	p9
Looking for Fur-Ever Home: Charlie & Siren _____	p10
Bottle Babies_____	p11

**If you are feeding an
outside cat, please contact
FCR immediately!**

**We can help trap and
spay or neuter outdoor
cats.**

**Email FCR at
info@feralcatrescuemd.org**

**CATS HAVE 3 TO 4
LITTERS A YEAR!**



A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Seasons Greetings to All

In 2024, Feral Cat Rescue experienced an even bigger year than last year! We are a small group but accomplish so much due to our faithful volunteers and your greatly appreciated donations. Our rescue consists of nearly 30 volunteers who contribute in various ways; whether it be 4 hours per month or 80, each role plays an integral part in keeping this amazing rescue functioning and in ensuring its continued successful mission. I feel deep appreciation and gratitude for every volunteer. Thank you to our volunteers!

Please donate or volunteer. Some volunteers transport cats, some trap cats, many foster cats, and some work at the adoption events at the California Petco every Saturday and Sunday. As of October 16th, this year we had spayed and neutered 710 cats. Our goal is to vet at least 900 by December 31st. We have taken over 300 cats into our foster program and have found homes for roughly 230 of them. More will be adopted out by the end of the year as well.

Last year we spent \$93,000 to accomplish this and were able to do so because of your generous donations and our incredible volunteers.

We would like to extend a giant thank you to Dr Kosich and the caring staff at Calvert Well Pet, Paw Prints Animal Hospital, and Well Pet Clinic Lexington Park. We also greatly thank All Kinds Veterinary Hospital for their support since our inception in 2007. They have always given us a break financially in order to help us vet sick and injured animals that need a full service vet. Thank you to our vets!

We stepped up our Trap, Neuter, Return program this year and had several Feral Feline Fixing Festivals, as well as our weekly routine trapping. Some weeks consisted of two surgery days instead of just one surgery day. This increased the number of feral cats spayed, vaccinated, and returned to their outdoor homes.

We are still not able to help every caretaker that has contacted us. We just do not have enough volunteers to trap and transport. Some caretakers are unable or unwilling to trap the cats themselves and bring them to our drop off locations in Great Mills and Mechanicsville. We need more volunteers in order to help more people and vet more cats.

Some goals we were not able to fully accomplish. We want to increase community awareness and do humane education. We want to recruit more foster families and volunteers. We want to do fundraisers. Mostly we want for all the cats to be spayed and neutered.

I hope all of you will consider sending in a donation so that we can continue our mission to relieve the suffering of feral cats and their offspring. Our address is PO Box 623 Great Mills, Md 20634. We also have a PayPal button on our website where you can use your credit card to donate. The address is www.feralcatrescuemd.org If you can't donate financially, please donate your time.

Warm Regards,

Diane Harris

Feral Cat Rescue President

A Walk on the Wild Side

COMPARE COOK COUNTY TO ST MARY'S COUNTY-A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

By Diane Harris



St. Mary's County Signage



Cook County Signage

I am still going to use my words. I wish we had the Cook County sign in our parks instead of the sign we have.

A new animal ordinance was adopted by the St. Mary's County Commissioners and put into effect on July 30, 2024. Despite protests by a number of citizens at an open forum in front of the Commissioners, they still put in the ordinance that no one is allowed to feed animals on County property. There is an established feral cat colony on County property. It has been there for at least 11 years.

In addition, the 2017 animal ordinance had said that the definition of owners did not include feral cat caretakers. The new 2024 ordinance did not exclude caretakers. We are actually getting less progressive and going back in time with this wording of the new ordinance. In some counties, in the past, in order to get caretakers to stop feeding feral cats, animal control would say if they fed the cats for 3 days, then the caretakers were owners and would be fined for not having rabies certificates up to date. If there was no TNR, feral cats would not get rabies vaccines at all. With TNR, they are at the very least vaccinated against rabies once. Catching a feral cat twice in a trap is usually pretty difficult, and therefore, it is hard to keep up with vaccines.

I will add that since the ordinance says if you harbor an animal for 3 days, then you are the owner. This means if we find a cat, and we feed it for 3 days, then no one can tell us to hold it for 30 days, advertise we found the cat, or call the shelter to ask if anyone is missing their cat. It is our cat.



