



The Feline Network

A Kindhearted Approach to Feline Overpopulation

P.O. Box 526, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

(805) 549-9228

www.felinenetwork.org

Winter 2024

Nonprofits Partner in River Rescue

Feline Network has teamed up with CARE4Paws to help the cats and dogs living with homeless people in the Santa Maria riverbed.



"It's hard to say goodbye, but I know it's for the best."

This effort is in conjunction with the City, County and State cleanup of unhoused encampments.

CARE4Paws is a spay/neuter mobile clinic that provides medical and spay/neuter services for the pets of low-income, senior, disabled and unhoused members of communities in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties. Unlike Feline Network, CARE4Paws is not set up to foster and adopt out animals.

CARE4Paws volunteers Claire Sheehy and Christine

(Chris) LaBossier, who is also a part-time FN trapper, and FN volunteer Jennifer Wilson have spent many hours walking along both sides of the riverbed getting acquainted with the people who live there and looking for cats and dogs in need of care.

CARE4Paws staff member Julie Crutcher also assists in this effort. Chris said their first task was to locate and identify animals needing mobile clinic services such as spaying or neutering, vaccinations, assessment, medication and treatment.

Over time, Chris and Jennifer rescued 18 kittens ranging in age from five weeks old to young adult cats as well as one older adult cat. "Our team was surprised by the number of kittens suffering from upper respiratory infections," Chris said. "It was not easy for people to surrender their cats and kittens, but most realized

they were not able to care for them and they trusted us to do what is best for them."

The 19 kittens and cats first went to FN volunteer Anna Stewart, an experienced vet tech, for triage and medical care before being placed in foster homes. "Luckily, I have the availability to help," Anna said. "I have tents set up in my kitchen for the small kittens and catteries in my back yard for the big ones." The five-week-old kittens had diarrhea and needed a proper diet, treatment for parasites and fleas, and plenty of TLC. Four of the older kittens had upper respiratory infections, and three had pneumonia. When the animals were triaged and stabilized, she then passed them on for fostering to Annie Dreizler, Jamie Pierce and Julie Smith, who took the tiny kittens. Most of them have since been adopted.

The riverbed project is ongoing. There are a couple of sick young cats that Chris and Jennifer are still trying to rescue. "My heart goes out to Chris and Jen who go down in the riverbed and try to help the animals," said Anna. "It is truly a labor of love that sends them down there."



"In you go, little ones."



Warm and cozy in Anna's home.

Season's Greetings from the Board

We wish you and your families and your beloved pets a very Happy Holiday Season! 2024 has been a very active year for cat rescue! Our volunteers look forward to a much-needed respite from the intensity of their work during the winter season but, at the same time, they anticipate that 2025 will be equally demanding. We appreciate and thank our volunteers for their willingness to sacrifice and serve the needs of our community, and we thank you for your donations! These donations make our work possible, and for that we are grateful. The Feline Network does not have a shelter or paid staff, and all donations go directly to help the cats.



In Memory of Laguna Lake and Susan Andreassen

Almost 20 years ago, a nine week old kitten was trapped at Laguna Lake and FN volunteers tried to tame her up enough to become adoptable, but she was too feral. They named her Laguna Lake. A woman in Arroyo Grande allowed the kitten to be relocated to her colony. Long story short, Laguna Lake ultimately moved next door to Susan Andreassen's house...and never left. Slowly, over time, Laguna Lake worked her way indoors and became an indoor-only cat. She slept in Susan's bed and loved only Susan. She gave Susan many years of love, comfort, and companionship until she passed away naturally.

Susan loved cats, horses, and monarch butterflies. She was a voracious learner and took classes to become a master acorn grower. She also participated in equine therapy. She was actively involved in worthy charitable causes and donated what she could to them. She spent countless hours for decades socializing cats and kittens in Annie Dreizler's cattery.

Sadly, Susan died on June 28, 2024. Before her passing, she bequeathed part of her money to Feline Network because she saw firsthand all of the hard work and resources it takes to rescue cats, get them spayed or neutered, socialized and then find them loving homes.

Kuma, the San Francisco Cat

I have been feeding a colony of feral cats for seven years on Fiero Lane in San Luis Obispo. They were adolescent siblings when they were trapped and fixed, and they were too feral to foster so they were returned to the site. I volunteered to feed them daily.

