



FERAL CAT FOCUS INC. COMMUNITY CAT NEWS

P.O. Box 404, East Aurora, NY 14052

1-888-902-9717 (toll free)

www.feralcatfocus.org

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PROVIDING FERAL & FREE-ROAMING CATS WITH FUNDAMENTAL COMMUNITY SERVICES

DECEMBER 2021



WE ALL LOVE TO SEE THE STATS



I know all of us Feral Cat FOCUS do! It brings joy to our hearts. As of November 1, 2021 we spayed or neutered and subsidized along with Operation PETS Spay/Neuter Clinic of WNY 2,120 feral cats. On Mondays in October and November, Feral Cat FOCUS partnered with Operation PETS to exclusively spay/neuter feral cats. With Operation PETS staff and Feral Cat FOCUS volunteers working these clinics, **approximately 45-55 cats were spayed or neutered on every Monday for six weeks!** That is approximately 300 cats that will no longer be reproducing kittens and will have healthier lives in the long term. This was a huge accomplishment!

By the end of 2021 we will have spayed/neutered and vaccinated approximately 2,430 cats through our Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return program. This is with all our appointments filled for the year 2021. A huge thank you to Operation PETS for all the time and patience and subsidies they give to the feral cats of WNY, and all the caregivers, and volunteers and manpower it takes to pull this great accomplishment off.

ONCE UPON A TIME....

No this isn't a fairytale, it's a happy ending kitten tale Meet Olaf and this is his story.



One Monday during a 'feral cat only' spay/neuter clinic at Operation PETS The Spay/Neuter Clinic of WNY, a small kitten was brought to the clinic in a trap. Staff named him "Olaf" and he was determined to be friendly by the staff of Operation PETS. 'Olaf' became an adoptable kitten sponsored by Feral Cat FOCUS. It was readily agreed that "Olaf" would get settled in at the clinic to stay a bit after his neuter for evaluation.

"Olaf" was very, very friendly, and very, very vocal. He had the loudest meow to come from a little kitten. He played in his kennel with the toys the staff gave him and made huge messes as kittens are apt to do! "Olaf" is an all-white kitten with one blue and one green eye. After two FCF volunteers observed his behavior in his kennel, it was decided that little Olaf was in fact deaf! So began the search for a special home for this adorable kitten. The word was spread by staff and volunteers and soon, a great home was found. The home had other pets and were excited and willing to take on the responsibility for a special needs cat. Our kitten fairytale has a truly happy ending as little "Olaf" (aka "VISION") found his wonderful Furr-ever home.

FEEDING/CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR FERAL/ FREE ROAMING CATS

- No Ground feeding! Food should never be thrown on the ground and scattered all over.
- Cats should only be feed once a day, working around your schedule, keeping to the same time every day, so that the cats can rely on their daily feeding. *They will adjust for your timing.*
- Food should never be left out all day.
- NEVER feed at night!
- Food should be placed in a dish and picked up after each feeding. NO DISHES ARE TO BE LEFT OUT. Keep the feeding areas always clean, and neat.
- If there is a garage, barn, shed, porch, try feeding the cats in an enclosed area, where you will not be annoying your neighbors. Again, feed only once a day. Keep areas clean.
- Water can be left out. And in Winter try using heated water bowls.
- Heated pads can be used - they only heat up when an animal sits on them. Look for them on Amazon (under \$30.00). Recommended/used by horse stables, and animal barns. Try to provide shelters for the cats. Go to our website at www.feralcatfocus.org for feeding and warming shelters, as well as more ideas for caring for feral/free roaming cats. Never use blankets as the fibers get wet and freeze. Straw is a great insulator.
- These feeding instructions are accepted by most municipalities, and the Erie County Health Department.



WINTER SHELTERS FOR FERALS

Feral Cat FOCUS has been busy making winter shelters for our community cats. Pictured are three of our volunteers (Melissa, Alicia, and Kathy) with some of the shelters.

This year we made 80 shelters for distribution among our Western New York colonies.

Based upon the high demand we are considering holding a shelter-building workshop next Fall in an attempt to accommodate even more cats. We are not asking for a commitment but would like to get a sense of how many people might be interested.

If you think you might like to attend a workshop please contact Melissa @ 716.515.8965.

