

We Have Many Pets In Need Of Adoption - Please Open Your Heart & Home

Animalfriends

Spring 2017 OF CONNECTICUT

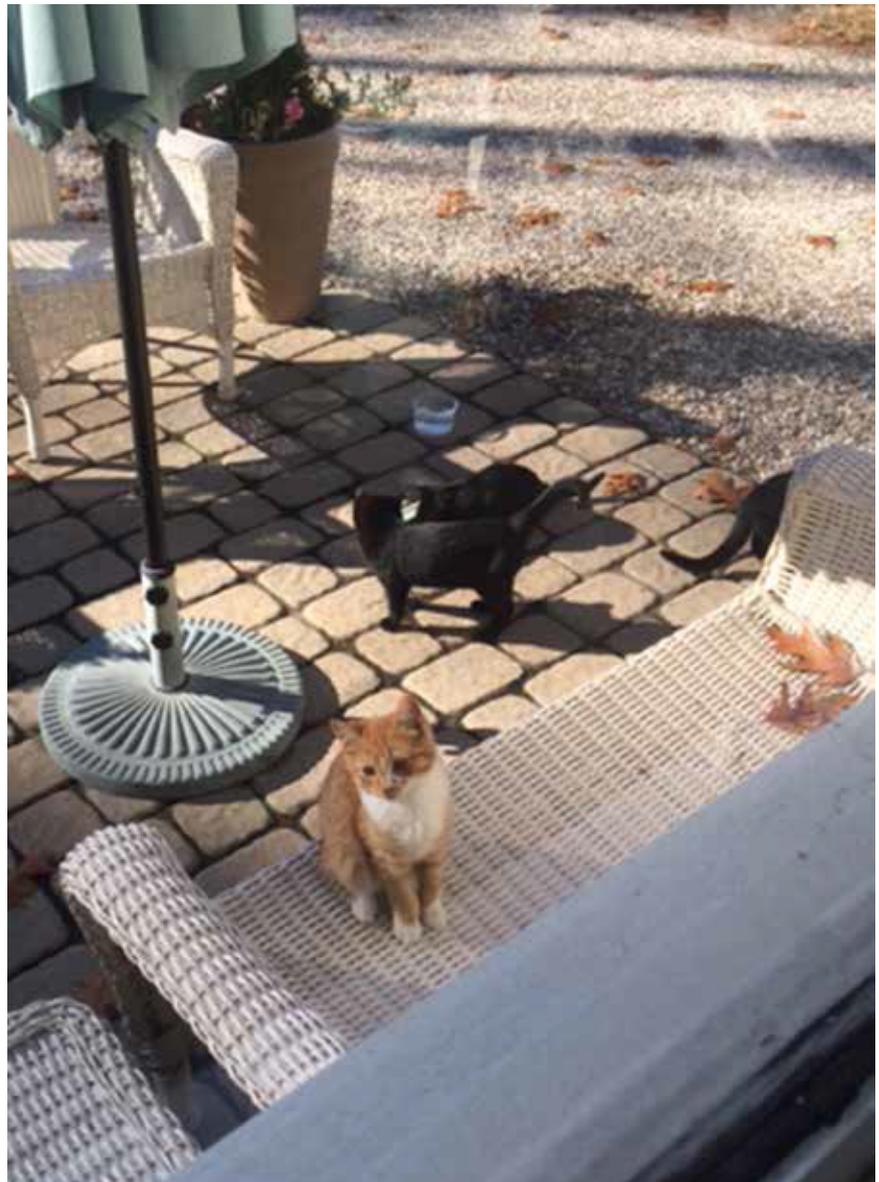
THE CATS OF UNIONVILLE

An Introduction

Early in the spring of 2015, my husband, Garry, and I noticed that a black cat, who had been roaming around our area, looked as if she was nursing kittens. We did not know where she was hiding them. She was getting thinner and thinner, so we started feeding her. We have named her “Mama”, aka “Panther”. In the late fall or early winter 2015, another black cat, who we assumed was one of Mama’s daughters, also began wandering around our yard, and looking as if she was also nursing kittens. She was small, obviously young and also very thin. So, we began feeding “Spookie”, who is solid black with big round golden eyes, just like a Halloween cat.

Spookie became very personable and would come to our back storm door, stand up against it and look in the window. Eventually, she would meow at us. She is very sweet. At that time, we were feeding both Mama and Spookie in the back yard by our shed. We were putting the food on the brick walkway until we noticed slugs climbing inside the food dish...yuck!! We started to put the food dish on an old wooden bench. Eventually, another tortoise colored female cat was eating there as well. As time went on, we discovered she had also had kittens. We named her “Cal” and she is probably Mama’s daughter as well. There had been a large orange male cat in the neighborhood, who had probably mated with Mama.

