



KITTENS, KITTENS EVERYWHERE...

IN THE WORLD OF ANIMAL RESCUE, the months between March and November are known as "Kitten Season." If you've ever looked for a kitten to add to your family during the Winter, then you know—the little guys are scarce during the colder months.

Cats start going into heat as the weather begins to get warm and continue to get pregnant and give birth until the weather turns cold. Even while she is still nursing her most recent litter, a female cat can go into heat and get pregnant again. Each year, on average, an unspayed female will give birth to three litters of kittens each litter averaging four to six babies. Needless to say, this time of year... we have kittens virtually coming out of our ears!

The calls for help are non-stop. Every day, a couple of dozen people call, asking if we can take in the mom cat and kittens living under their porch or the unspayed family pet that got outside again and now has another litter of kittens. Shelters are also calling, begging 4Paws to take a litter or two of the dozens and dozens that are overflowing their facilities and in danger of euthanasia. In 2002, 4Paws found loving homes for 268 kittens—nearly half of all the cats placed into forever homes last year. So, if you are looking to adopt a kitten, look no further, 4Paws has them!

Once you have decided to adopt a kitten—whether it be to save a life; teach the children about responsible pet care; provide a friend for your current cat or dog; or simply to bring a loving companion into your home—how do you choose

the right kitten for your family?

Age often seems to be foremost on the minds of adopters. "As young as possible" or "between five and eight weeks" are requests we often hear.

You should keep in mind, though, that it is important for a kitten to be at least eight weeks old before separating him from his mother and/or siblings. The period between six and eight weeks is a critical time in a kitten's development—when he learns how to interact with other cats.

Whether or not a kitten ends up in a multi-cat household, it is important for him to be properly socialized. It is the bond developed with their mothers and siblings from which kittens model their relationships with people. A kitten that stays with his feline family until at least

eight weeks of age has the best chance of acquiring the skills and confidence necessary to develop loving attachments later in life.

The period between the sixth and eighth weeks is also the time when mom cat teaches her young proper kitty manners. If we could understand her meows, we might hear, "wash your paws after eating, no staring at strangers, and listen to your elders."

While young kittens are cute and fun to watch, adopting a kitten is a step that should be carefully considered before taking any action. Once you have decided that you are ready to commit to the life-long care of a new kitten, significant time and thought should go into choosing the right kitten given the needs and

continued on page 7

ANNOUNCING: THE FIRST ANNUAL 4PAWS YARD SALE

Volunteers are currently collecting items to be sold at the yard sale. Why not redecorate the den or finally get around to that Spring cleaning—and help homeless cats in the process? Give us your used desk, your teenager's baby clothes, or the Christmas gift from 1999 that is still in its original gift box. And, what better reason to get a new, bigger, better TV, than giving the old one to charity? Remember, 4Paws is a non-profit organization, so your donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.

Bring your donated items to either of the next two adoption fairs: August 23 at the Tyson's Petco (703/448-3401) or September 13 at the Fairfax Petco (703/352-3300), both from 1 to 5. You can also call 703/715-MEOW for alternate collection sites.

On September 20th, come early to the 4Paws Yard Sale for the best bargains and show your support for homeless cats and kittens! 4Paws t-shirts and sweatshirts with animal friendly designs will also be available for purchase.

Date: Saturday, September 20
Time: 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Location: 14342 Silo Valley View
Centreville, VA 20121

Visit www.fourpaws.org for directions to the yard sale and weather related postponements.

Alternate rain dates
(8 a.m. to 2 p.m.):

- 1st alternate—Sunday, Sept 21
- 2nd alternate—Saturday, Sept 27
- 3rd alternate—Sunday, Sept 28





4 Paws Press is published by
the 4 Paws Rescue Team, Inc.
P.O. Box 2908, Merrifield, VA 22116
(703) 715-MEOW (voice)
(703) 560-9795 (fax)
info@fourpaws.org
www.fourpaws.org
Combined Federal Campaign # 7540

If you would like to be added to or
deleted from our mailing list or know
others who would like to receive our
mailings, please contact us.



