



# Forgotten Ones Cat Rescue

## Newsletter

Summer 2022

### TIME TO PAWS AND REFLECT



How future generations will regard charities is of interest to all non-profit organizations. A sustainable charitable sector will be possible only if the value and importance of philanthropy is instilled in children—and, fortunately, we know it is!

It has been reassuring to learn that parents believe children benefit in many ways when they learn about the significance of giving to charities and helping their community.

The website all4kids.com reports that teaching kids about philanthropy will help them develop empathy, responsibility, organizational skills, collaboration, and leadership. Children will also learn an intrinsic lesson about their place in the world.

Research suggests that, from the time they're very young, children have a deeply rooted instinct to share and to help others. One study found that toddlers enjoy giving to others even more than they like getting treats for themselves. Kids, it seems, have a

strong natural drive to be kind and generous, and it is a parent's role to nurture that instinct.

Over the years, many Forgotten Ones foster families have commented that pet fostering has been a positive experience and a great learning opportunity for their children. They have said that caring for cats and kittens has taught their children to be gentle and to develop a respect for animals. The kids have also learned about the importance of community spirit and teamwork.

Forgotten Ones has witnessed first-hand that children's love of animals can lead to their initial experience with philanthropy. We are delighted and honoured when a child chooses to make their first donation to Forgotten Ones. Madison, the eight-year-old granddaughter of one of our foster families, recently donated her piggybank money to Forgotten Ones in honour of Mother's Day and "to help the kittens." The amount a child donates is inconsequential; the gesture is beyond price.

We will have future generations that are generous and giving if children learn about caring today. And, as a society, we will all benefit.

~ Laura Wyatt, Director, Forgotten Ones Cat Rescue

### ADOPTION ALUMNI - Tuna



Porcupine (left) and Tuna (right)

We decided to adopt Tuna in March 2020, as we felt our resident cat Porcupine needed a friend. We know that black cats have the lowest rates of being adopted in shelter settings, and we wanted to

make sure that we were not adding to that statistic. Also, we mostly only wear black and dark colours, so having a shedding animal that blends in with us works out pretty well!

Tuna adjusted extremely well to her new home. I work in a veterinary clinic and had received so many conflicting ideas on how two cats should be integrated. The first days were full of growls and hisses, but the cats were best friends by the end of the second week, and now they cannot get enough of each other.

We love Tuna's personality so much and she's one of the funniest cats we've ever met. She is so vocal and playful, she never fails to make us laugh. We can't imagine our home without Tuna now!

We want to thank you guys so much for being so amazing throughout the adoption process and during a pandemic. ~ Shawna & Austin



# Love is Not Blind!

Just like humans, cats living with vision loss can face many challenges, but that doesn't mean they can't have fulfilling and happy lives. The greatest support pet owners can provide a blind animal is love and patience.

## Causes for Impaired Vision in Cats

Blindness in cats can be a result of disorders, diseases, or injuries, and can occur at any stage in a cat's life. Some kittens are born blind due to congenital abnormalities of the eyeball or its surrounding tissue. The condition might be evident in a kitten shortly after birth, or can develop within the first six to eight weeks of life. Most defects are genetically inherited.

Cats of all ages are at risk for eye injury resulting from playing or fighting with other cats, or from a foreign object that has either penetrated or fully punctured the eye. An untreated eye injury can greatly damage a cat's eye or even lead to blindness.

Viruses that target cats, such as feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV), feline leukemia virus (FeLV), or feline infectious peritonitis virus (FIP), can also cause feline eye disease.

However, vision loss in cats most commonly occurs as felines age. An older cat's vision can be affected by a condition, for example, high blood pressure, or a disorder, such as cataracts, glaucoma, progressive retinal atrophy, or tumors that develop within the eye or adjacent to it.

If vision loss is gradual, the transition is much easier for a cat. By the time a cat completely loses its eyesight, the cat will have learned to easily navigate the environment. If vision loss occurs suddenly, much more time is needed for adaptation. Pet handicaps can be overwhelming for the owners, even more than for their pets, and it might take time for family members to adjust to living with a blind cat.

Fortunately, for the most part, cats who are blind respond and behave in much the same way as cats that have sight. Be assured that a safe and stimulating environment will enable visually impaired cats to continue to enjoy and remain engaged in life and the world around them.

