



Forgotten Ones Cat Rescue Mewsletter

Spring 2016

TIME TO PAWS AND REFLECT



Every spring, for the last 70 years, National Volunteer Week has been held mid-April. The event celebrates ordinary people doing extraordinary things to improve communities across North America. It is an opportunity to recognize the

enormous contributions that volunteers make every day of the year.

Interestingly, National Volunteer Week was first proclaimed in Canada in 1943. Women's Voluntary Services in Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, and Vancouver organized special events to draw the public's attention to the vital contribution women made on the home

front to the war effort. After World War II ended, National Volunteer Week declined in popularity until the 1960s, when it was revived and began gaining popularity in the United States as well.

As FOCR is 100% volunteer-based, we are thankful all year long for our team, because we constantly see the benefits the group brings to animals in need and the community.

There are also individuals who are improving the lives of cats and kittens; starting on page 5 we feature two people who are cat colony caretakers. We believe it is important to acknowledge the animal advocacy efforts done by everyone—be it an organization or a single person.

~ Laura Wyatt, Forgotten Ones Cat Rescue Director

PET TAILS: Udon



In May 2015, the weekend of our wedding, we went to the Forgotten Ones Cat Rescue adopt-a-thon looking for a new addition to our family. My husband noticed Udon (then called Cheddar) and immediately fell in love with him.

We filled out the adoption papers and could not wait to take him home but, unfortunately, he had devel-

oped a runny eye after the event. Thanks to the wonderful care of FOCR, particularly volunteer and foster dad Wayne, we finally were able to take our cat home after waiting almost a month.

Wayne told us Udon was very shy and quiet—were we in for a surprise! Once we got him home, he was very different with us. We tried to keep Udon in a room for a few days so he could get used to his surroundings, but within two hours he was pawing the door and meowing at our resident cat on the other side. We could not keep them apart and we had no choice but to let them meet. There were a few hisses and fights, but now they seem to get along, even though they wrestle often.

Udon loves a nice long belly rub and is very, very talkative, especially with me. Udon has become a very noisy boy! He is still a bit shy, and doesn't quite come when you call his name, but we hope that will change with time. As annoying and noisy as he can be, we love him dearly. He brings joy to us every day! ~ Cory & Kevin

DO YOU WANT TO INCREASE ADOPTIONS? MAKE IT FUN AND MAKE IT COUNT!

That's Mike Arms's marketing advice to animal rescue groups. To many animal welfare professionals, Arms is considered a guru in the marketing of shelter pets.

"Let me tell you a story," he says. "We had a nine-year-old dog and her six puppies come to the shelter. We knew we would have a tough time adopting a nine-year-old dog, so instead of promoting that fact, we sent out a headline to the media that said *63-year-old gives birth to sextuplets*.

The media went crazy with the story and we had 20 applications to adopt her that same afternoon."



ARMS REACHING OUT TO HELP ANIMALS IN NEED

Mike Arms has had an incredible career in the animal rescue field that has extended from trauma to triumph.

Animal rescue work is a double-edged sword. It is extremely rewarding and gratifying to find wonderful, loving homes for abandoned and abused animals. On the other hand, it can be disheartening and overwhelming to realize how many more animals are still out there that need the help of human intervention. Mike Arms started his career dealing with the heartbreaking aspects of animal rescue work but, ultimately, that experience was what inspired him to become a major force for animal advocacy, initiating innovative ideas that have increased pet adoptions world-wide.

Growing up on a farm, Mike had no ambitions to work with animals

once he started a career. In the 1960s, he arrived in New York with a newly-acquired accounting degree, looking for a job that would enable him to make a difference in the world. An employment agency suggested that he take a position at the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) because it would look good on his resume. Mike was unfamiliar with the ASPCA organization, but he was grateful to have a job. Unfortunately, his career with the ASPCA was short-lived when the stress of seeing the horrors that mankind perpetrates against the animals of New York became too much for Mike. At that time, the ASPCA was killing more than 140,000 innocent animals a year. Arms decided to distance himself from employment in the animal rescue field and handed in his resignation.

THE TRAUMA

With just six days to go until his last day, Mike got a call that there was a dog hit by a car that was seriously injured. There were no ambulance drivers available, so Mike exchanged his suit jacket for an ambulance-

driver jacket and drove out to the accident scene.