The 4Paws Rescue
Team is a non-profit
community based
volunteer organiza-
tion that takes in neg-
lected, abandoned,
abused and unwanted cats and kittens
and finds them permanent, loving
homes. An animal rescued by 4Paws
will never be euthanized except out of
medical necessity. In addition, 4Paws is
dedicated to managing the popula-
tions and improving the health of feral
cat colonies. 4Paws also works with
schools to teach children the impor-
tance of responsible pet care.

4Paws Rescue Team
Officers and Board Members

Barbara Lipson
President/Board of Directors

Dede Dixon
Vice President/Board of Directors

Dianna Hogan
Secretary/Board of Directors

Linda Simmons
Treasurer/Board of Directors

Board of Directors
Kathleen Kerrins
DeAnna Scott

4 PAWS PRESS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A HEADLINE IN THE WASHINGTON POST, April 2003, "Sinking Revenue Alarms Charities," speaks of a cry heard around the nation and felt deeply right here by the 4Paws Rescue Team, its volunteers and the community of pet owners and homeless cats that we have pledged to help. The article explains that tough economic times coupled with "... a troubled Washington area United Way and increased demand for services..." have charities scrambling to stay afloat.

Far from immune to this economic crisis, 4Paws is squarely in the middle of it. Donations from private individuals are down 23% as compared to this time last year. Contributions from the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), a program for Federal government employees that facilitates donations to charities through payroll deductions, have also dropped. In prior years, donations from CFC provided funding for 60% of 4Paws' operating activities. CFC donations for the current year, starting in March of 2003, are running 40% below last year's levels.

As the Washington Post pointed out, not-for-profit organizations across the country are facing similarly severe cuts in funding. Many organizations have responded by freezing job openings or laying off workers, cutting back on travel and training, and reducing overhead costs. 4Paws, run entirely by volunteers, does not have any fat to cut; no employees, no rent, no excesses—93% of the funds raised are used to directly benefit the cats by paying for vet services, medical supplies, cat food, litter and other supplies. The remaining funds are used primarily to operate the administrative functions of the organization (i.e., postage, ads for adoption fairs, and print costs for adoption applications). There is no other option, therefore, if donations drop, 4Paws will have to cut program services—fewer feline lives will be saved.

This is a horrific situation during a time when even more of our furry friends need our help. Of late, more families are finding themselves in the emotionally devastating situation of having to give up their cherished pets. In many cases, its financial difficulties that are forcing people to relinquish their pets—they are finding that they can no longer afford to care for them. The calls have spanned the gamut: lost jobs, bankruptcy filings, and evictions as well as military deployments have resulted in previously loved pets needing to find new homes. Of course, 4Paws helps when possible—our volunteers share in the heartbreak of every owner who must give up his beloved cat. The image of those dearly loved felines quivering, alone in a cage in an animal shelter—their lives quite possibly cut short if space becomes scarce—is a picture we fight to keep from our minds.

As always, the amount of help that we can provide is limited by our resources: volunteer time and now, more than ever, financial resources. That is why we are asking you—even in these difficult financial times—please send a donation. Times are difficult everywhere, for you, for 4Paws, for the homeless cats languishing in animal shelters or starving on our streets. Just think how much your donation will mean to the former pet whose family was forced to relinquish him to an animal shelter, as he sits waiting, lonely and afraid, for someone to take him out of the cage. Imagine, if because of your donation, the shelter volunteer ultimately removing him from the cage were able to hand him to the loving arms of a 4Paws volunteer instead of having to take him down the dark and scary hallway to the euthanasia room.

Never before have we been in such desperate need of your financial assistance. Please make a contribution today so that 4Paws can continue its important work of saving feline lives... our furry friends deserve so much more than to die a premature death because of lack of funds.