In early spring of 2016, eight kittens began coming out from under our neighbor Rachel’s back deck,



which is about 10” off the ground. My neighbor and I tried to capture them, coaxing them with sardines, but they would just run back under the deck when we tried to touch them. We would have had to take all the boards off the deck to find all of them. When they had started to come out, I would say they were older than 8 weeks. I

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UNITED WAY

You can donate while at work by making a contribution to THE UNITED WAY. Just specify that your donation is intended for AFOC. Please use the following letters and numbers on the form: AG 0640.



Sunshine Fund

Sunshine was a dog that came to us many years ago. She was a Shepherd Husky cross and was found in a project in Hartford with one eye poked out by a stick. The owners signed the dog over to AFOC. We had her injuries treated and we found her a wonderful home. She lived to be over 14 years old. What happened to Sunshine was just the beginning of many years involved in rescuing injured and abused animals. This fund is in her memory.



I-GIVE MATCHING CONTRIBUTIONS

Register with I-Give on line. Shop on line with major retailers and help AFOC at the same time! All consumer transactions will contain a percentage donated to AFOC.



Sponsorship Program

We have many cats that are not adoptable or hard to place. We are looking for sponsors willing to sponsor a rescue cat by helping to cover the cost of food, litter, and basic medicine. Our goal is to sponsor every cat.

ANOTHER CONVENIENT WAY OF GIFT GIVING!

You can now use your credit card and make a donation on-line through PayPal. Just go directly to our website for further details (www.afocinc.org).



AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon that lets you enjoy the same wide selection of products, low prices, and convenient shopping features as on Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/06-1132973>, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to the eligible charitable organization of your choice. It does not cost anything to sign up or add to your purchase price. It is totally funded by Amazon. Remember, when you are shopping on line with Amazon, go thru AmazonSmile instead and help Animal Friends of Connecticut at the same time.

surmised that there were actually 2 litters of kittens, one older than the other, judging by size. We named them Herbie (orange tiger), Tippy (black with white-tipped tail), Oreo (black and white), Scout (black and white), Tennessee (all black with a white bow tie, like the penguin cartoon character, Tennessee Tuxedo), and Little Blackie (the sweet little runt of the litter). There may even be another mother cat from Mama, who we have named Pierre because he/she is black and white with what looks like a black goatee under her chin. At first we thought Pierre was a male, but because Little Blackie and Tippy follow him so closely, I now think he may be "Pierrette". We shall see when we trap Pierre and take him to the vet.

This past fall I searched online and called our veterinarian to find out how to take care of feral cats, since no one in the neighborhood claimed them. I was given Francine's name and number in West Hartford. She told me about the state vouchers for spaying and neutering feral cats, Jan's number at Berlin Animal Control to obtain the state vouchers, and George from Animal Friends of Connecticut.

Jan was extremely helpful. She is involved with an organization that has partnered with Ragged Mountain Veterinarian in Plainville. They have a spay and neuter clinic one Sunday a month. George twice lent us 4 of his traps, for both the October and November clinics. It wasn't until these clinics that we discovered the sex of the kittens. We neutered Herbie, Little Blackie, Tennessee and spayed Oreo in October. In November we had absolutely extraordinary luck in trapping the three mothers, Mama, Spookie and Cal!

Trapping

We were totally new to the Trap Neuter Release (TNR) method of dealing with feral cats. George gave me fantastic advice on how to use the traps he lent us. He would deliver the traps a few days before the clinic

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so the cats would be used to seeing the traps. You do not set the traps until the afternoon before the day of the spaying or neutering. That way, if they eat the food you have placed in the trap, they will have 8 hours between then and the time of their surgery the next day.

In October, we placed canned cat food on small paper plates at the back of the traps. Within 15 minutes, four kittens were safely inside. We kept them in the garage overnight, covered by towels because it wasn't too cold. We did place the cages next to each other so the cats could see each other and their combined body warmth would help keep them warm. If you read about feral cats online, you learn that when confined in a covered place, they tend to remain quiet and still, and it's absolutely true. I know that if our rescued house cats were ever confined they would meow indignantly!

When we could pick the cats up after their surgery, we brought them home and placed them in the basement because that night was supposed to be much colder and I didn't want the little cats to get too cold. The three male kittens were let go the next day, but we kept the female kitten for an extra day. She growled at me the day that we let her go. She remains the most aloof of them all. I assume it was because we kept her the extra day.

