



The Pet Pride Post

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Foster Care Providers

Opening their homes and hearts to cats and kittens in need

As we welcome spring sunshine and warmer temperatures, sanctuary staff and foster care providers are welcoming kittens—lots of them! It's kitten season in Rochester, and with unsprayed females as young as six months able to birth multiple litters during a single season, shelters like ours are inundated with calls from people needing help for pregnant mama cats, moms with kittens, or kittens without moms.

Pet Pride's foster care providers play crucial roles in the lives of these vulnerable felines. Expectant and nursing mama cats need quiet, private spaces away from other cats, and their babies need extra TLC until they are old enough to be adopted. A foster home is the safest place for them to be during those first few weeks of life, and foster care providers give these babies their best chance to thrive. Some foster volunteers help cats who are too stressed in a shelter environment or need one-on-one care for other reasons, and they all alleviate the strain on shelters like ours during the busiest time of the year, allowing staff to allocate space and resources to other cats in need.

Becky Buchholz has plenty of stories to tell from her twenty years of fostering. She has helped dozens of pregnant mom cats and welcomed their babies into the world. She has kept orphaned kittens by her bedside, tucked into a winter hat, and bottle-fed them every few hours through the night. She rehabilitated a lame kitten by doing physical therapy, massaging and bending its tiny leg several times each day.

What motives Becky to continue this work year after year?

She says she knows that she can make an immediate difference. "A lot of people say, 'I could never foster because I'd want to keep them all,' but you can't keep them because of all the other cats who need you. This is such an easy thing for me to do, and I plan on doing it until I can't anymore."



Photo by Liv Markovitz.

One of the more challenging assignments in Liv Markovitz's twelve years of fostering was socializing a litter of ten-week-old feral kittens. Together, they listened to five audiobooks so the kittens could get used to Liv's presence and the sound of human voices. As both a volunteer foster provider and a Pet Pride employee, Liv enjoys being a part of the process from intake through adoption and meeting the families who take her fosters home.

Emily Strassner specializes in bottle-feeding orphaned kittens, who require nourishment every two to three hours. "Besides waking up in the night, it's really pretty easy," she laughs. "I know it's for a short period of time, and my kids sleep through the night." Emily's family includes

her husband, three teenagers, three dogs, and three cats, and she babysits her one-year-old niece, so her foster kittens benefit from ample and varied opportunities for socialization. "It's very rewarding, because I know they're going to be great pets for somebody," she explains.

The stories of dedicated volunteers like Becky, Liv, and Emily speak volumes about the profound impact that foster providers have as well as the personal rewards they enjoy. If you've ever considered opening your home to a cat in need, now is the perfect time to join our fostering family. Your support will not only save lives but also enrich your own in ways you never imagined. 🐾

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Pet Pride of New York saves the lives of homeless cats in our community by providing shelter, veterinary care, and adoption into loving homes. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and a New York State Registered Shelter/Rescue, and we operate a no-kill cat sanctuary and adoption center.

Pet Pride Cat Sanctuary and Adoption Center

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From the President

Dear Friends,

It was 16,965 days ago, in 1977, when three other founding members and I met in our lawyer's office and legally formed Pet Pride of New York, Incorporated. Nearly forty-seven years later, we are still here, saving lives on a scale we could only have dreamed of back then. Pet Pride is growing because of the generosity of thousands of donors and the hard work and dedication of our board members, staff, and volunteers.

Our wonderful volunteers help with everything from emptying litter boxes to allaying the fears of newly surrendered cats. They pull weeds, build shelves, assist with special events, and contribute in a multitude of ways to the successful operation of our sanctuary and adoption center.

As we all roll up our sleeves to undertake the monumental tasks associated with kitten season, I want to shine the spotlight on one particular group of volunteers: the men and women who foster Pet Pride cats and kittens. These lifesavers are often called on a moment's notice to take a newly rescued cat or kitten into their homes. Many of these cats have just given, or are about to give, birth—making for several more lives that need to be protected. Foster volunteers bring the cats and kittens to veterinary visits at the shelter to receive their vaccinations and undergo spay or neuter surgery. They socialize, play with, and offer consistency for their houseguests, and they provide shelter staff with details about the personalities and preferences of their feline charges to help match them with the best forever homes. Finally, they extend the surest sign of love by letting their fosters go when the time comes, knowing the cats and kittens they feel so attached to belong with other families, not theirs.