## Keller Inspires Compassion

**Visually impaired cats can evoke kindness and concern from people and other pets. Keller was a homeless kitten whose blindness stirred compassion in all he met.**

In August 2021, Sioux City Animal Center in Iowa received a call about two stray tuxedo cats, who were later named Keller and Anne Sullivan. Keller was approximate nine months old and was visibly blind, and Anne Sullivan was approximately two years old and appeared to be his protective mama.

Keller was the first to be humanely trapped and, when he was brought to the shelter, staff observed that he was very frightened and confused. A couple of days later, Anne Sullivan was brought

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## Stimulate Other Senses

When cats start to lose their vision, they rely on their other senses to help them function in their darkened world. Their ability to smell, feel, and hear becomes finely tuned and is their main tool in orienting themselves to their environment. Toys that make sounds, such as balls with bells, squeak toys, paper bags, or paper balls, can provide stimulation and playtime for vision-impaired cats.

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Trixie (above middle) was the perfect addition to the mother-son duo of Anne (left) and Keller (right). Creating a blended family was the ideal way to met the needs of all three felines.



Sioux City Animal Center staff decided to name the Tuxedo pair in honour of Helen Keller, the famous deaf and blind author and humanitarian, and Anne Sullivan, who was Keller’s devoted teacher and lifelong companion.

to the shelter. Once she was placed in Keller’s cage, he immediately calmed down and snuggled up beside her. The shelter staff watched in awe as the mama cat instantly resumed her role as a seeing-eye cat for her baby, providing him guidance everywhere he went.

According to the shelter’s vice-president Chris Wall, the duo was the most closely bonded pair of cats he had ever seen. They were constantly by each other’s side, and each would gently bounce off the other’s body, which helped Keller move about safely.

Keller and Anne were exceptionally affectionate with people as well. “They appeared to be fabulously friendly cats,” said Wall. “They were very, very lovey. As soon as I opened the cage door, they came forward and wanted their loving, but I couldn’t separate them [from each other] with a crowbar.”

Soon after they arrived, it was determined that Keller’s mom required surgeries for life-threatening health issues, and, fortunately, Anne made a full recovery from her operations. But the shelter staff decided the mother-son duo would benefit if there was another cat in the family to provide additional support for Keller. Anne was very protective of Keller, so finding the right fit for them could prove to be challenging.

They decided to try a nine-week-old orphaned kitten named Trixie, who needed a family of her own. Trixie had lots of personality, but she was so lonely that she was constantly crying. It was thought that Anne would be the ideal mama for Trixie, if she would accept her.

As it turned out, Trixie was immediately adopted as a family member, and she quickly learned to help guide Keller. Shelter staff were delighted with the outcome. “I’ve been here 37 years, and I’ve never come across a situation like this.” observed Cindy Rarrat, shelter director. “They love each other!”

### Comfort and Joy

Animal therapy, or pet therapy, is a term that refers to the use of animals to help people cope with and recover from physical and mental health conditions.

Tommy (below) has the ideal temperament to be a therapy cat, as he provides comfort, hope, and lots of kisses to everyone he meets.

One of Tommy's initial assignments as a therapy cat was to visit first responders on the first anniversary of the mass shooting on the Las Vegas Strip.

When it came time to start the adoption process, the rescue requested the trio be kept together, which turned out to be a non-issue. They received applications from 20 different states and one from Australia.

The chosen adoptive family has three children, including 12-year-old Joshua who is legally blind. Joshua's mother Amy said the three cats are in for the "best life."

### Blind Cats Inspire Compassion

**Tommy and Carrots are remarkable cats. Both had lost their vision as kittens, but their blindness did not dampen their genial and gentle personalities, which made them well-suited as therapy cats extraordinaire.**

Therapy cats are relatively novel and therapy cats with disabilities are even rarer. In 2018, Pet Partners, an organization that provides animal-assisted therapy, had more than 10,000 registered therapy animals, but only 200 were cats.

The requirements for animal therapy cats include being comfortable in a harness, being able to walk on a leash, recognizing their name, coming when called, and remaining largely unfazed no matter the situation. Given the nature of cats, meeting those qualifications can prove to be quite challenging for most felines—but not for Tommy and Carrots!