SOME IMPORTANT WINTER REMINDERS

- Place food and water in a protected/covered area
- Try to keep water from freezing or replace often when temperatures drop below 32 degrees (try adding a pinch of sugar to the water to help keep it from freezing)
- Provide extra food to meet cats' need for more calories in cold weather
- Keep antifreeze in a safe place away from cats who can find the taste irresistible
- Stay away from salt and chemical-melting products which can be toxic to cats and harm their paws
- Keep snow away from shelter entrances so cats can easily enter and don't get trapped inside!

You will find more helpful winter-care tips on www.feralcatfocus.org under "Colony Management"

OK, SO LET'S TALK ABOUT THE SUCCESS OF THE BLUE-COLLAR WORKING CAT PROGRAM!



Yes, this is a real picture of a real little girl whose grandmother asked Feral Cat FOCUS about getting working cats for their barn. The little girl was so excited to have barn kitties that she wanted to let the cats know how happy she was to have them in her grandmother's barn. She wanted them to feel welcomed so she did what she thought might make them happy -- she read to them!

In the above picture the cats are being temporarily held in cages for three weeks to help them acclimate to their new home and become comfortable with their new people. After that they will be released to freely explore and "get to work" in their new home.

Twenty-eight horse stables, poultry farms, cow/goat barns, taverns, wineries, warehouses, workshops and garages have received working cats from Feral Cat FOCUS **just in the year 2021**. Each setting got anywhere from 2-5 cats. So, you do the math, on how many cats got a new lease on life. Thank you to all of our adopters and to the great people who called Feral Cat FOCUS to inquire about our "Working Cat Program". Thank you to the tireless work of our volunteers who transported the cats to their new working cat homes, set up the cats in their homes, and educate adopters



Billy lives with two Blue Collar Working cats.

A "Blue-Collar Working Cat" is the perfect new hire for wherever pests interfere with your barn or business.

They're strictly business. And their business is solving your rodent problem.

feralcatfocus.org/adopt-a-barn-cat-program

FERAL CAT FOCUS DOES NOT ADVOCATE MOVING CATS. THESE CATS ARE FROM SHELTERS AND WERE FROM HORRIBLE SITUATIONS WHERE THERE WAS NO OTHER ANSWER BUT TO REMOVE THEM FROM THE SITUATION. FERAL CAT FOCUS ALWAYS SEEKS TO FIND OTHER ALTERNATIVES.



CATNIP KITTY KICKER

Stuffed for kicks and especially for cats that loooove catnip. Filled with LOTS of potent, fresh catnip and polyfil. Cats love to kick, toss and cuddle. Available in a variety of fun patterns. 14" long. Handmade by Feral Cat Focus volunteers. \$8.00 ~ Proceeds benefit Feral Cat Focus Purchase at Lockwood's Garden Center (4484 Clark Street, Hamburg) weknowplants.com

WORDS FROM A FERAL CAT FOCUS TRAP LOANER....

So, you've decided to help some stray kitties wandering around the neighborhood...THANK YOU! But Now What? You know; it truly does take a village and every person is needed; especially YOU!

First Step: Make a plan and call Feral Cat Focus at 1-888-902-9717 to get low-cost spay or neuter appointments at Operation Pets Spay/Neuter Clinic of WNY Inc.

Second Step: How are you going to catch them? (That is where we trap loaners come in).

I AM THE ALL-IMPORTANT STEP 2 - THE TRAP LOANER! NO TRAP NO SURGERIES!

FCF Trap Loaners are spread out into as many areas of WNY as we have volunteers for. A trap loaner keeps a supply of traps ready for whoever needs them. They keep them in good condition so that they are available for whoever needs to borrow one, all season long. When you make your appointments, you'll either get a number to call or someone will call you to arrange for you to receive some traps. (Either way we will find you!)

Since traps are costly (between \$75.00 and \$90.00), most people don't want to make an additional investment on top of already caring for the kitties. So, we've made it easy for you; for a low "**Fully Refundable**" deposit of \$20.00 per trap you can borrow one of ours. Return the trap, clean and in good working order and we return your complete deposit; very simple.

Sadly, some people forget to send them back...it really messes up the system when they are not returned in a timely manner...since no one else can use them! Be kind and let's get as many cats Trap/Neutered/Vaccinated/Returned (TNVR) as possible by returning the traps!