FELINE TALES . . . WITH HAPPY ENDINGS

Taffy was rescued from a West Virginia shelter with a very high euthanasia rate. Shortly after her adoption, Taffy's adoptive mom writes, "We were very lucky to have recently adopted a kitten from you...we met her at the Saratoga Animal Hospital. She is a very special girl. She only has one eye—she had the other removed some time ago due to glaucoma. She is the most beautiful cat in the world. A lot of people say that she is lucky. We are the lucky ones. Every day with her is a blessing. Words can't explain the joy that she brings to us. Thank you for bringing us together."—Eva and Kevin

Inky, a sweet little cat with long black fur, had a difficult start in life. She was born and lived outside her entire life until a volunteer was able to trap her. It is a miracle that she survived the seven or eight months before her rescue... born with a genetic defect resulting in eyes with no lids, the wear and tear from the elements eventually left her blind in both eyes. Surgery has alleviated Inky's pain. Having been blind most of her life, she is adjusting well to her new circumstances in a home where regular meals and a warm place to sleep are routine. Inky's new family includes four feline siblings— one of which is also blind—and a mom and dad who were instantly enchanted by her loving nature.

Heidi, was rescued at 8 weeks of age from an overcrowded animal shelter just before she was to be euthanized. Now she has a whole family to love her and children with whom to play. Her new mom writes, "... how happy we are and how wonderful she is. It is like she has always been a member of this family. She came in and fit right in...She has made us all so very happy and I can't imagine what we would do without her."—Patty K.

Matilda, adopted by Bruce Mueller, continues to bring joy for which he is unendingly grateful.



Jerry (above), his littermates, five other kittens and six adults were all given to 4Paws by an elderly woman who had taken a few stray cats into her house, but not had them neutered. In no time, the cat population exploded out of control and she was unable to care for them all. The woman turned to 4Paws for help. "[Jerry] responds to his new name (**O'Reilly**) very well. He is very much a 'people cat' and brings joy to every member of the family...When we first brought him home, he was on a constant adventure. He had so many things to explore in every room. Then he realized there was a basement and an upper level. It kept him busy for weeks... O'Reilly thanks you and we thank you for this perfect match."—Nita P.

Sam was found in an alley in DC, most likely dumped there by an owner who no longer wanted to care for him. Now he rules the roost! "Sammie is doing wonderfully. Despite sharing his home with two 65 pound dogs—he rules.. We have put up special shelving so he can lounge at his favorite window and eat his food without being disturbed. I was worried at first about how Sam would take to the dogs, but they all get along great (after the initial two weeks of hissing). The three line up on the floor while I make dinner waiting for the scraps to fall. Sammie does not let the dogs push him around when something falls. Our dobie and rottie mix both just stand in confusion and whine when Sammie gets to the scrap first. As Sam sleeps on his catnapper, fat and happy, I know I could never be without him."—Lauren H.

"Thanks [to 4Paws] for helping the cats of Lewes. Your incredible support has helped over 70 cats this past year. When I think of how many litters... [have been] prevented, I am thunder-struck. So much suffering avoided!"—Denise A.

Firebird (now named **Sammy**), another cat saved from death row at a local shelter, was very sick when rescued by 4Paws. His new dad writes, "Sammy is doing well...He has proven to be one of the 'people-friendliest' cats that we have ever encountered. He just loves to get attention and never seems to stop purring... All-in-all, it looks like we have a great match. Sammy seems more at home all the time and we certainly enjoy having him."—Mike A.



Found scavenging for food in a trash dumpster, **Twister** (above, left) was later discovered to have a paralyzed tail from an earlier accident. Now, Twister has a cushy life of leisure that he shares with his feline brother, **Tango**, also adopted from 4Paws a few years earlier. His doting mom writes, "It appears that two best buddies have found each other"—Tami and Don

"Thank you again for the love of my life. My **Emily** (formerly **Fluffy**) is smart and wonderful and beautiful and precious and sweet and perfect and companionable and good natured and compassionate and loving and affectionate and fun and..."—Diane M.

FELINE TALES...WITH HAPPY ENDINGS

continued from previous page




Mittens (above, left), another owner give up, gets this report from his new family, "He is doing great. The first week was a little rough. He was hissing and growling at our other cat, Watson. But Watson welcomed him with open paws. Now they are the best of friends. If one walks out of the room, the other must follow." –Diana L.