A Walk on the Wild Side

We also have been asking for years that our ordinance say that ear tipped cats will not be taken to the shelter unless they are sick or injured, and the Commissioners did not include this either. We could spend \$1500 and vet 20 cats, and they could be taken to the shelter to be euthanized. There is no protection in the ordinance for vetted ear tipped cats or our efforts or the money we spend.

Despite the fact that we have been working diligently for 18 years doing Trap, Neuter, Return and have significantly reduced the feral cat population and the euthanasia rate, the Commissioners have not shown their support for TNR in the ordinance. Feral Cats are not even mentioned in the ordinance.

In 2007, when we first started Feral Cat Rescue, Tri County Shelter was euthanizing 550 per month. That number decreased every year until the 3 counties started separating to create their own shelters. In 2020 only 60 cats were euthanized per month. Trap, Neuter, Return works. It saves taxpayers dollars. Cats that go into the shelter cost taxpayers money. It has been said that it costs \$100 per cat that winds up in the shelter on average. TNR reduces the feral cat population and helps eliminate rabies. It also reduces the suffering of so many animals who deserve our compassion.

According to Gandhi, "the greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated."

A Walk on the Wild Side

Grant Success!

By Diane Harris

In 2024, Feral Cat Rescue received a grant from the Md Department of Agriculture for \$20,000 to spay/neuter and vaccinate feral cats in certain zip codes in St Mary's County. The condition was that we would vet 250 cats, and in fact, we vetted 252 cats with the grant money! You might think that is a lot of money but as of October 16th, we have vetted 710 cats and our goal is to reach 900 cats this year.

The \$20,000 only paid for 250 cats, and that money did not include the dewormer and the distemper vaccines. We have done this with your donated money. Thank you! This is a huge accomplishment. Can you imagine how many cats would be out there if we did not vet 900 cats? That would be 450 females having 3 litters a year with 4 kittens per litter and totaling 5400 cats. Then the kittens would start mating as early as 4 months, and it would have been ever more kittens.

The good news is for 2025, our President wrote a grant application again, and the Md Department of Agriculture will be awarding us \$24,000 in 2025 to vet 300 cats. The work involved requires a lot of time. Just to write the grant takes hours.

Trapping, transporting cats to and from the vet and communicating with everyone to let them know when to trap and when to close their traps is also very time consuming. Communicating and encouraging caretakers to help with the process takes time. We need volunteers to help, and we need money. Even volunteering 5 hours a month is a big help.

We hope you will consider joining our small and mighty team!



A Walk on the Wild Side

You've Come a Long Way, Baby!

By Diane Harris



Tiny Timmy Before

One of our volunteers was called to an apartment complex where there is a feral colony, and she went over to pick up a litter of 5 kittens. One of the kittens, Tiny Timmy, was in critical condition. He didn't even weigh a pound. His eyes were sealed shut.

Carrie, who is one of our volunteers, rushed him up to Calvert Well Pet. The vet didn't think he would be able to see, and poor Timmy was dehydrated. He was treated, and Carrie took him home to start the round-the-clock treatments. Every three hours, his eyes were dosed with 3 different types of antibiotics, and she fed him as often as he would eat. Carrie's efforts paid off. With time, he healed and even found a home of his own.



Tiny Timmy After

Raja Needs A Home

My name is Rajah. I was born in 2018. I am very friendly; however, at Petco, I feel really scared and growl at everyone, so no one has adopted me or given me a chance.

Do you know someone who has no pets and would foster to adopt me? Please tell them about me. I need to live in a quiet household where I am the only pet.

I come when my foster Mom calls me, and I love to get in bed with her at night and get lots of love. I love to be petted.

I spend the majority of my day sitting in my cat tower watching the birds and the squirrels. My foster Mom has a cat bed in a sunny window for me so I can look out the window, feel warm and cozy, then snooze and dream about hunting.

I would love to find my person. Could that be you? I would love you always.

Yours truly,

Raja



REDUCED ADOPTION FEE SPONSORED BY MALVINA SHIMANOV
RAJAH IS ONLY \$50

Cotton

By Laura Diaduk

I was called to trap a very small colony of cats in Ridge. There were only 3 cats. The caretaker said there was a mom, her older kitten, and a large white male. They told me the male had been around for several years after he was put outside by a neighbor when they moved. Although the caretaker kindly fed him, no one took him in or got him help. We TNR'd the other two cats, but I decided to evaluate Cotton and give him a chance.