Most of the cats were very skittish and kept their distance, but slowly, over time, a black kitten (Black Kitty) began to trust me. At first he would come up and start to eat as I was putting food down. He began to let me pet him and would sometimes even jump on my back when I was bending over to put food in the bowls. Eventually he became more interested in being petted than eating. I would crouch down and he would climb into my arms, wrap his paws around my neck and nuzzle his nose into my neck. I often thought of trying to find Black Kitty a good home, but I was hesitant because he was in a safe environment with his siblings. That all changed, however, as the area became more developed and his siblings started disappearing one by one.

One day in August 2023 I brought my cat carrier, picked Black Kitty up and put him inside. Volunteer Christine Collie fostered him, and he adapted easily to her home as if he had never been a feral cat. He wanted to be petted all the time, purred readily and played with toys. I visited him almost every day. I took him for a vet exam, and he received a "clean bill of health." He didn't even flinch when they drew blood and vaccinated him. He just purred the entire time while I petted him.

When I described Black Kitty's personality to my niece, Madi Kahn, and her partner, Veronica Friend, they knew instantly that they wanted to adopt him. I knew this would be the perfect home. Early one September morning, I loaded my car up with scratching post, litter box, food and toys and drove to his new home in San Francisco.

Madi and Veronica named Black Kitty "Kuma," which means "Bear" in Japanese. They absolutely adore and spoil him. They say he is THE BEST CAT EVER! They send me pictures and updates all the time. He loves to be petted and sits next to them on the couch. He is very playful, is not afraid of people entering their home and enjoys meeting everyone. I could not have asked for a better home for Kuma. He has come a long way, and he deserves his newly found home, living in the lap of luxury.



Veronica and Madi show off their beloved Kuma.

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We are holding periodic
Adopt-a-Cats at PetSmart in SLO.

Please visit our website
at www.felinenetwork.org, our
Facebook page, Petfinders and
Craiglist for information and to see
our kittens and cats.

by Jennifer Hilty

**Donations may be made through our
website at www.felinenetwork.org and on our Facebook page.**

We Couldn't Do It Without You!

PROVIDERS OF DISCOUNTED SPAY/NEUTER SERVICES AND/OR MEDICAL CARE FOR OUR FOSTERS AND COMMUNITY CATS:

Animal Hospital of San Luis Obispo, Atascadero Pet Center, Cat & Exotic Care of the Central Coast, Coast Veterinary Clinic, Five Cities Veterinary Hospital, Laguna Veterinary Care, Los Osos Pet Hospital, VCA South County Veterinary Hospital, Veterinary Ophthalmology Services, Woods Humane Society

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Laurie Aguilar, Carolyn Barkas Gross & Vic Gross, Cheryl Barton & Vince Petrie, Ken Bennett, Kim & Gerrit Berg, Sara Betencourt & Olivia White, Roxanne Bohn, Heather Burns, Sarah Daks, Stephanie Davis & Warren, Annie Dreizler, Paula Farrar, Julie Gall & Manya Choboian, Elaine Genasci & Dan Andoetoe, Deannie Greenelsh & Family, Jackie Heimerl & Mark Tonkin, Tammy & Joe Herz, Britney Hong, Nicole Johnson & Lilly Ferra, Valarie Koos, Darcy & Bruce Lazar, Susan Lee, Caroline Lockhart, Brandy Mathers & Gail Stanley, Kirsten McCullough, Deborah Merkley & Eirik Garcia, Ellen Nelson, Sandra Olinger, Kristin & Patrick Perl, Jamie Pierce, Bethany & Dizzi Ponce, Jennifer & Jeremy Salinas, Lisa Schott & Ron Leverett, Kathy Schwanitz, Benita Smith, Julie Smith & Family, Anna & Norm Stewart, Melanie & Jayden Von Burg, Pamela Werth & Kevin McCracken

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Carol Brookshire, Linda Cohen, Annie Dreizler, Elaine Genasci, Chris LaBossiere, Caroline Lockhart, Lori Manning, Ellen Nelson, Sandy Rakestraw, Jill Stavros, Pamela Werth