Your trap loaner will have you fill out a form, present ID and give you complete instructions, tips, and tricks for successfully and safely improving the lives of our furry friends. Your trap loaner will give you ideas for a successful trapping session, including how to set up the trap and how to present it to Operation Pets. Most traps come with covers to help calm the cats when trapped...it's scary for them too you know! Or you can borrow trap covers or make your own. We expect our traps to be returned cleaned so the next person can use it. It's not hard, just a disinfectant spray or some bleach water will do. (We recommend 32 parts water and 1 part bleach)

We here at Feral Cat Focus are all about making the process as easy as possible for you! The trap loaner will also be available to answer any questions you have right up to trapping day! We look forward to seeing you! Good luck, 'your friendly trap loaner'.

FERAL KITTEN REHABILITATION

After COVID-19 forced us into a hiatus, some dedicated Feral Cat FOCUS volunteers decided to use some very valuable time to help rehabilitate feral kittens. The process can be difficult: Socializing and caring for feral kittens is a time-consuming process which requires devotion, patience, time, and attention. Also, there is a critical period of about 9-12 weeks, after which it becomes extremely difficult to get these feral kittens to become the socialized cats to where people want to adopt them. We are not saying it cannot be done, but the time needed to spend with them becomes even greater.

In July 2021, some kittens were trapped and brought to Operation PETS Spay/Neuter Clinic of WNY Inc. A Feral Cat FOCUS rehabilitation foster mom Courtney Rice agreed to take them in. At first, they were very sassy and feisty. However, they quickly came to love being snuggled and held and especially loved mealtimes! After their time with Courtney, the kittens were adopted by Sarah & Joseph Porter of Pulaski, NY. Below is an update Sarah and Joe provided about the girls since their adoption in August.

When they first arrived in our home, they were tiny and timid. The girls were inseparable then and they still are today. For the first few days, they hid from us; but they loved food and would come out and sit by us to eat. At first, they did not want us to pet them much, but every day we were able to pet them a little longer. They eventually started purring and enjoying our touch; and that was such a wonderful feeling. The more comfortable they became, the more we fell in love with them. We named the black kitten "Cocoa". She was the timid one at first and often hid behind her sister for protection. But she was the first to decide she enjoyed our attention. We named the tabby "Tigger" because she was so bouncy, but eventually began calling her "Spaz". She took much longer to warm up but has become comfortable over time and now loves to be petted (only on her terms, of course).

These two girls could not be more different! Spaz is rambunctious, tough, and has no fear. She climbs everything like a daredevil: the higher, the better. She is extremely agile and stealthy, and keeps the dogs reminded that she is in charge! Her purr is just as loud and intense as she is. Spaz is also on a mission to liberate our houseplants from their containers. We think they should stay in their containers, but she thinks they should be pushed on to the floor. We are still working out who is right.

Cocoa is sweet and gentle and loves to be held like a baby. Joe is her favorite person, and she follows him from room to room, never wanting him to be far from view. Cocoa likes to drink water with her front paws IN the dish and it is not unusual to see wet paw prints all over our floor! She also enjoys getting in the bathtub and racing around like it's a track.



While they are usually hanging out on their 7-foot cat condo, they also enjoy laying in the sun and causing mischief. They have lovely pet beds but prefer to knock over and then lay on random household objects. They have plenty of toys, but make a daily mess with grocery bags, potting soil and anything else they can find. They both run to us for a treat before we leave and are the first to greet us when we return. It is so heartwarming to have an animal run to greet you when only a few weeks ago, they hid. We have no doubt that they will keep learning how to "be a house cat" and continue to be little, naughty love bugs.

Thank you to Feral Cat FOCUS for their dedication to TVNR and for rehabilitating these darling creatures. The amount of time that goes into catching, fostering, and vetting is incredible and appreciated.

The adoption process is a great experience. Also, thank you to the wonderful foster mom, Courtney. Without you, we wouldn't have the pleasure of watching these two kittens grow.