We salute our foster care providers, and we invite you to support their work and ours. Whether you choose to purchase items from our online wish lists or make a monetary donation, your contribution toward all the kitten formula, kitten chow, cat litter, and surgical supplies we're going to need in the coming months will be put immediately to work saving precious lives.

With sincere appreciation,



Stuart Gluckman, DVM

P.S. To donate online or select a gift from any of our wish lists, please visit www.petprideny.org/donate. Thank you!

Socializing Your New Kitten

Rebecca Lohnes, MS, CCBC, CDCC

Congratulations — you're welcoming a new kitten! As soon as you arrive home, you can begin socializing your new kitten to help them be confident, calm, and happy throughout the rest of their life. Young kittens are primed to learn all about the world around them. They're more playful than they will be as adults, and they're naturally more open to new experiences.

Socialization is a process wherein you expose your kitten to new sights, sounds, people, and other animals in order to teach them that new experiences are safe and fun. If you socialize them to a wide variety of things, they can learn that variety itself is safe and fun. This will help them adapt to any changes or new experiences later in life.

The best socialization is positive socialization where your kitten is having a great time and is learning that new experiences always happen in conjunction with their favorite things (food, play, affection). Contrast this with passive socialization where new things are happening, but the experiences are neutral and the kitten is simply observing. With passive socialization, they're not learning to enjoy the situation, and it can easily turn into a negative experience for the kitten. For the best positive socialization, you must give the kitten the choice to participate or to retreat. Forcing them to socialize will ultimately work against you and can cause increased fear and anxiety.

For example, instead of plopping your new kitten on a visitor's lap, which effectively takes the kitten's choice away, provide treats or a wand toy to encourage your kitten to have fun with their new friend. In any new situation, you must tune into your kitten's body language, and if they show any signs of stress or fear, let them retreat and decompress.

As long as you're keeping the socialization active and positive, there's really no limit to the experiences that you can have with your new kitten! Harness training so you can explore local parks together? Why not?! Becoming friends with your sister's calm, cat-friendly dog? Absolutely! Riding in a stroller so you can become that-one-neighbor-who-walks-their-cat-in-a-stroller? Do it. We can't wait to hear about all your adventures!

One caveat — you do need to keep in mind that kittens are not blank slates. Their behavior is shaped by genetics, early experiences, and even their mom's health and stress levels during her pregnancy. Not every kitten is going to want to grow up to be an adventure cat. However, if you're practicing positive socialization, you can help your kitten gain confidence and you can find other activities for your shy guy that will be just as fun. 🐾

Rebecca is a Certified Cat Behavior Consultant and the owner of Young Lion Training and Behavior.

Thinking about fostering?



NESSA, a proud foster care graduate. Photo by Liv Markovitz.

Visit our website at www.petprideny.org for more information and an application, or contact Pet Pride at info@petprideny.org to learn how you can make a lifesaving difference as a Pet Pride foster volunteer.

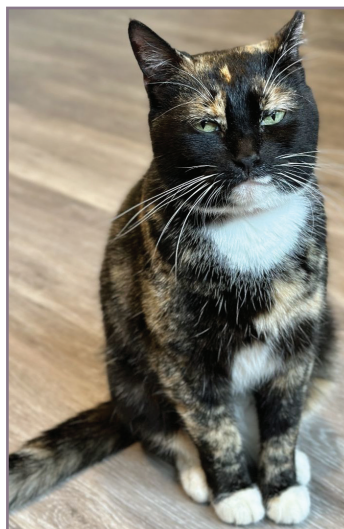
Upcoming Events for Your Calendar

Whiskey & Whiskers

Iron Smoke Whiskey, Fairport
May 14, 2024, 6:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Kitten Shower

Pet Pride Cat Sanctuary & Adoption Center, Victor
May 18, 2024, noon - 4:00 p.m.



Is **SWEET BEAUTY** the next "Grumpy Cat" of Internet fame? We think this curious, playful, and funny one-year-old girl is just waiting for an adopter to come along and put a smile on her face!

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Address _____ City _____ State ____ Zip _____

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I would like to make a recurring, monthly gift in the amount of \$ ____ .

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**Please make your check payable to Pet Pride of New York and mail it to us at P.O. Box 338, Mendon, NY 14506,
or donate online at www.petprideny.org/donate.**

Pet Pride is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. A copy of our latest financial report (990) may be obtained upon request from Pet Pride or from the New York State Attorney General's Charities Bureau, 28 Liberty St., 15th Floor, New York, NY 10005.