### Tommy

In 2011, Christy Santoro, a retired special-education teacher in Las Vegas, agreed to foster a sickly four-week-old kitten who had been abandoned at a veterinary office. The kitten was malnourished and his eyes were so infected that they had to be removed a month after his arrival.

Despite the hardships the little kitten endured, he maintained an affectionate and outgoing personality. "Even after losing his eyes, he loved getting out of the house, meeting new people, and greeting our house guests at the front door," said Christy. "His ears perked up as soon he heard his leash come out. How many cats like being walked on a leash?"

Tommy's exceptional ability to connect with people became even more evident in 2018 when he and Christy manned a kissing booth at a fundraiser for a local animal charity. Christy realized that Tommy was thriving on the experience and was in his element, purring, preening, and giving everyone kisses. "Tommy was so charming and open to everyone," remembers Christy, and he helped raise \$500. It was at that point Christy became convinced that Tommy's personality would make him amazing therapy animal, and the two took a pet-therapy training course.



Carrots (above) is a ginger-and-white cat whose weekly visits to the Marie Curie Hospice comforts patients and gives them a feeling of well-being.



Carrots is a worthy recipient of the Blue Cross Medal, which honours the extraordinary things pets do for people and how they change our lives.

Christy and Tommy earned their certificates as a cat-therapy team and they both benefit from their volunteer work. “Seeing Tommy bring joy to others brings me joy!” says Christy. Tommy flourishes when he is visiting people of all ages, as long as they give him plenty of attention. Christy and Tommy have provided their services to senior care facilities, schools, workplaces, community events, and hospitals.

In addition to providing comfort and stress relief, Tommy and his disability present an opportunity to teach the importance of acceptance, kindness, and awareness of the visually impaired. According to Christy, when people first see Tommy, they feel sorry for him because of his blindness. However, after spending just a few minutes with the therapy cat, they realize that his differences make him even more special.

### Carrots

Carrots is a six-year-old blind cat who helps bring relief and joy to people suffering from anxiety and depression. In November 2020, his service to patients in the Marie Curie Hospice in Bradford, England, was recognized when he was awarded the United Kingdom’s prestigious Blue Cross Medal.

The Blue Cross Medal was established during World War One as a way of celebrating heroic pets who change or save people’s lives. In 2020, there were 143 nominations for the award, and Carrots was chosen as the winner because of his significant contribution to help lift the spirits of sick, unwell, and dying patients.

Despite losing both his eyes as a very young kitten, Carrots has always had a calming and confident way about him, according to owner Katie Lloyd, who rescued Carrots when he was just three weeks old.

She was honoured by the recognition her pet received and talked about his ability to bring comfort to so many people, including herself. “He has been my companion since he arrived at Bradford Cat Watch Rescue, which I have run now for 14 years. Carrots helps me get through some of the hardest times of my life. Whenever I am going through my own health struggles, he seems to have a sixth sense that I need additional comforting and makes me feel so at ease.

“He has also been there for everyone at the Marie Curie Hospice in their hour of need and is special to so many people. He loves visiting patients and settles beside them so that they can stroke him and listen to him purr. He touches the hearts of everyone he meets and has a great sense of love and responsibility.”

Bradford Cat Watch Rescue’s mission is to save the lives of homeless, unwanted, sick, and injured cats, and to work with the community to provide information, community projects, and support for people and cats. Carrots’ Blue Cross Medal is a well-deserved recognition of the rescue’s positive impact and their contribution to helping people, pets, and their community. 🐾



# 10 Summer Safety Tips

For most Canadians, summer is our favourite season, a time to enjoy fun in the sun and to make great memories. To ensure that our pets have a fantastic summer as well, here are a few tips to keep your cat safe throughout the season.