Upon his arrival he saw a young black-and-tan shepherd/terrier mix lying in the street. The dog had been hit with such force that its back was broken. Mike knew immediately that the dog was in pain and urgently needed medical treatment. As Mike approached the injured dog, three men came out of a nearby doorway and asked him what he was doing. Arms calmly explained that the little dog was dying and he was taking it to a veterinary hospital. The men told him that he wasn't taking the dog anywhere. Mike inquired if it was their dog and they said, "No, but we are taking bets on how long it is going to live." Arms told them they were sick and turned to lift the dog into the ambulance.

As he bent to lift the injured puppy, the men attacked him with a bottle to the head, followed by a smack with a baseball bat, and then a sharp knife thrust into his hip and shoulder. Mike was knocked unconscious and lay in the street bleeding with nobody around to come to his aid.

Incredibly, the injured dog, which had not been able to move before Mike's arrival, struggled to make its way over to Arms and licked him until he woke up. Although he was barely conscious, Mike was so moved by the compassion of the seriously wounded dog to try and help him, he made a promise to God that if He would let Mike live, Mike would do everything possible to protect animals. Fortunately, Mike survived his injuries and, true to his word, he went on to save more animals than anyone else in animal-welfare history.

THE TRIUMPH

Arms' career in the animal-rescue field has included being the Director of Operations at the North Shore Animal League from 1977 to 1997. During his time there, he oversaw 400,000 animal adoptions and turned an annual local adoption event into an international collaboration involving 2,200 shelters in 9 countries. Today, North Shore Animal League is the world's largest no-kill animal rescue and adoption organization.

Since 1999, Arms has been President and CEO of the Helen Woodward Animal Center (HWAC). The *Home 4 the Holidays* adoption program Mike created



Millions of animals have benefited from Mike's novel and positive approach to marketing animals available for adoption. He is seen here with lovely Hannah.

his first year at the Center initially organized fourteen shelters in San Diego County. Twelve years later, millions of orphaned animals have been adopted. Those fourteen local shelters have turned into 4,000 participating rescues and shelters, all thanks to Mike's *Home 4 the Holidays* program. The success of this initiative illustrates the positive effect of business principles on adoption rates. Mike's philosophy is that those in the animal field have a life-or-death job. "We are in the business of selling new and used animals and so we better be good at what we do if we want to save their lives," he says.

Arms believes that, to truly help animals in shelters, we need to start thinking of sheltering as a *business* and market as such; we need to value to each life and get away from the attitude so prevalent today that animals are disposable objects.

Arms says this idea stems from his observation that we do a poor job marketing these worthy, beautiful animals to the public. Think of how much money goes into creating an ad campaign for a bag of dog food or a can of soda—millions of dollars.

In response, Mike created the Business of Saving Lives Conference and workshops, which teach participants more effective ways to find families for orphaned pets. Animal shelter workers from the United States, Argentina, Canada, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Ireland, Iran, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Romania, and Singapore have traveled to Helen Woodward Animal Center to learn the business of saving lives. International conferences are held off-site, twice a year, for industry leaders. Participants go away with tried-and-true techniques to improve their fundraising skills, education concepts, volunteer management, public relations, and social media and marketing efforts in order to increase their adoption rates and advance animal welfare.

Mike Arms has spent more than four decades as an animal-welfare advocate and has improved the quality of life for innumerable orphaned pets. It is truly incredible that it was an act of compassion by one dog that was a turning point in Mike's life and inspired his own compassion for millions of animals.

*Roses are Red, Violets are Blue,
We have the cat, that's purr-fect for you!*

Forgotten Ones Cat Rescue's

*Valentine's
Adopt-a-thon*

February 12–14

PET SMART

1700 Elgin Mills Road East,

Richmond Hill

Tel: 905 787-8740



What Are Cat Colonies?

Feral cats often live together in social and family groups called *colonies*. Colonies can be as small as 2–10 cats on residential properties, or as large as 50–100 cats in urban industrial and public areas.

The cats form close bonds with each other and will often defend the colony's territory from other cats who might seek to access their food and shelter.

Managed colonies are those that benefit from the attention of caring humans or *caretakers*. Caretakers feed the cats and provide shelter and veterinary care, including spay/neuter surgery, which prevents more unwanted kittens from being born.