NEWSLETTER MAILINGS

Iris Alexandra, Vicky & Craig Johnsen, Judy Michener, Buzzy and April Stokes

PURCHASING & DELIVERING CAT FOOD

Raul Castillo

POSTING OUR CATS/KITTENS FOR ADOPTION

Elaine Genasci, Sid Hawker, Ellen November

OTHERS

Animals in Need Fund & Nipomo Dog and Cat Hospital, collaborating with Feline Network to provide low-cost spays and neuters for cats and kittens in the South County

Laurie Aguilar & Rachel Maples, taking calls on Feline Network phone lines

Sonja Bernard, providing home-grown catnip to our foster homes.

Roxanne Bohn, overseeing foster homes and helping with their medical needs

Lori Brief-Chavez, holding pet food drives with Trilogy Pet Club in Nipomo, collecting food, toys and monetary donations

Linda Cohen, collecting and distributing food to feral cat feeders

Maxine Colin, foster home support and assistance

Lynette Crane, coordinating rescues, foster homes and spay/neuter in the South County as well as taking calls on our phone lines.

Mike Davis, picking up cat food from retail stores, storing it and distributing it to feral cat feeders

Sharon Dobson, data entry of intake and adoption information

Annie Dreizler, rescuing, fostering and rehabilitating feral cats and picking up donated food and distributing it to feral cat feeders

Elaine Genasci, managing our Facebook page, overseeing foster homes and spay/neuter coordination

Misty Gin of the Pet House in Los Osos, hosting a donation barrel and posting our adoptable kittens

Marie-Christine Husk, picking up and sorting Feline Network mail

Lemos Feed & Pet Supply, providing litter at a discounted price and hosting our food donation barrels in their stores

John Michener/Mediaspring, hosting website

Ellen Nelson, fostering and finding suitable placement for feral cats

Kristin Perl, recruiting and overseeing foster homes, fundraising, and screening potential adopters

Pismo Beach Self-Storage, providing a storage unit for our supplies

Karen Richards, registering microchip numbers and helping locate owners of lost cats

Kathy Schwanitz, ordering supplies, newsletter layout and managing our website adoption pages.

Shelby and Karl, website editing and design and sponsoring our database.

Pastor Jason Sisk & United Church of Christ, providing a room for our board meetings

Laura Sisk, bookkeeping services

Sue Smith, use of her shed for storing our South County supplies

Anna Stewart, fostering at-risk litters of kittens and vaccinating and overseeing medical needs of foster cats and kittens in the South County

Pamela Werth, fostering at-risk neonatal kittens and overseeing foster homes



Lynn Reiss & Elizabeth Doukas, who feed feral cats in the South County, enjoy camaraderie at our annual FN volunteer picnic at Bidell Park.

HEARTFELT THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS

November 2023 thru October 2024

We especially thank our Very Generous Donors

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HEARTFELT THANKS

Golden Paws

(Continued from page 4)

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TO HONOR AND REMEMBER

In Loving Memory of

Carol Ann (Soule) Aguirre, "my oldest first cousin," by Annie Dreizler. "She was a true animal lover and was comforted greatly by her cats until her last breath. She will be deeply missed."

Willo Cashier, "who dearly loved her kitties," by Kristin Bell, Jennifer Cashier & Jean R. Fontes

Dale Ekdahl, "who liked orange cats," by Elana Peters

Don Hartley, by Debbie Kraft

Kyle, youth pastor in our church, and our friend, **David**, by Diane & Clark Hendrickson

Ace, "the Maharry family's beloved 19 year-old kitty," by Elaine Giannini, their Aunt Dede

Bubba, Picaboo & Spanky, "my amazing, rescued cats," by Michele Arete Kostrenich. "I miss them so much!"

Kitty 'Chirpey', by Johanna Manak-Bushman, "Roxanne Povio & James Grunke's cat who lived to be 22 years of age."

"Our sweet, sassy Clementine" by Carolee & Emilee Hunt of The Cat's Nest, "and to Kathy & Alan Henderson, who shared her with us."