1. Whether your cat is indoor or outdoor, make sure to keep fresh, cool water available at all times. For outdoor cats, add ice cubes to the water bowl to keep it cold longer.
2. If you don't have air conditioning in your home, have a fan and shaded spots available for your cat. The best rule of thumb is that if it's too hot for you, it's too hot for your cat.
3. Repair or replace any damaged screens to prevent your cat from getting out of your house or falling from a window. The instances of cats getting critically injured from falling from apartment and condo windows have been so numerous that the occurrence has been termed *high-rise syndrome*.
4. Choose the right times to play with your cat. Over-exertion in hot weather can cause your cat to suffer from heat exhaustion, which is the precursor to heatstroke. Schedule playtime for the mornings and evenings, when it's cooler.
5. For outdoor cats, make sure you are current with flea and heartworm treatments to avoid external and internal parasites. There is no treatment for feline heartworm disease, only prevention.
6. On hot days, gently stroke your cat with a damp washcloth or paper towel to help your kitty cool down. We all know that every cat loves a good pat!
7. A tangle-free coat will help keep your cat cool, so brush your cat often over the summer months. It might also be worth having a professional clip for the summer, especially for cats with long fur.
8. Cats have sweat glands on their paws. If you see wet paw prints, it's a sign your cat is sweating and is in need of replenishing fluids.
9. Avoid taking your cat with you in the car in the summer unless it's absolutely necessary. Never leave your cat in a parked car—even if you put the windows down and park in the shade, it's still too hot!
10. Summer storms can be scary for your cat. Loud thunder can spook some cats, so be sure to have a safe space where your kitty can hide. For outdoor cats, make sure they have a safe dry place to take refuge. 🐾

## Screening Your Screens

Most window screens are designed to keep bugs out, not to keep cats in. Cats can easily push many standard window screens out of place, especially if the screen is older or the frame is damaged.

Cat-proof window screens offer a secure, sustainable solution to keep your indoor cat safe when the windows are open. These screens are made of stronger materials than the standard window mesh, to prevent your cat from clawing through them. They are available at many hardware stores.



## Cats & Water—A Complicated Relationship



Cats have developed a reputation for being aquaphobic, and most people believe cats have a strong aversion to water. If you have ever tried to bathe a cat, you might be certain of it!

Even though cats can paddle in water as well as dogs, and there are certain breeds of domestic cats that are known to enjoy swimming, most cats will go to great lengths to avoid getting wet.

On the other hand, many cats are fascinated by water and may enjoy dipping their paws into the bathtub or water bowls, or dunking their heads under the faucet for a drink.

Cats' love/hate relationship with water is complex. Animal behaviourists have developed a number of theories regarding the perplexing attitudes cats can have to H<sub>2</sub>O.



Domestic cats descended from the African wildcat (above). They inhabited desert regions and had little knowledge about, or exposure to, bodies of water. Animal behaviourists believe our pets have retained behavioural similarities to their ancestors with regards to water.

### AVERSION TO WATER

In general, domestic cats do not enjoy being submerged in water and there are a few diverse reasons for this.

#### Evolution

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association theorizes that cats owe their dislike of water to the fact that they originated in dry, desert climates. Throughout the early history of the species, cats were not exposed to rivers, lakes, and rain. As a result, they were not as familiar with water as some other evolving species.

Another possible explanation for a cat's dislike of being submerged in water is connected to its innate need to always be prepared for potential dangers. Most cats have coats that trap water and can weigh them down when wet, which would cause them to move more slowly and be more vulnerable if attacked.

#### Fastidiousness

Cats are meticulous self-groomers. In fact, they spend about 30 to 50 percent of their waking hours carefully grooming themselves, according to Cornell University. It makes sense they don't want their coats to get drenched and all their hard work to go to waste.

As felines are especially sensitive to the odors and chemicals found in water, they don't enjoy the smells lingering in their groomed coat.

Additionally, cats have lots of different scent glands that produce pheromones used for marking and communication, and scented bathwater and chemical-laden tap water can mask these natural scents.



In general, a healthy adult cat doesn't require bathing unless it has gotten into something that has coated the fur and can't be easily removed with a brushing. It is critical to buy a shampoo made specifically for cats, as shampoos made for humans or dogs, especially flea shampoos, can be toxic to felines.



Kittens are playful and have a natural impulse to push and prod things with their paws. This could be why they might play with, or in, water.

## Negative Experiences

Another cause for cats not caring for water is having negative experiences or lack of experience with it. If your cat's only exposure to water was being trapped in a downpour, forced into a flea bath, or squirted as a disciplinary measure, it's hardly surprising that kitty is not fond of water.