Sole Support for Homeless Souls

As a cat rescue organization, one of our goals is to educate the public about issues that affect the wellbeing of animals, which is why we often discuss the plight of cats and kittens in cat colonies. It is estimated that there are about 100,000 feral and homeless cats in the GTA, with hundreds of feral kittens being born every day. About 75 per cent of those kittens will die, claimed by predators, disease, malnutrition and the elements.

As depressing as these facts are, it is encouraging to know that several charitable organizations have made it their mission to help these disowned animals. In addition, there are many individuals who have undertaken to improve the lives of homeless animals, and we are pleased to feature two such people.

Sonia's Story

One day I saw some stray cats. When I went back the next day, they were still there, so I started feeding them. I noticed that someone else was also feeding them but I never saw who. The three cats wouldn't come near me, but I would still go every day to put the food and water down. When it started to get cold, I had a wooden house built. I lined



Momma, above, enjoys a much better quality of life thanks to Sonia's caregiving support to her colony.

“I finally met the other girl who had been taking care of them. She is truly an angel. She looks after 10 colonies for 2–3 hours every day. She trapped the cats at most of these colonies and had them spayed/neutered and vaccinated. I took over this colony from her; however, she still stops in to see them.”



Sonia, seen above with Milo, is a compassionate animal-lover. She supports a local cat colony by providing essentials the abandoned cats need to survive.

it with insulation and added straw to it. I felt really bad that these kitties were living outside and I wanted to provide them with a warm shelter.

After feeding the cats for approximately four months, one of the cats began to trust me and let me pet him. He would rub against me and seemed to know that I was his friend.

A month later, one of the other cats warmed up to me and let me pet him, too. They became very friendly with me, and they allowed me to rub their stomachs, pet them, brush them, and pick them up. They would run to my car when I arrived. It took a year before the third cat would come close to me, but she would not let me touch her. Now she gets close and I have touched her once or twice, but she gives me dirty looks.

I feel it is important to help these animals; I started feeding them and now they rely on me. I also wanted to establish a bond so I could try to rescue them and one day have them adopted. I love cats and want to make sure these cats are okay. If they are going to be outdoors then I want to keep an eye on them and keep them as comfortable and happy as I can.

I find it rewarding because these cats have come so far from when I first started feeding them. They went from not coming near me to running towards me, rolling over for belly rubs, and letting me pick them up.

Sadly, one of the cats was fatally hit by a car. It is very upsetting to know that, even though you try to take care of cats without a home, there are so many dangers out there for them.

I wanted to bring the other two inside and I was able to get the one that trusted me, and I named him Fluffy. I took him to a vet and had him checked over, vaccinated and microchipped. However, Fluffy was a totally different cat indoors, where he HATED everyone, including me. We thought he would come around, but he showed no signs of wanting to be an indoor cat.

In the meantime, his outdoor mate, named Momma, wouldn't allow me to trap her. She was very smart—smarter than me (ha, ha). I was trapping skunks and raccoons but Momma wouldn't fall for it. I didn't want her to be alone, and her mate was still inside hating every moment of it. We decided that it would be best for both cats for me to release Fluffy back outdoors. The day after I released him, he was as happy as ever and was my friend again.

Being a colony caregiver continues to be a challenge because I don't want any cats on the streets. However, sometimes outdoor cats don't adjust to the indoor life. If they are going to be outside then I want to keep an eye on them and make their lives as safe and protected as I possibly can.

Anita's Story

When I moved to a new home in 2005, I noticed a multitude of stray cats roaming the neighbourhood. It turned out the root cause of this overpopulation problem was an elderly lady, a cat hoarder who had had approximately 25 cats and kittens residing in her backyard. I discovered, to my chagrin, that she'd been allowing cats to breed on her property for more than 50 years—yes, five decades—and considered them a source of entertainment.

Between 2005 and 2013, I fed, cared for, and rescued so many of the cat hoarder's strays I lost count. One pregnant female gave birth to six kittens in my garage. Fortunately, I was able to find homes for the entire brood, including the mother. That was my first experience as a cat colony caretaker.

I became involved in a second colony when I saw two kittens scampering across the rooftop of the garage of my neighbor, Giulie. The two kittens were the first residents of the colony, and we named them Buffy and Jodie. Shortly thereafter, their mother appeared, and a few months later, she gave birth to four more kittens.