Although he was being fed daily, he looked rough. A beautiful flame point Siamese like him should be soft and clean. Instead, he was dirty, with coarse fur and clear scars from fights with other males. He had an obvious upper respiratory infection, complete with sneezing, congestion, and snot, and he held his ears flat and kept shaking his head, which was indicative of an ear infection. Despite all this, when I reached out my hand, he bumped his head into my palm and purred for me. I named him Cotton.

Calvert Well Pet got him neutered, combo tested, and started on an antibiotic. Unfortunately, he tested positive for FIV. FIV is Feline Immunodeficiency Virus. It is transmitted by blood, usually between in-tact males like Cotton fighting for territory or mating rights. I knew this disease would make it harder for his body to fight the infections he had, so I kept a close eye on him.

After two weeks of care, I requested another antibiotic since his URI wasn't going away. After another two weeks of no improvement, I sent him up to Calvert Well Pet again for evaluation. Dr Jen determined that the infection had gone away but his nose was runny likely due to a polyp. She recommended taking him to get a scope.

After a couple months, we were able to get Cotton into All Kinds Vet with Dr Adam. He explained that even if there was a polyp, it was likely in his nasal passages and couldn't be removed anyway. More likely, Cotton had an upper respiratory infection untreated for so long that his nasal passages have experienced deterioration, leading to debris getting trapped and resulting in the constant sneezing and snot. His suppressed immune system due to the FIV would allow bacteria to take hold and cause infection after infection.



Cotton when he was first rescued



Cotton after being adopted

A Buddy Story - Can You Provide an Outdoor Home?

By Diane Harris

We try very hard not to relocate cats, but sometimes it is in the best interest of the cats that we do so. This is one of those stories.

We do not like to relocate because the cats have to stay in cages for 45 days to acclimate to their new outside home. It is certainly not pleasant for the cats to be caged for all that time. They want to run around and do cat things. Sometimes after being released, they don't stay, and we don't know their fates - they could starve, become injured, or be attacked by wildlife.



We are currently trying to find homes for 4 colonies. We often do it in pairs or more. It is difficult to find these homes because people don't want cats that are not friendly toward humans. We really need to find Good Samaritans who will help. Fortunately, we have found one! She is taking an entire colony where the caretaker had a stroke and can no longer care for the cats. The feral adults will go to her farm and stay in her tack room. I have taken in 2 of the kittens to tame and to find inside only homes, but that is beside the point. You don't have to have a farm. You just need to live away from roads.

In the other situations, one of the caretakers died, and in the other, the mobile home park does not want anyone feeding the cats there. The cats are starving or people secretly feed them after management leaves. Management threatens to evict, if tenants are caught feeding. The management is so kind, don't you think?

Some places realize they keep the rodent and snake populations down. Others don't care. This is really getting away from the Buddy Story of Orange Crush and Captain.

Orange Crush had to be relocated several years ago, along with a couple of other feral cats. The other 2 have since passed or moved on, but Crush is still there. Melissa McNeal and her husband Mike took Crush and the others a few years back and became awesome volunteers in Feral Cat Rescue. We trapped Crush again this summer to update shots, and he also received dental care. We aren't always able to recapture, but Crush was lucky.

Captain is his new buddy. Captain was living behind a business very close to the road this past spring. The trapper felt that he was young enough to be tamed, so he was taken into our foster system. For months, efforts were being made to tame him but to no avail. He was just too big when we trapped him.

He was put outside as a companion to Crush, and their friendship began. They are both living their best lives, thanks to your donations!

So many other cats are waiting for their chances at the good life. Can you provide an outdoor home for two or more feral cats? Can you provide food to help feed cats? FCR constantly needs lams adult and kitten dry food.

Eleanor: A Journey of Resilience and Hope

By Melissa Anjay

Eleanor is a brave little kitten rescued from a feral litter with her mother and siblings. Unlike her thriving family, Eleanor was born with a condition that affects her two back legs. Despite this challenge, her fighting spirit shines through as she explores her surroundings and engages with her siblings, showing that her limitations won't define her.

To regain strength and movement, Eleanor follows a rigorous therapy regimen that includes weekly physical therapy and acupuncture sessions. Under the care of Dr. Jennifer Tacia at Big River Acupuncture and Rehabilitation in Charlotte Hall, Eleanor makes steady progress. During her home exercise sessions, she is playful and energetic, zooming around the room so quickly that it's often difficult for her foster family to keep up with her exuberance.