In November, we tried to trap 4 more cats, but succeeded in getting only 3 (Mama, Spooky and Cal). But, they were the original females who gave birth, beginning the saga of the Unionville Cats. Herbie went in the trap but, because he was neutered in October, we opened the door to let him go. Pierre(ette) almost entered a trap, but decided against it. Tippy and Scout followed suit and did not enter either. It was a very cold night, so we put the 3 cages in the garage, on many layers of cardboard and newspaper, and covered the cages with some old rag rugs that we had. The cages again were next to each other so they could see each other and keep each other warm. The next morning, when we went to the veterinarian, they were actually nice and warm when we took off the rugs. We put towels and rugs on them to transport them in our covered pickup. If you do ever use rugs, do not use rugs with a solid or rubber backing because they could cut off air supply. Our old cotton rag rugs are hand-woven and let air through, while keeping the cats heat in.

When we brought the 3 mama cats home after surgery, we left them alone until the evening. Then, before we went to bed, we inspected their cages to see if they were okay, and found that they had all urinated, and one had defecated. Because they had been spayed, we decided to clean their cages before letting them alone

for the night. The veterinarian had placed absorbent pads (like hospital pads) in the cages after surgery for a clean surface, but those were now dirty. We raised the cages onto a board over 2 sawhorses so we didn't have to clean them at the floor level. My husband, Garry, pushed the pads with a stick through the cage grid to my end of the cage, where I lifted the door very carefully and pulled them out. We then placed some margarine tubs with a little water and dry food in the end so they could drink and eat overnight. We placed the cages back on the floor on clean newspaper layers and covered them with the rag rugs. Surgery was on a Sunday and we released them on Tuesday. My husband, Garry, cleaned the cages on Wednesday and George picked them up to be used by other needy feral cat guardians.

Housing

Knowing that winter was coming, and that the kittens were growing, Garry and I decided to provide warm, dry shelter for them. I searched online for ideas for feral cat homes and we decided we wanted something relatively pleasing to look at in our yard. I had the idea of adapting a small dog house and found the perfect one at wayfair.com. It is a "Trixie" dog house that comes in 3 sizes. I chose to order 2 medium size houses. They are made of sturdy, pine tongue-in-groove boards with a covered porch and a roof that opens for cleaning. I read the reviews on the Trixie dog house on several sites (Wayfair had the best price) and took a leap of faith and ordered them. We have been very pleased with their strength, the solid construction and the very easy instructions. If you follow the instructions and the diagrams, you will have none of the problems some reviewers complained about online.

The cats took about 5 days to get accustomed to the houses, but now they all use them. We filled them with about 5-6" of landscape chopped straw for warmth. We modified the entrance door by screwing a 6" board across the bottom of the opening so it would be more cat-sized and to cut down on wind entering the house. The cats sit on the little porches in the sun and stay cozy inside the houses when it is cold. They sleep inside overnight and, whoever has "sentry duty", pokes his/her head above the door opening to see what's going on outside. In the morning, when we get up and they hear the back door open and shut, they all come running out to be fed on our back patio.

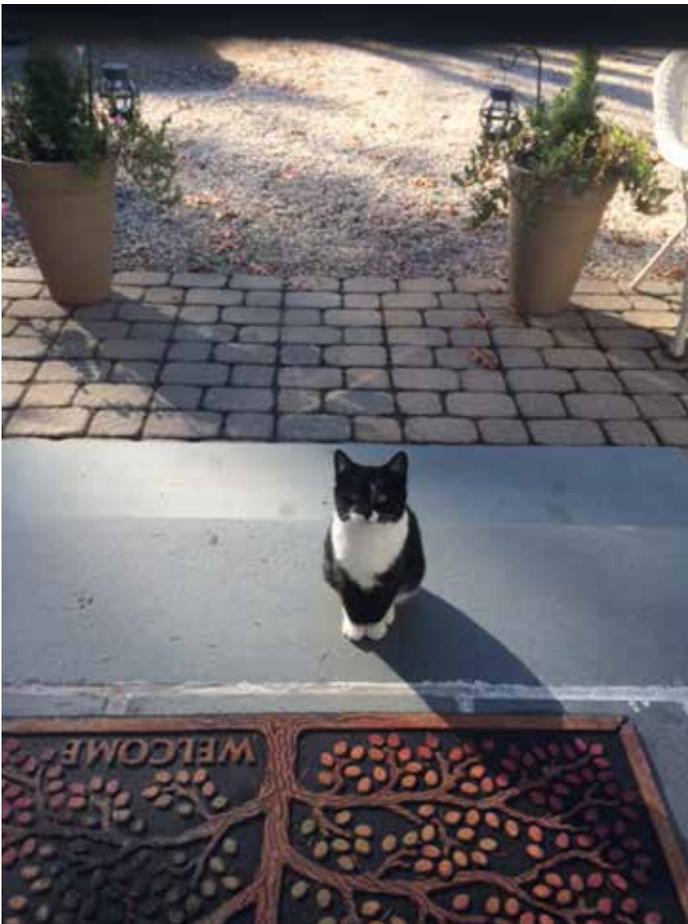
Needless to say, we have some very spoiled feral cats at our house! However, only one of them, Tennes-

see, has allowed my husband to touch him. The others will run if we get closer than 6 or 8 feet, but we are letting them get used to us at their own speed. They sit on top of our picnic table and watch my husband work in the yard or shovel snow. He is their free entertainment, along with a fence to walk on top of and many trees to climb. We like our cat community, but we are trying very hard not to have anymore!!! Hopefully we will be able to trap Pierre(tte), Tippy and Scout the first week in January. Then we will be done!!