Once the kittens were fully weaned, I humanely trapped two of them, socialized them, and paid for the spay/neuter surgery. They moved in with Giulie.

In the meantime, two gorgeous males joined our growing colony, and by the summer of 2014, we were in serious trouble. Before we had a chance to trap and neuter all the cats, fourteen more kittens were born. Giulie's backyard was beginning to look a lot like the cat hoarder's place. Something had to be done.

Unfortunately, three of the kittens became ill and another three sustained serious injuries; we had no option but to surrender them to local animal control centres. We do not know what became of them.

To save the remaining kittens from further harm, I brought them inside, tended to their medical needs, and prepared them for adoption. Giulie adopted two more, and homes were found for the rest.

I also discovered Toronto's Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program. In October 2014, after attending a workshop presented by the Toronto Feral Cat Project, I received my Cat Colony Caretaker certificate. With the assistance of two amazing cat rescuers, Joanne and Robin, I trapped five of the seven remaining cats and had them fixed free of charge.

In October 2015, a cat named Callie showed up with a broken leg and pelvis. Giulie rushed her to emergency and, \$6,000 later, she acquired yet another indoor cat—this one with a metal rod in her leg.

We worked hard to find homes for the cats in our colony and now only

DOING THE MATH

Assuming a pair of cats are left to breed at will, they have two litters per year and 2.8 surviving kittens per litter, the result is a staggering 420,715 cats in seven years.

First year: 12

Second year: 66

Third year: 382

Fourth year: 2,201

Fifth year: 12,680

Sixth year: 73,041

Seventh year: 420,715



three cats remain: Buffy and Jodie, as well as Henry, a cat that was abandoned by his family.

Three of us care for the colony, providing food, water, and love. Giulie has shelters in her yard and allows the cats into her enclosed front porch and garage. My friend Stephanie helps with the feeding and has been instrumental in socializing Henry. We also keep an eye out for any medical issues that may arise.

Caring for homeless cats is time-consuming and stressful. If people would simply spay or neuter their companion animals and refrain from letting them outdoors unsupervised, colony caretakers wouldn't be needed.

However, it's such a relief to know that there are TNR programs to break the never-ending cycle of unwanted pregnancies and reduce the number of cats who are euthanized in shelters every day.

Unfortunately, the cost of food and emergency care can be astronomical. Plus, it's dangerous out there! So, despite our best efforts, outdoor cats have notoriously short lives. Every night when I go to bed, I wonder if our precious angels will still be there in the morning.

I know my own two rescues, Spider and Willow, are happy to have a home. And I'm forever grateful to my patient and understanding partner Kevin, who has learned to accept that at any given moment there may be a "bonus" cat recovering in our foyer.

As rewarding as it can be, cat colony management is not for the faint of heart.



Anita, with some help from her friends, has provided food, shelter, veterinary care, and lots of love to numerous homeless cats and kittens. She has opened up her home, and her heart, to dozens of felines, including Buffy, Jodie, and Henry, above.

FOCR BULLETIN BOARD

PICTURES? STORIES? TIPS?

Receiving photos and updates about Forgotten Ones adopted cats and kittens is very rewarding for our volunteers. We would love to hear from you so we can include your photo and story in our Mewsletter. Please contact us at info@forgottenones.ca and include the word *Mewsletter* in the subject line.

SPRING EVENTS

Pet Smart Adoption Centre We will have cats available for adoption during the months of February, March, and May at: Pet Smart, 1700 Elgin Mills Road East, Richmond Hill Tel: 905 787-8740.

Valentine's Adopt-a-thon February 12-14, Pet Smart, 1700 Elgin Mills Road East, Richmond Hill

FOSTER HOMES URGENTLY NEEDED



Between the time cats and kittens are rescued and when they can be permanently placed for adoption, foster homes provide an important stepping stone. During kitten season, in particular, we are constantly seeking short-term homes for rescued felines, such as adorable Flynn, seen here.

Fostering is a great experience for everyone. Seniors enjoy having the companionship of a pet without the long-term commitment, and children learn important life lessons.

If you can open up your home and your heart to an animal in need, you are sure to find it a marvelous experience. FOCR pays for veterinary care—you provide the love!