Felines that aren't accustomed to water might also shy away from it because cats are creatures of habit and typically don't enjoy surprises. Cats that have received regular baths since kittenhood, or those that have warmed up to water on their own terms, may love to take a dip.

## AFFINITY FOR MOVING WATER

Given the complex nature of cats, it isn't a surprise that feline's attraction to water is as complicated as their aversion to water. There are several theories for the fascination with H<sub>2</sub>O, specifically running water, that many cats have.

## Instinct

Cats are intelligent creatures that possess evolved wildcat survival traits. Ancestors of domestic cats lived in the wild, where they learned that a pool of stagnant water could be dangerous. Drinking from still water could cause them to be ill, as such water was often polluted with bacteria from any number of sources. On the other hand, drinking water flowing in a stream, with less contaminants, did not cause them any harm. Centuries later, flowing water likely triggers an instinct in cats that assesses it as safe to drink.

## Vision Limitations

Felines have great peripheral and night vision, but they find it hard to see close objects, such as water in a bowl. You might see cats dipping their paws into the liquid right before drinking, and it is likely that they are trying to figure out what the water level is. They like to know the approximate level of the water, otherwise they run the risk of sticking their face too far into the bowl and getting more than their tongue wet. To make things easier for your cat, try to always fill the bowl to the same level.

## Whisker Fatigue

When a cat has whisker fatigue, it means that the whiskers are overstimulated, which makes the cat feel unsettled and agitated. Whiskers are super sensitive tactile hairs that help your cat with spatial awareness. The end of each whisker is covered in nerve endings that let the cat know an object's exact location. If a cat's food or water dish is deep and narrow, those sensitive whiskers can end up smushed against the sides. Experiencing this every time they eat or drink can be particularly uncomfortable, and some cats will paw at food and water to try to pull it from the bowl. 🐾



Despite their reputation for liking only dry land, a surprising number of domesticated cats, such as the Maine Coon breed (above), enjoy swimming.



The Turkish Van breed's ability to swim is not their only claim to fame. In Turkey, the cats are considered national treasures, and their preservation is overseen by the Turkish College of Agriculture and the Ankara Zoo.

## Best Swimmer Cat-egory

Although many cats do not like water, there are at least 10 breeds that actually like to swim. Turkish Van, Norwegian Forest, Maine Coon, and Abyssinian are four cat breeds with a long history of being natural-born swimmers.

### The Turkish Van

The Turkish Van is an ancient breed that developed naturally in the region of central and southwest Asia. The breed name comes from the name of a lake and a city in Turkey, both called Van, and the original cats were simply called "Vancats."

The Turkish Van's history with swimming dates back centuries and is based on facts and fables. According to legend, two ancestors of the Turkish Van sailed aboard Noah's Ark. Before the flood waters had totally subsided, the pair jumped into the water and swam until they reached dry land. They eventually found their way to Lake Van and remained in the region to this day.

The Turkish Van cat is a large, highly energetic animal that demonstrates athletic prowess both on land and in the water. Van cats are strong and capable swimmers, an ability that has earned this breed the nickname "the Swimming Cat." They can happily swim for long periods of time and emerge from the water relatively dry.

Van cats' agility in water is thanks to their physical attributes. The cat's body shape is often compared to a swimmer's physique, with a strong, powerful torso, broad at the chest and shoulder, and long, muscular legs. The breed's semi-long fur is naturally water-repellant, which prevents their coat from becoming saturated and weighing them down in the water.

### The Norwegian Forest Cat

One of the oldest cat breeds still in existence is the Norwegian Forest Cat. It is an ancient breed that developed without human



Other cat breeds that enjoy swimming are Bengals (above), Manx, Japanese Bobtail, American Bobtail, Savannah, and Turkish Angora.

Although Bengal cats are quite confident in water, it is still essential to monitor them so they remain safe when they are swimming.

assistance for hundreds of years in the forests of Norway. Called the *skogkatt* (Norwegian for “forest cat”) in its native country, the Norwegian Forest Cat is sometimes given the nickname “wegie” in North America. Their association with water goes back centuries, as it is believed that their ancestors served on the Norse longboats as mousers during Viking raids.