Eleanor's resilience has touched the hearts of many, and her foster family documents her journey, celebrating every small victory. With the support of her caregivers and Dr. Tacia's expertise, Eleanor is not just working to regain her physical abilities; she is inspiring others to believe in the power of hope and perseverance. Her story serves as a reminder that with love and support, every setback can lead to a remarkable comeback.

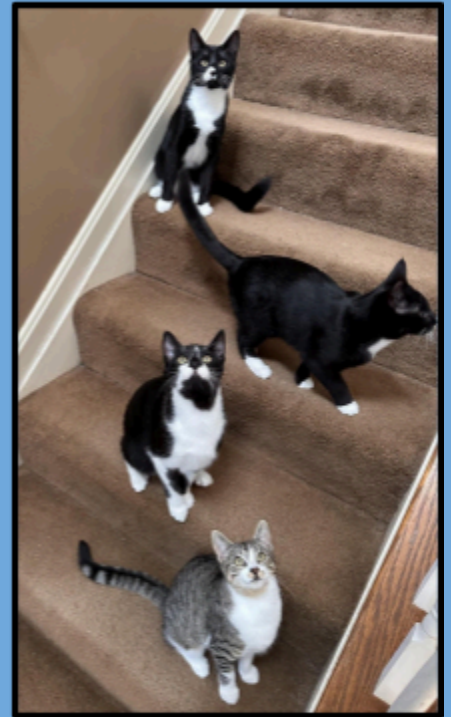


Not Just a Singleton, Quintuplets!

By Diane Harris

Wendy and Mark Schofield found a mother cat and her 5 kittens outside their home. Because they are cat lovers and had worked with Feral Cat Rescue doing TNR for a colony that Wendy had been feeding, they knew exactly what they had to do. They trapped Mom, caught the 5 babies, and brought them into their bathroom where they would all be safe. They asked if they could foster for Feral Cat Rescue and when the kittens were 8 weeks old, it was the plan to start bringing them to Petco to find them their new homes.

As it turned out, there was a big hiccup in this plan. One kitten, poor little Skye, tested positive for feline leukemia. Her mother and siblings tested negative. This meant to be absolutely sure her siblings would not come down with the disease, Wendy and Mark had to foster them for 2 months longer and retest to make sure they were still negative. It was hoped that Skye would also throw off the virus and become negative as well. Fortunately the siblings were all negative when retested, but Skye was still positive. Mom was spayed and vaccinated and returned to her outdoor life.



Skye's numbers have dropped. She will be retested in December, and it is hoped she will then be negative. It was always in the plan that Skye would be Wendy and Mark's cat and live out her life with them no matter how much time she has in this world. She seems quite healthy at this point and is doing well.

Duncan, Iona, Angus & Conner went to their first adoption event and did not receive any applications. The following week, the couple were in the car to bring them to Petco and tears started coming to both their eyes. I love this compassion! They turned the car around and went home. They texted me and said they would be adopting Skye's 4 siblings as well. The couple started out with the plan to adopt one and wound up adopting all 5. Quintuplets! Hopefully, Skye will eventually test negative and be able to rejoin her siblings. Please send positive thoughts and prayers her way.

A Walk on the Wild Side

Charlie & Siren Need a Home

Charlie & Siren recently lost their treasured mom who loved them dearly. Their mom was a deeply respected and cherished member of the local community who lent a helping hand to every person, pet, or homeless animal she came across.

"Mom" rescued SIREN from a house fire. She took Siren into her home and fell in love with her. Siren over time became her sleeping buddy. Siren is a gorgeous, fluffy, long haired Tortie. Siren likes to be brushed, petted, sits in laps, and sleeps on the bed (but she's ok if you don't want her to sleep with you). Siren is 13 now and in good health and quite strikingly beautiful.

Their mom would be so proud if some wonderful senior or quiet family would welcome them into their home. They both have a sponsor who will help with future vetting if necessary. They would be great staying together but they do not have to. They just need someone to love and appreciate them as much as their mom did. Please consider a senior cat! They have life and love left to give.



A Walk on the Wild Side

Bottle Babies - All 4 Lived!