George is a fabulous man to help us out. The women volunteers from the Berlin Animal Shelter, who give their time one Sunday a month at Ragged Mountain Veterinarian, are very friendly, knowledgeable and hard- working.

February/March 2017

The two spay/neuter clinics we were going to attend with the last of the Unionville Cats were not



attended. The cats were too smart to go into the traps, no matter how tantalizing the tuna fish was! George Murtha advised me to try propping the traps open and letting the cats get used to eating inside them without

the doors slamming shut. That worked. Our next clinic is March 19. Depending on the weather, we will trap on March 18.

The weather is an issue. The cats are warm and cozy in the little cabins we provided them, and they do still go under the neighbor's deck where they were all born. However, the last bad snowstorm we had in mid-February was not good for one of our kitties. My husband used the snowblower on the driveway and paths to the cat cabins and to the neighbor's deck. The snow was deep and the state snowplows made huge piles of snow along the road in front of our house. We kept track of the cats and noticed Tennessee and Little Blackie were missing. We waited and looked for a day or two, expecting them to come back, but only Little Blackie appeared later with all the rest. My husband found Tennessee in a snowbank along the road in front of the house when he was clearing the sidewalk again. We don't know what he would have been doing on the road. Perhaps they all go across the street when it is dark and the traffic has slowed to almost nothing. We will never know.

It was very cold and the ground was frozen, so my husband dug a shallow grave for Tennessee and we buried him, wrapped in one of my kitchen towels with cats on it. This was probably on February 13. Today, March 13, my husband went to the back yard and Spookie, Tennessee's mother, was lying in the sun next to Tennessee's grave. They know, just like elephants know where one of their own died and re-visit it. After Tennessee disappeared, Little Blackie was alone. They were little buddies and always together. Spookie still accompanies Little Blackie around the yard, but she is independent. Little Blackie pretty much sticks close to home.

We will continue to try to socialize the Unionville Cats. They do not stay 10 feet away when we put food in their dishes and fill their water bowls. They now wait about 3 feet away. Our sites are set on Little Blackie and Herbie as being the most adoptable. They are all still a family unit, brothers, sisters and cousins. They all play together and like to sit in the sun on the cabin roofs and on our picnic table. We love them. We look forward to warmer weather when we will be outside gardening and having them lie in the yard watching us work.

*Becky and Garry
Unionville, CT*

Jesse



Last summer, a striking brown tabby tiger, about 6-months old, appeared in my backyard, crying. The neighbor's outside cat viciously attacked him and chased him off his turf. I walked down the hill to the tiger and was met with a ferocious growl. I gave him space and left food on my porch for him. I inquired among my neighbors. No one knew where the tiger came from. He looked well fed and in pristine condition. We assumed he was a neighbor's cat who was allowed outside.

Months passed. The tiger periodically appeared on my hill and in the nearby woods where there are coyotes. He'd eat food from my porch, but bolted, terrified, when he saw me. It was hard to get a good look at him. Sometimes, late at night, I'd hear my inside cats stirring near the slider door and find the tiger looking in at my cats.

Cold weather came. The tiger appeared outside with more frequency, huddled beside my porch in freezing temperatures. He would not come near me. I wondered if he had been abandoned since that summer day when I first saw him, and had been secretly eating food at my porch since then. I got a good look at him; he suddenly appeared quite large. I wondered if he was not a male, but a pregnant mother cat. It was heartbreaking. I had to do something.

I telephoned Animal Friends of CT and left a message. It was New Year's. Judy returned my call in less than an hour, then Pat called to follow-up. She brought a Havahart trap to my home and explained how to use it. This was my first hands-on animal rescue. We knew the cat would eat from my porch if I was out of view. Pat advised me to position the cage with the food in the same location that he was accustomed to. It took some doing to keep the squirrels out of the trap while remaining unseen to the cat. With tremendous luck, within a short time-frame, the cat walked into the cage for food and sprang the trap door closed. He struggled to escape,

growling fiercely. I brought the cage inside for warmth. My cats mincingly advanced to investigate—he did not growl at them. I telephoned Pat, who consulted AFOC management to plan next steps.