Wegies are excellent swimmers, thanks to the water-resistant double coat that protects them from cold waters and also enables them to swim effortlessly.

Members of this breed have been known to use their swimming skills to hunt fish and other prey reachable only in the water.

### The Maine Coon Cat

Many believe that these gentle giants descended from Norwegian Forest Cats, as their thick, fluffy coats are remarkably similar in design and function. Their large paws serve as makeshift paddles, scooping large amounts of water out of their way so they can glide more efficiently through the waves. Not all Maine Coon Cats love to swim, but they generally love water and will spend copious amounts of time playing with it.

Maine Coons have a reputation for learning to turn on the faucet, as well as for scooping water from toilet bowls and dunking toys in their water dishes. Some Maine Coon owners say they’ve taken to keeping their cats’ water bowls inside enclosures to help contain the splatter. Some Maine Coons love water so much they will climb into the shower with their owners!

### The Abyssinian

The Abyssinian cat is said to be one of the oldest cat breeds, resembling the cats depicted in Egyptian tombs. Known as “Abys,” these cats have a distinctive wildcat look, with their ticked coats and large, erect ears.

Active Abyssinian cats are great swimmers and enjoy any activity that involves water. They are known to do a few laps in a warm bath and to enthusiastically swat and tap their water fountains.

Genetic evidence suggests that Abyssinian cats came from Indian Ocean coastal regions, and dwelling close to an ocean could explain their comfort with water. 🐾

## HOW TO DONATE THROUGH YOUR EMPLOYER

Many companies believe in corporate social responsibility and support local charities. As an extension of corporate philanthropy, matching gift programs are designed to be the means by which businesses encourage employee charitable giving.



Companies match donations made by employees to a wide range of not-for-profit organizations. As a registered charity, Forgotten Ones Cat Rescue is an eligible recipient of the matching gift funds. In addition, if you donate to United Way, you can also request that your contribution be directed to us.



Charlie (left) and Johnny (right)

### Charlie & Johnny – Love at First Sight

In 2018, our daughter, who was nine at the time, met Johnny and Charlie at a Forgotten Ones adopt-a-thon held at TruPet. She instantly fell in love with them. After that, we visited them frequently at the store and they were always drawn to her. It was clear they had formed a connection, so we decided to adopt them.

Charlie is blind in one eye and Johnny has one eye in which he has limited vision, so he can see only about 6 to 12 inches away. We spoke to Laura at Forgotten Ones about possible issues or special care that they might need, and she put our minds at ease that there would be no problems.

Charlie and Johnny felt at home right away—running around the house and exploring their surroundings, like typical active kittens. At first, Johnny would occasionally run into things (walls, furniture, etc.). There were times when he would climb onto high surfaces and couldn't get down but, after a couple

of days, he figured out where everything was and was comfortable playing and chasing his brother around. They're still playful and active, and they're very sweet and cuddly with us and with each other. It's like having two five-year-old kittens in the house!

We have another Forgotten Ones cat, Sven (formerly Trooper), and the three of them love to play, eat, and nap together. Johnny and Charlie are a great addition to our family

~ Jon & Family



### Dash – His Name Says It All

We were heartbroken in 2020 when we lost three cats that we had personally rescued from the streets. They'd had a great life with us and died of old age. We decided to adopt a cat through Forgotten Ones Cat Rescue, and volunteer Laura introduced us to Dash. He had not been a good fit for his original owner or his foster family, but we fell in love with him immediately.

When we brought him home, he slept under the bed for the first night, but after that he slept with us every night. He quickly became comfortable with the whole house, including the windowsills, where he would knock over everything in sight. We jokingly nicknamed him Crash-and-Dash and baby-proofed the windowsill by removing items so he could come and go as he pleased. He likes to dart to and fro while playing with his DaBird toy, so Dash really is a fitting name for him.

Dash is not a lap cat, but loves affection. When he first felt comfortable enough to expose his chin and belly for pats, he

was so relaxed that he rolled right off the bed. He expresses his love for us by putting his paws on our chests and rubbing his face against ours for several minutes while purring away.

We are so in love with Dash and will be forever grateful to Forgotten Ones volunteers for matching us with our beautiful forever cat! Thank you for all you do!

~ Colleen & Bryan