Lola, "a feisty little dog with pointy cat ears," by Alice Welchert

"Our Sweet Noxi", by June McIvor

Pearl, "Tom & Connie Komin's beloved kitty," by Nancy H. Malk

Sammy, "our son and his wife's 13-year-old kitty put to rest," by

Diane & Clark Hendrickson

Trece & Sasha, "departed but not forgotten, both full of love & personality" by Jane Brechler. "Thanks for all you do to protect & nurture our feline friends."

In Honor of

"All our loving families at the Cat's Nest", by Emilee & Carolee Hunt

Sara Bettencourt & Olivia White, by Jane Baker & Daniel Jimenez

Sarah Daks, "for her foster work for Feline Network," by Jonathan Daks

Blair Kilby, by Cynthia Roden

Coco, Jan & Eli Zinner's dog, by Thomas & Laveta Casdorff & Maria Bustillo.

"Jan & Eli hosted a 15th birthday party (Quinceanera) for Coco and asked their guests to bring donations for Animals In Need Fund (AINF) and FN."

Lola, by Suzan Estrada

In Appreciation of

Roxanne Bohn, by Ruth Laitila

Christine Collie, by Sharon Kamm. "Thank you again for all of your kind assistance. All kitties are well. 'Dearest' has turned out to be quite feral & only comes in the kitty door to eat at night, or

when she decides she wants some love!! and a comfy snooze on her favorite chair!! Blessings to your crew!"

Lynette Crane, by Evelyn Major. "Thank you for being such a help for this latest feral! You have a special place in my heart."

Lynette Crane & Debra Holt, by Susan Henslin. "Thanks for your care and concern when Fluffy needed it most. Keep up the good work."

Teresa Garcia, by Kathy Schwanitz. "Thank you for going above and beyond when you are pet sitting by taking care of the fosters too!"

Kristin Perl, by Ardith Haines. "Thank you so much for your part in my opportunity to adopt Mia."

Pamela Werth, by Stacy Bialac. "We love Simon Sons. He is a cowboy kitty, rides all the rockers."

Feline Network & Laurie Aguilar, by Dena Smith, M.D. Thank you for your kindness. Fortunately did not need the trapper this time. Laurie was so considerate & helpful. Very grateful for your care & support."

Feline Network & Elaine Genasci, by Denise Milardo. "Thank you for all the valuable work you do in our community. Without your volunteers and TNR program, our cat overpopulation problem would be 10-fold greater. I also want to thank Elaine for helping me get a feral kitten spayed before she had a litter of her own."

The Feline Network

by Patti & Bruce Everett. "Thank you for rescuing 'Milo' seven years ago. He has become a very fine cat and a cherished companion."

by Barbara Frickelton. "My husband and I are owned by two female cats. We really appreciate receiving the FN newsletter."

by Marleta & Bob Garner. "Thank you for your compassionate & selfless dedication to improve the lives of our four-footed friends. You are superstars."

by Diana J. Harris. "Keep up the good work."

by Jackie Johnson. "I lost two wonderful orange tabby friends to rampaging dogs. Such sadness. But also good things when I was allowed to touch one cat for the first time after three years of feeding, and then this month when another one decided to spend an entire night inside the house! This summer a classic tabby appeared, my first time seeing one. So handsome! Thank you, all of you, for your love and kindness over the years to felines."

by Nora Lewis. "I am happy to share a portion of my IRA charitable deduction for this year. Keep up the good work."

by Robin Masia. "Thank you for saving my feral cats! Your staff made a huge difference."

Jodie & Ryan McLean, "With much love and thanks, always in the memory of Maximus and Monroe, and from the new kitten love of Baji Bleu & Bodhi Bean."



Coco. "At 15 I feel as good as I look."

Osha's Fantastic New Life



We wrote about Tippy (Osha) in our last newsletter. She was a "walking skeleton" when we rescued her. She was horribly matted with foxtails and had a very bad upper respiratory infection. Her right eye was undeveloped and embedded in the eye socket, which necessitated removal of the eye.

Fast forward to the present, and Tippy (renamed Osha, meaning "warrior" in Japanese) is living a fantastic life on the Arroyo Grande Mesa with her new mom Wendy Hashimoto and her new sister Riley, a miniature Queensland heeler that Wendy adopted last August from a rescue in Fresno. Riley is missing her left eye and is blind in the right. Wendy said she has had a rough life but that she is extremely affectionate, nonetheless.