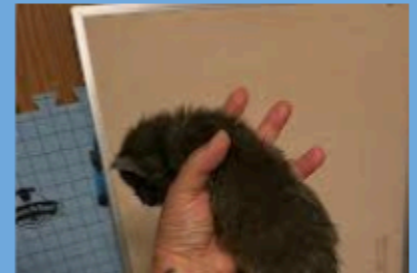
By Melissa McNeal



On August 25, 2024, all the Feral Cat fosters got an urgent text from our VP Laura looking for a foster home for 4 extremely small kittens. All our foster homes are always full during kitten season. The mother was only a kitten herself at 4-5 months old and had abandoned her babies.

I want to thank Mr. Walter for the excellent care he gave these babies as soon as he found them. Without him, these babies would have died. He put them in a box with blankets and newspaper to keep them warm and went out to buy kitten milk to feed them until he could get them to us. He also worked tirelessly for weeks afterwards to trap the young mom and any intact ferals so there would not be any more feral kittens.

My husband and I agreed to foster these babies. At first glance, from a picture that was sent the kittens looked to be 3 to 4 weeks old. When they arrived, we realized they were not even 10 days old. Their eyes were not open. This would be round the clock feeding every 2 hours as their tiny bellies could not hold much. These little babies weighed between 7 to 9 ounces. They were warm and not dehydrated thanks to Mr Walter.



This was going to be quite the challenge as I had never had bottle babies this tiny. My husband and I set up the kitten tent with a heating pad to keep them warm. We picked up some KMR kitten milk from another foster. Thank you, Carrie. They were on a feeding schedule of every two hours around the clock. After feeding, we needed to wipe their genitals and bottoms with a warm wet paper towel to stimulate them to pee and poop as kittens cannot go on their own. If this is not done, they will die. Most of this was done mainly by my husband when I was at work. Thank you, Mikey.

The kittens, even though they were in very good health, were still fragile. I was so happy after the first 24 hours that they were still alive. When caring for bottle babies, you will lose one or more even if you do everything right. Every day all these babies were weighed to make sure they were gaining weight. I worried if they did not gain weight. This went on for weeks.

A Walk on the Wild Side

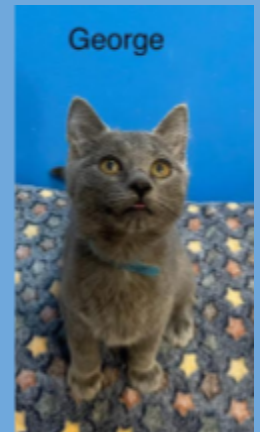
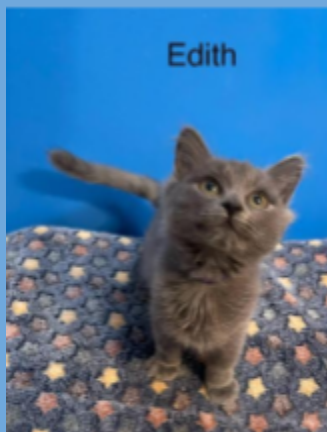
By week 4, they were eating every 3 or 4 hours and sleeping 6 hours through the night. Once they started eating food on their own, we started to relax. Taking care of bottle babies is physically and mentally challenging. It is like being a first-time parent again. As a foster you become very attached to the little ones that have been with you for over a month or more because they think of you as their parent and are always snuggling with you.

Thank you again Mr. Walter. Without you, these babies would not have had a chance. You are the hero in this story.

Even though this story had a happy ending and Mr. Walter did everything right because the mom abandoned the kittens. I wanted to let everyone know however, not to take little kittens

away from their mothers if they are nursing until they are eating food on their own. If you find a litter of kittens, watch for a while to see if the mother comes back before removing them and helping them. All moms need to eat and drink, and she may have walked away for a bit to hunt, eat and drink.

Remember: where there are kittens, there are intact cats that can breed. Please get in touch with us so together we can TNR (Trap Neuter Return) these feral cats.



"We are Animal Rescuers, our work is never done, our homes are never quiet,
our wallets are always empty, but our hearts are always full."



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Feral Cat Rescue, Inc.
PO BOX 623
Great Mills, MD 20634

Email. info@feralcatrescuemd.org

<http://www.feralcatrescuemd.org>

<http://www.facebook.com/FeralCatRescueofSoMD>