At my house, Pat blanketed the Have-a-Heart trap to calm the cat, then drove him to the emergency vet. I was both relieved that we rescued him and sad that I'd never see him again. Pat called to report that the cat was male, with fleas and round worm, who appeared to have had little human contact. He was neutered, vaccinated and medicated at the vet's, then transported to the AFOC animal shelter and housed in a large transitional cage. Pat asked me to name the cat and I chose "Jesse." When I told her that I missed him, Pat invited me to join Jesse's socialization team as a volunteer. I enlisted.

Prior to my first day at the animal shelter, Pat shared that Stacie, a resident volunteer, had reached her hand out to Jesse, despite his growling reception. He rubbed his head against her hand, with his claws tucked away. The insight gave me courage and hope that he was more afraid than aggressive. When I entered Jesse's cage, he growled deeply, concealed inside the bottom compartment of his cat condo with eyes shut tight. He had not eaten for a week. His initial dose of round worm medicine was discarded with the uneaten food.

I sat down on the floor and took out a shoelace that I brought to play with. An eye opened and a paw darted out to catch the shoelace. I put my hand close for Jesse to sniff. He gently rubbed his head against my hand. Then he laid his whole head in my hand. When the other volunteers departed, Jesse emerged from seclusion and stood beside me. He leaned against me. I scratched his neck and he purred loudly. I filled his bowl with the same food that I'd given him outside and he began to eat. He used his litter box, indicating a certain amount of domestication. I stayed with Jesse inside his cage for three hours, floored by his transformation. When it was time to leave, he swiped at my leg. He was a composite of contrasts. Nevertheless, I was smitten with this remarkable survivor.

Pat met me at the shelter on my next visit. The game plan was to feed Jesse his round worm medicine concealed in treat-like pill pockets and we succeeded. The cure took eight weeks minimum, confirmed by lab work. Jesse would remain in his transition cage in the meantime. After Pat left, Jesse climbed into my lap and regarded me. He gave kisses and bites, but stopped biting with a verbal "no." He liked to be held. I was getting attached to this cat. I sat with Jesse in his cage at the shelter two to three times weekly over the next two months. He was a beautiful, smart, loving cat, and a talker—he trilled prolifically. Provided I was alone, he'd climb in my lap to be held and petted. I'd bring special food and toys, play and speak with him and straighten his cage. He became friendly with the shelter volunteer staff, who fed him, cleaned his cage, played with him, and transported him to vet visits.

I needed assurance that Jesse would have a happy, forever home, and decided to adopt him. I weighed the likelihood of successfully integrating him with my indoor male cats who led an idyllic, cozy lifestyle. Jesse tested negative for round worm and the day finally came to bring him home from the shelter. He was calm in the cat carrier. I released him in a separate section of my home and showed him his food and litter box. He ate and did not hide. He was happy and affectionate.

Later, I introduced Jesse to my cats, who initially appeared to accept him. That is, until I administered a topical substance on the cats' necks that had been discussed as a protective measure for any lingering parasites. The cats suddenly smelled different to each other and it caused a big stir. They faced off, howling, lashing out. I was swiped at by Jesse's transferred ire. I returned Jesse to a separate space with me overnight, while my established cats had the run of the rest of the house. The next day, I switched their locations to build familiarity. I gradually let them interact together, with supervision. Within a few days, the cats were largely co-existing successfully.

Ten days have passed since Jesse came home to live with us. He has been accepted into the "tiger pride." He is a sweet, enjoyable family member, who appreciates what he has. From time to time I need to correct some of his behavior, but for a one-year old, who spent most of his life abandoned in the wild, he is very civilized.

Keep up the great work, Animal Friends of CT! I could never have achieved such success without your tremendous insight, generosity and assistance. This has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my lifetime.

Nancy

We would be happy to accept a donation of a car, van, truck, RV or boat in any condition, running or not. They are a charitable tax deduction and help us continue our daily work. We could also really use a motor home or trailer to keep behind the shelter as an isolation ward. Support our fund raisers!



Gisele My Story

Last summer, I was a little kitten, outside and looking for food. I found some on a front porch and ate it. So, of course the next day I went back to the same porch - I'm no dummy! - and found food again. The lady in the house saw me, so when I went back the third day, the food was in something called a Havahart trap. I went in to eat, but it closed. I was very scared at first, but I still ate the food because - remember, I'm no dummy. She immediately took me to her vet's office so I could get checked out. She told the vet tech there that she thought I was about 3 months old. They agreed.