HEARTFELT THANKS Silver Paws

(Continued from page 5)

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Osha

(Continued from page 6)

When Osha isn't relaxing in the sun on her window bed, she might be seen playing on large condos or with toys in "her" room, lounging on a sofa in the living room, exploring the outdoors on a halter and leash, snuggling with Riley, sitting on Wendy's lap, or cuddling up in bed to sleep with Wendy and Riley. "My furniture is their furniture," said Wendy. "What's mine is theirs and what's theirs is theirs, lol!"

"As a pet sitter, I didn't hesitate when I saw Osha was up for adoption. I knew she was the one. She absolutely loves people, other dogs, my lap and anywhere close by me."

Sistine's Perfect Smartie

Once upon a time, there was a bright and imaginative little girl named Sistine, who had a dream of finding her perfect kitten. For as long as she could remember, she had envisioned a kitten she called "Smartie," a black kitten who was not only playful and kind but also as clever as he was magical—a friend to all. Sistine knew Smartie was out there somewhere, waiting to be found, so she set off on a year-long journey with her parents by her side.

They visited shelters, rescues, and adoption events, meeting many adorable black kittens along the way. Each kitten was sweet in its own way, but none of them matched the picture Sistine had in her heart. "He'll be the one who feels like home," she would tell her parents. "He'll be smart, kind and loving, just like I've dreamed Smartie is and will be."

After nearly a year of searching, Sistine's mom, Jillian Seaton, came across Feline Network in SLO, a rescue group with many kittens needing homes. There was one special kitten named Willie, and everything about him sounded just right—he was brave, playful and kind to both people and other animals, and he had a little magic sparkle about him. Jillian showed Sistine Willie's picture, and her eyes widened. "That's him," she whispered. "That's my Smartie."

Jillian and Sistine drove from their home in Solvang to SLO, excited and hopeful that this journey would bring Sistine and Smartie together at last. When they arrived, they were greeted by Julie Gall and Manya Choboian, Willie's foster moms. As soon as Willie was placed into Sistine's arms, something magical happened. Willie looked up at her with bright eyes, then gently kissed her on the chin and softly on the nose. Sistine giggled, feeling a warmth in her heart that she had not felt before. Jillian, watching closely, smiled. "Sistine, is this your Smartie?" Sistine beamed, her heart overflowing with joy. "Yes," she said with a confident and radiant smile. "This is Smartie."

And from that moment on, Sistine and Willie—her Smartie—were inseparable. He was everything she had dreamed of: smart, kind, playful, and loving, with a little bit of magic in his purrs. Together, they filled their home with laughter, love, and the kind of friendship that only happens when a girl and her kitten find each other.



**Sistine's dream
come true.**



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Trapper Goes the Extra Mile to Help Cats

The number of cats Elaine Genasci has trapped and had spayed or neutered (TNR'd) this year is nothing short of remarkable. As of November 1, she trapped 365 cats at 48 different trapping sites! Trapping cats involves pre-arranging vet appointments, setting traps, checking the traps, taking the trapped cats to vet offices for spay/neuter, picking them up, recovering them in a warm place, and returning them to the original site. Some cats are fortunate as they are tame enough to be placed in foster care. You can imagine how much dedication, perseverance, hard work and sacrifice it takes to make all this happen. Elaine averages 1400 miles per year traveling to and from trapping sites and vet offices. We at FN laud Elaine for her outstanding service to the community.

The difference spay/neuter makes in the lives of cats cannot be overstated. It prevents future litters from being born only to live difficult, sometimes tortuous lives. They are subjected to extremes of weather, often hungry and covered in fleas, and frequently suffer from diseases or painful injuries.



These kittens were taken into foster care from a trapping situation in Atascadero. Elaine was first contacted to trap feral cats at a home in June, where she TNR'd a cat family of five. This turned out to be only the tip of the iceberg. Approximately every month thereafter for the next five months she received information that there were more feral cats at different homes in the same block, all within approximately 1/2 square mile. "In fact, when I stand in the backyard of one of the houses, I can see all these properties," said Elaine. She received a call from another homeowner recently about more cats that need to be trapped. So far, 98 cats have been TNR'd and 15 kittens rescued from this single neighborhood.