For more information about our foster program, please contact us at: info@forgottenones.ca

Forgotten Ones
Cat Rescue

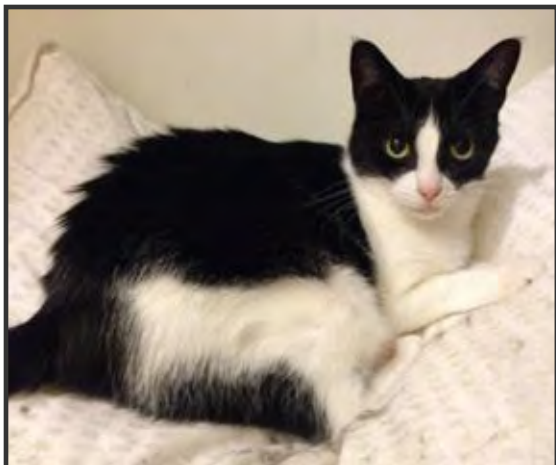


Established in 2000

We rely on financial contributions to continue our mission of finding loving homes for abandoned cats and kittens. Every dollar received is used for the needs of the animals in our care.

Donations can be made through our website: www.forgottenones.ca or mail a cheque to: Forgotten Ones Cat Rescue, P.O. Box 32203, Harding Postal Station, 250 Harding Blvd West, Richmond Hill, ON L4C 9S3.

Tax receipts for \$20 or more will be issued.
Registered Charity #85159 8417 RR0001

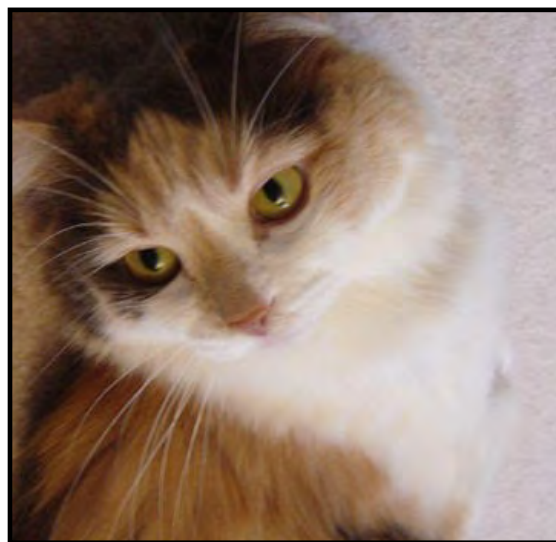


LILY—A Friendship Blooms

When I first brought Lily home to meet my cat Sydney, things didn't go well. There was hissing, growling, and a reluctance to share the litter box. I began to panic that things weren't going to work out, but FOCR told me to stay calm. Time passed, the two girls got to know each other, and now they're best friends.

Lily is a sweet girl who just wants to be petted—I often say that she is “powered by pets.” She sleeps on the pillow next to me every night, and is there to greet me when I wake up in the morning. She loves to snuggle and purr, and she and Sydney play and curl up together.

I'm so thankful that FOCR was there for her when she needed it, and for me when I needed it! ~ Andrew



CALLIE—Dreams Do Come True

Twice, within a year, my mother saw a calico cat in her dreams and one day a friend called her and said she was looking for a home for a kitten. My mother said, It wouldn't happen to be a calico, would it? And, of course, it was.

Cali is now 13 years old and is very loved. She is quite temperamental but very affectionate. Her unpredictable personality is not the only thing that is unique about her—she is also polydactyl, with an extra toe on each of her front paws.

Callie loves little pom-pom balls and treats them as her litter. She will carry them gently in her mouth and we will frequently find a group of them that Callie had placed together. She has a strong dislike for striped socks and hisses and growls at them. She is a funny little girl and we love her quirkiness. ~ Sandy



CUBBIE—A Cheeky Cutie

It's hard to believe that it has been five years since I adopted nine-week-old Cubbie. He has grown into such a beautiful boy inside and out! Everyday he makes me smile and laugh, I think more than I ever have in my entire life! Each morning he makes my day when he gives me a kiss upon waking. He's such a sweet kitty, likes to talk a lot, and is so silly-butt cheeky! He's always into some kind of mischief, usually trying to entice one of his three sisters into whatever game he's thinking of.

I honestly don't know what I'd do without him! He's the love of my life this sweet, little soul! I can never thank Forgotten Ones enough for saving Cubbie and his family. There are no words to express my gratitude and the love I have for my boy. ~ Anne