Later, I saw a very nice doctor. During my check-up he discovered that I already had adult teeth even though I was so small. Fortunately he dug deeper and found out that I had lung worms. Lung worms are so rare that they had never seen them in that office. Lung worms are treatable with medication but without it, almost always fatal. I could have died! I will always be smaller than most cats and could develop asthma - but, so far, I haven't.

When the lady who found me called to ask when she could pick me up and take me to the shelter (she volunteers at Animal Friends of Connecticut), they told her not for weeks yet. I stayed at Roaring Brook Veterinary Hospital for almost 7 weeks, but the lady came to see me often and the vet techs loved me. They played with me and gave me special attention. Jenn, one of the techs, let me sit on her lap while she made phone calls (she still misses me and asks about me).

Meanwhile, the lady decided that someone who had been so sick should have a real home. So, when I was released from the vet she brought me back to her house where I was SLOWLY introduced to my new sisters and brother, Tedy (who at first didn't want anything to do with me), and Merlin and Blitzen (all 3 of them are AFOC cats).

Now I happily reside with my new Mama and Daddy and brother and sisters. Tedy and I are now friends and sometimes she even plays with me. I have my own blanket on the couch and I am very loved and spoiled. See, I told you I'm no dummy.



Sponsoring Toby

I had just lost my cat, Rajah, in June of 2005 and wanted to do something help support homeless animals in his memory. I wasn't ready to adopt another cat, but did want to help rescue organizations and shelters.

I went about searching for the right organization to support. The most important thing for me was that the organization was "no-kill" and operated locally. I'm not sure exactly how I found Animal Friends Of Connecticut. My next door neighbors had just adopted an AFOC cat and the local newspaper showed AFOC cats up for adoption. I easily found the AFOC website (www.afocinc.org).

I do remember visiting the AFOC website and navigating around it. That's how I learned about the AFOC sponsorship program. The sponsorship program page states: "We have many cats that are not adoptable or are waiting for adoption. We are looking for Sponsors who are willing to sponsor a rescued cat by help covering the cost of food, litter and basic medical care."

I was very impressed that AFOC cares for cats that are not adoptable when many "euthanize" these animals. I had to help my Rajah, who was suffering as he was dying, cross over to The Rainbow Bridge and don't consider putting healthy animals to "sleep" to be "euthanasia". To me, that is just a euphemism.

The AFOC sponsorship program is very flexible. It let me donate an amount (monthly) I was comfortable with, so I went ahead and signed up, leaving which cat to sponsor up to AFOC. I soon received an email from AFOC asking if I'd like "Toby 2" as my sponsored cat. It didn't really matter to me which cat I sponsored and told them Toby would be fine. Toby was about a year old at the time. Eileen, who was sending me the emails, told me that as a kitten, Toby bonded to another kitten named Fletcher.

Fletcher had a terminal condition, so they didn't separate them because he received comfort being with Toby. AFOC didn't think Fletcher would survive and planned to adopt out Toby when Fletcher was gone. Fletcher had other ideas and survived, which was great, but it also meant that Toby lost his opportunity to be easily adopted. It's a sad reality that (weaned) kittens are in higher demand for adoption than older cats. Kittens quickly become cats and, once they do, the chances for their adoption drop significantly.

Soon after I agreed to sponsor Toby, I received a package with his photo, a letter, and a refrigerator magnet with his picture. As time went by, I'd periodically receive Christmas cards, refrigerator magnets, letters, and photos of Toby. I consented to let AFOC put my first name on Toby's sponsorship image on the website. From time-to-time, I'd look at Toby's picture there and smile when I saw "Sponsored by Carmelo, Cromwell CT". I'd also look at my Toby's refrigerator magnets when I sipped my morning coffee and wonder how he was doing.



Years went by and I'd replace Toby's refrigerator magnets when they faded, while always thinking "I'll have to adopt him someday." This wasn't realistic, as my elderly mother was living with me, along with my three cats, Doppler, Keiko and Tasha. Normally, I'd have one or two cats, but Tasha was rescued off the street by my niece and needed a temporary foster home, which I provided, not realizing I was destined to be a foster failure.

I had Doppler since the day he was born prematurely in August of 1996. My girlfriend and I bottle fed him around-the-clock as his mother was only six months old and didn't lactate. In May of 2013, Doppler lost his long battle with lymphoma. In November of 2013, my elderly mother passed away. My house suddenly felt empty and I decided to adopt an AFOC shelter cat. I contacted Judy (AFOC director) and she had me speak directly with Barbara at the shelter. I asked about adopting Toby, but Barbara told me he wasn't available since he was so bonded to Fletcher.