A FERAL KITTEN STORY AND A DETERMINED 'HUMAN MOM'

About five years ago a feral mom cat and her three newborn kittens came into the care of Feral Cat FOCUS. For the first six weeks all the kittens were doing well, but one morning the feral mother cat had pushed one of the kittens aside and refused to care for him. (A mom cat will do this when there is something wrong with a kitten, as a way to ensure the other healthier kittens will survive, it is the way of the animals in the wild). Up until this point, this kitten had been the largest of the three, he was such a fat little boy that he was named "Squishy". Squishy started vomiting his food and losing weight, day after day he started to fade. His foster "human mom" Cheryl tried many different foods. This would get him stabilized for a couple of weeks and he would gain weight. He would then have an episode and lose weight and start to fade again. Cheryl did everything - back and forth to the veterinarians, testing, x-rays, changes of foods, until one day the x-rays revealed that Squishy's stomach was in his chest cavity and his esophagus was kinked which caused acid reflux and the vomiting. His food was switched to a raw diet which was easier for him to digest. Since then he has been doing great. He is now five years old, weighs 7 lbs. and looks great thanks to the determination of a dedicated foster mom who never gave up with the help of Feral Cat FOCUS.



FERAL CAT FOCUS AT BUFFALO "COMMUNITY DAYS"

Feral Cat FOCUS volunteers Debbie Karcher and Sue Sellingsloh hosted an information table on August 19, 2021 during Buffalo Police D District "Community Days" on Hertel Avenue in Buffalo. We had FCF brochures, a display of a humane trap, several other cat resources flyers and some homemade catnip toys. We had a good number of people at our table asking questions and offering comments. These participants were mostly from the Buffalo Black Rock neighborhood which is known to have a density of feral and free-roaming cats. Hopefully the information given will be helpful to these residents and will also have a ripple effect into the larger community.

Looking to help Feral Cats?

Be an advocate for Feral Cats, talk to your neighbors and encourage them to practice Trap /Neuter /Vaccinate/ Return (TNVR)

Take the first Step, be their voice, make the call

1-800-902-9717

PROTECTING FERAL CAT COLONIES FROM EASTERN COYOTES

By Elise Able - Fox Wood Wildlife Rescue, Inc.

As a wildlife rehabilitator, nuisance control officer and life-long cat lover, I was asked to write this article to help people protect their feral cat colonies from coyote predation. Here are some tips. Implementing as many tips as possible in combination into your situation will produce the safest environment for your colony.

Tip 1. You can add cat posts. A cat post is generally a long piece of wood that erects out of the ground. Normally, cat posts sit 10 to 12 feet above ground. It provides a structure for your cat to climb on top of for safety, but coyotes are not accessible to the top. Cat posts are a great option in the case of an active coyote attack. The issue with this method is that cats cannot outrun coyotes, meaning the cat must already be by the posts to escape. Most cats will instinctively go to the posts, though, allowing them to remain safe

Tip 2. Fence the area. Any physical barrier helps deter most coyotes. Have small areas cats can slip under. 2" x 4" wire is fairly inexpensive. Use trees to attach it to or stakes to support it. For additional protection, you can add a 15-inch woven wire extension or roller bar to the top. If you are able to make a permanently fenced area, you may also want to consider adding wire into the ground to prevent coyotes from digging underneath the fence, and adding a "coyote roller" either purchased or homemade to the top. www.coyoteroller.com

Tip 3. In general, coyotes are lured by the food, and not the cats themselves. Try to feed only during daylight hours, if possible, to prevent drawing in many species of wildlife. Pick up all **leftovers**.

Tip 4. If you encounter a coyote on the property, haze it! Methods of hazing are yelling, chasing, opening/closing an umbrella toward it.

Tip 5: Protect outdoor pets with Coyote Repellent Lights. Nite Guard solar lights continually emit red flashes of light, which are recognized as predator eyes. Being "watched" will initiate a coyote's survival instinct, and the animal will naturally avoid the area. The lights are solar powered, very small and inexpensive. Raccoons and foxes may also be deterred by them. www.niteguard.com

Tip 6. Have feral cat shelter openings that are small enough for a cat, but too large for a coyote,

and deep enough a cat can run in and stay out of reach of a coyote. Shelters that are off the ground are best.

Tip 7. If you are able, choose areas where coyotes don't frequent. Studies have shown that cats generally avoid areas where coyotes frequent, either through predation or threat of predation. Next to a patch of woods or an open field are common places that coyotes might frequent, so feeding the kitties near buildings is a better idea

Tip 8. If you are feeding feral cats and coyotes come to your property quite a bit, even if you are diligent with your garbage, they may be attracted to other food sources. Bird feeders, for example, are a common food source that attracts coyotes. Remove bird feeders and fruit trees from your property if coyotes are a serious issue in your area. Whether a cat or some other small mammal is the victim of a coyote attack, the majority of attacks occur between the hours of 10:00 PM and 5:00 AM because they are nocturnal. This is especially true between the seasons of mid spring to early fall. During this time of the year, the coyotes are rearing newborn puppies. As a result, females are more protective. Plus, they have more mouths to feed. This causes more coyote attacks for both protection purposes and food. Coyotes generally have their litters in late April and early May.

Tip 9. Wolves are natural predators of coyotes. Wolf urine is available for purchase online. A few sprinkles around the perimeter of the area might help deter coyotes.

Tip 10. Coyotes are very afraid of things that move, make noise, and flap in the breeze, such as balloons and empty garbage bags. Punch balloons are inexpensive, sturdy and easily found online or in the party section of at many stores. They are very scary for a coyote. Purchase the balloon pump along with the balloons, as the material is very strong and would be difficult to inflate without it. A few small pebbles, beads or bells can be placed inside the balloon before inflating it with air for extra effectiveness. Hang the balloons (or empty garbage bags) 1-2 feet from the ground around the perimeter of the property. Use low tree branches, the outside of a fence, fence posts, stakes, etc. Considerations: horses might be a little frightened of these, so try it away from their paddock. and regular balloons are made of much thinner material and won't last long.



Feral Cat FOCUS also provided food for hundreds of feral cats and their caregivers, at NO COST to anyone. Feral Cat FOCUS volunteers tirelessly pass out food and hope to the caregivers of colonies everywhere in Western New York.

Thank you to Patti and Larry, Jen and Bill, Mark, Tyler and Deana, Sharon and Elijah, Jim, Judy, Second Chance Sheltering Network and Tom. Oh, that Patty Wall -- she is cutting (and sewing) trap covers. She would like me to ask you all to please use the trap covers and please launder and return them. It is becoming harder to get sheets and it is a lot of work. Please return them and so we can share with other feral cats!

Thank you to Chris, Kathy, Tom and Jo for the trap liners. Great job for all your efforts. You have heard about some of the volunteers throughout this newsletter. That is a fraction of what it takes to accomplish the goals that Feral Cat FOCUS has set forth with the idea that all cats are created equal and that just because a cat does not sit on your lap or purr in your ear, they are somewhat less equal. To us at Feral Cat FOCUS we love them even more! Thank you to all the phone volunteers, trap loaners, trappers, and transporters that work tirelessly to pull off the numbers you see above.

Thank you to our volunteer coordinators, the crafters that help raise money, newsletter and e-news editor, accountant, webmaster, the volunteers that hold and care for sick and injured cats and kitten socializers, all the SPCA's and shelters that help take adoptable kittens and of course the Board of Directors.

On behalf of all the Feral Cat FOCUS volunteers we thank all of YOU, our donors and our supporters. We cannot do what we do without you!
Have a wonderful Holiday and a Happy and HEALTHY New Year.



FERAL CAT FOCUS

PROVIDING FERAL CATS WITH FUNDAMENTAL COMMUNITY SERVICES



Many cats are left to fend for themselves outdoors.

Feral cats struggle throughout the year to find food, fresh water, safe shelter and to just survive.

Feral and free-roaming cats who only know the outdoor life shouldn't be forgotten.

Please help us make 2022 a better year for the feral and free-roaming cats of Western New York. Saving one cat may not change the world, but it certainly will change the world for that one animal. It is only through the generosity of people like you that Feral Cat FOCUS programs can continue.

Feral Cat FOCUS is committed to humanely reducing the feral and free-roaming cat population in Western New York through the use of Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return as fully understood, accepted and practiced in every Western New York Community.

Please mail your donation to the address below or you can make an online credit card donation at www.feralcatfocus.org.

YES, I would like to donate \$_____ to Feral Cat FOCUS

_____ No Acknowledgement Needed

_____ I Would Like an Acknowledgement

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

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Feral Cat FOCUS is a registered nonprofit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. Contributions are tax-deductible as allowed by law. A copy of our latest annual report may be requested from us or from the Office of Attorney General, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271



When we look into the eyes of a Feral Cat
we see a house cat that never had a chance.