When I first went to the AFOC shelter to meet and adopt a cat, I asked to see Toby. Barbara took me to his room and I got to see him and Fletcher. I was a stranger, so Toby hid from me as much as he could, but I did eventually get to pet him. Barbara then took me around the shelter to meet the cats waiting for a forever home. I couldn't resist looking at the kittens, but they had a lot of potential adopters scheduled to visit them, so I decided to adopt a "long term inmate". I asked Barbara which cat I should adopt and she told me that black cats have the hardest time getting adopted. So, I adopted a beautiful "parlor panther" named Josie who was passed over many times. When I picked up Josie and put her in my carrier, she looked up at me surprised and made a tiny meow, as if she was saying: "Me? You picked me?" I also took home a little tabby cat named Gwendolyn who clung to me as soon as she saw me.

More years passed, and I lost Tasha and Gwendolyn. I also adopted a special needs kitten I named Pepino. Still, I would look at the refrigerator magnets and wonder how Toby was doing. My daydreams about Toby changed at the AFOC tag sale when George, one of the AFOC directors and secretary, told me "every cat at the shelter is adoptable" (under the right circumstances).

On November 10th 2016, I received phone calls and emails from AFOC volunteers Pat and Eileen telling me Fletcher passed away. I was worried about Toby and how he would adjust. I would call Jean, the shelter coordinator, and Pat to check up on him. Now a 13 year old senior cat, Toby's chances for adoption were slim at best. As Christmas approached, I received Toby's newest refrigerator magnet, a photo, and a card. I looked at the new magnet on my refrigerator and soul searched as I sipped my morning coffee.

I had some time off for the holidays, and as Christmas was nearly upon us, I called Pat, Barbara, and Eileen one more time. On December 23rd. I called Jean at the shelter with my "prank". I told Jean I no longer wanted to sponsor Toby. I told her I had sponsored him for about 12 years now and that was long enough. She paused and waited for me to speak. I then I asked if she'd be at the shelter the morning of Christmas Eve, as I wanted to go to the shelter to adopt Toby and to him home. Jean was wondering if that was what I was up to and overjoyed that it was. I had already told Eileen to switch my sponsorship to another AFOC cat and she said she'd pick one for me.

On Christmas Eve morning, 2016, I arrived at the shelter, met with Jean and the shelter volunteers, and thanked them for all they are doing. I then put Toby in my carrier and put him in my car. I stopped by Barbara's house to drop off pictures of "The Pride Cubs" (my cats) before bringing Toby to my home, where I had a spare bedroom prepared for him.

Pepino has a Facebook page with many followers. Earlier that week, I told them to expect a surprise on Christmas Eve. I delivered that surprise as a video on Pepino's Facebook page. I introduced Toby, told him he was adopted and finally has a forever home, and wished him a merry little Christmas. Toby was one of AFOC's longest term inmates and I just didn't think he should die at the shelter. <https://www.facebook.com/Pepino.CH/videos/1361663277217192/>

Since then many of Pepino's followers ask for Toby updates. Toby has met all of the cubs and has been slowly exploring the house. He's made his first visit at my veterinarian and received a microchip. Even though all my cats are indoor only, I microchip them in case something unforeseen happens and they run outside because they are afraid.

Recently, I received a big envelope from Animal Friends Of Connecticut. Inside was a large color picture of Felipe and a letter. I am now sponsoring Felipe with another sponsor. Sponsorship helps Animal Friends of Connecticut give shelter, food and veterinary care to many homeless cats, for as long as it takes for them to find a home. Without this help, many of these cats would not have a chance. Sponsorship is ideal for those that want to help these homeless animals but are allergic, cannot have a cat in their home, or are not in a position to adopt one.

I waited 12 years for the time when Toby and I were both ready. Sponsoring him helped keep him and others

alive at the AFOC shelter. I still have his last magnet on my refrigerator, only now, I just smile as I look at it sipping my morning coffee.

THANK YOU!

We would like to thank Anneliis Koiv for the many years of volunteering to organize and run the very profitable annual tag sale fund raiser. Unfortunately, all good things do come to an end. There will no longer be an AFOC tag sale as part of our fund raising.

YOU CAN HELP

Please consider holding a fund raiser at your home to benefit Animal Friends of Connecticut. What you hold is only limited by your imagination. Invite your family, neighbors and friends who love animals and want to help them anyway they can.

Some suggestions are to:

- **Hold a back yard picnic and request a donation of food, litter or money to attend.**
- **Hold a neighborhood tag sale selling things you, your neighbors and friends no longer want or need.**
- **Hold a beer/wine tasting at home or your favorite restaurant. The Thomas Hooker Brewery in Bloomfield might host this event for you.**
- **Ask your bank to hold a food drive in their lobby.**
- **Have a bike run on the "Rails to Trails" paths or at your fitness center on stationary bikes.**
- **See if a business you frequent will put an AFOC donation canister on their counter.**
- **Previous newsletters and printed materials can be provided for you to distribute at your event.**

IN LOVING MEMORY

Sailor: A donation was made in memory of Sailor, a loving dog.

- Carol Shaw

Rusty Ring: A donation was made in memory of Rusty Ring.

- James Ring

Shotzie, Jessie, Lacey Lu, Kellie: A donation was made in memory of Shotzie, Jessie, Lacey Lu, Kellie.

- Jo-Anne & Henry Bochicchio

Mistoe: A donation was made in memory Mistoe, beloved cat of the Consolines, Charlotte, NC.

- Mathew Pastermak

Roxy: A donation was made in memory Roxy, beloved dog of the Colsons, West Suffield, CT.

- Mathew Pastermak

Max: A donation was made in memory Max, beloved pet of the Motleys, Simsbury, CT.

- Mathew Pastermak

Snarl and Barkley: A donation was made in memory our sweet kitties Snarl and Barkley.

- Joan Walden

Betsy: A donation was made in memory Betsy Price.

- Betsy Griffing

Barbara: Donations were made in memory of Barbara Pike.

- Kathleen Tauro

- Susan Kautz

- Philip & Velva Lennox

Mike: A donation was made in memory Mike Brodeur, Wethersfield, CT.

- Joan Brodeur

Stanley: A donation was made in memory of my beloved husband, Stanley.

- Theresa Bobeck

Sapphire: A donation was made in honor of Sapphire.

- Michael & Ann Buchas

Cherrie: A donation was made in honor of Cherrie and to honor Tom Morganti and his staff at Avon Veterinary Clinic.

- Marcia Metcalf

Ben: A donation was made in honor of veterinary specialists, especially Ben.

- Marcia Metcalf

Taylor: A donation was made in honor of my cat Taylor.

- Karen Celio

Kayla: A donation was made in honor of Kayla, my best friend who was adopted from AFOC.

- Ingrid Persson

Anne: A donation was made in honor of Anne Gagne, a co-worker who passed away last month.

- Albert Testa

Molly: A donation was made in honor of Molly.

- Lisa & Raymond Deccy

Barbara: A donation was made in honor of Barbara Pike.

- Kate Knightly

- Jeff Ulrich

Roger: A donation was made in honor of Roger Dion, Manchester, on his 90th birthday.

- Jessica Montano

PORTRAIT OF A VOLUNTEER

AFOC has had, and continues to have, many dedicated volunteers. This encompasses organizing fund raisers, fostering pets and working at the shelter. One such volunteer, Ruth Woodford, epitomizes a true volunteer.

It all started in the 1980's, when Ruth wanted to donate to a no-kill shelter. After doing some research, she decided on Animal Friends of Connecticut (AFOC). It wasn't until the 1990's, however, that Ruth actually contacted Judy about the feral cats who lived near her work place in Wethersfield. People would feed them, but Ruth wanted to do more. With Judy's assistance and guidance, she was able to trap many of them, including a female cat with three kittens who were approximately eight weeks old. Being feral cats, they were apprehensive around people, but one kitten was different. Ruth brought her home and named her Emma. They enjoyed 16 years of companionship together.

When Emma passed away, Ruth contacted AFOC's George Murtha, who told her about a 3 1/2 month old kitten he was fostering. Ruth really wanted an older cat, but agreed to meet Emmie. When she did, Emmie ended up going home with her. (You might remember reading about Emmie in the winter newsletter.) Not only does Ruth have Emmie, but she is also fostering a mother cat and her five kittens.

Adopting and fostering cats is not Ruth's only interaction with AFOC. For the past 15 years, she volunteered to help Anneliis at her annual tag sale for AFOC. Ruth has also been organizing and running the annual bake sale for the past 10 years.

AFOC is not the only recipient of Ruth's generosity. She volunteers her time at the St. Elizabeth's House to serve breakfast on a monthly basis. The Avon Lion's Club is another organization where Ruth actively volunteers. She's the charities treasurer and contact person for meals-on-wheels. After retiring, Ruth found another organization where she could volunteer. She heard that Gifts of Love in Avon was moving. She realized that they would need help, so she took part in moving the donations to the new location. She now volunteers there once a week to help sort through donations.

AFOC would like to thank Ruth for all she has done for us over the years.



Please reach into your heart and give what you can afford to help these animals get a second chance in life.

Your gift is tax deductible.

We would be happy to talk with you about endowments, grants, gifts-in-kind, corporate sponsorship or other long-term support. Please call us at (860)827-0381

Animal Friends of Connecticut, Inc
P.O. Box 370306
West Hartford, Connecticut 06137-0306

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- I'd like to help. Volunteers please call (860) 827-0381.
 I am interested in becoming a member. Please add me to your mailing list to receive the newsletter (new members only).