Cuddles (above), relinquished to 4Paws on two separate occasions, has finally found her forever home. Her new mom relates a funny story about one of Cuddles' (now called **Sheba**) toys, "...I hold the mouse end and swish the string around. She goes crazy for it, especially since it slides from her grasp easily. . .and that challenges her. Lately she's declared victory by getting a good grip on the end of the string (which I tied knots in) and dragging it away into another room, with the mouse trailing behind her. [One night] we could hear a faint tinkling sound but couldn't identify it. [I finally found the source of the noise in] Sheba's extra water bowl—there was the mouse, drowning. The water had set off the little "chirper" inside the mouse...It wouldn't shut up so I [hit] it against the sink...Sheba was watching this, and when I let go (having silenced it) she jumped off the bed, walked over to it and screeched at it like I have never heard, kicked it into the

corner with her paw, and walked out....I couldn't stop laughing. Cat drowns mouse!" –Chris R.

When **Powder** was rescued from a local shelter, she was very sick and was taken directly to the vet. After a week of force feedings, a regiment of medications and a lot of TLC, Powder was able to leave the animal hospital and go into foster care. Now called **Tzippy** by her new family, she spends many hours frolicking with her new feline family and cuddling with her human family. "Tzippy has made me and my household WHOLE. The dynamics of 3 cats are even better than those of 2 cats. There is always someone to play with, even when one is dozing. Tziporah loves being in a household with other cats. She is very happy—and all of the cats have been playing together since Day 7 of Tzippy's arrival... She thrives on playing hide and seek, acting vicious, but then wrestling on the ground in a playful way, and then finally grooming the other cats as they groom her. Thanks so much...We love her and she loves being in our home." –Maria R.


Manifesto lost his previous home and family when his dad, a member of the armed forces, was deployed overseas and his mom, seven months pregnant, could no longer care for him on her own. His first mom was heartbroken to give him up. His new mom writes, "Although it has not been quite a year yet, I can't remember a time when [Festo] wasn't here. We were dog people, and it was because of our two dogs that I was at the Alexandria Petco the day I saw my (not so) little Fatso. [The day I brought him home]...despite my coaxing, Festo hid under the couch until I let the dogs back inside for introductions. As soon as Madison poked her nose around the corner, Festo came right out. They've been the best of friends ever since. Festo is our special buddy...He loves to cuddle...Festo has worn a permanent groove on my husband's lap, my husband calls him the 'leg numb-er.' He comes when you call him. He loves dogs. He loves us. We love him. What more can you ask for?" –Buzz and Brandy, Kiana and Madison 

FOSTER HOMES NEEDED—OPEN YOUR HOME AND SAVE A LIFE

4Paws' capacity to save feline lives is directly dependent on the number of foster homes available. Consider opening your heart and home to a stray cat; become a foster home volunteer. The experience is quite rewarding and a wonderful way to teach children responsibility toward pets. The commitment could vary from a couple of weeks to several months depending upon your availability. You provide the food, litter and love, 4Paws pays for pre-authorized vet care.

Call 703/715-6369 (MEOW) to find out how you can help 4Paws give one more homeless cat a better life; a life filled with love, warmth and security. You will be rewarded many times over...every time your foster cat purrs in your ear or snuggles up against your neck. Your greatest reward, however, will be when you hand over your foster cat to her new family.

Of course it will be difficult to say goodbye, having cared for your ward from the beginning of her rescue. You will certainly never forget the look of terror on her face the first time that you gently pulled her from the carrier. Later that evening, you witnessed the dramatic change that a simple brushing and hearty meal could make in her appearance and confidence. Over time, you saw her get stronger and more trusting.

In your heart, you will know that it is time to let her go...time for your foster cat to have a family of her own to love and who loves her. You will be comforted to know that her new family has been carefully screened by a 4Paws volunteer to ensure that she will be well cared for and loved throughout her life. And you will know that you have done a generous and beautiful thing by providing a temporary home for your foster cat, but then letting her go in order to make space for the next homeless cat waiting to escape the cold and dangerous streets or a shelter's death row. 

FELINE TALES...WITH UNFINISHED ENDINGS



Lucy Lu, with her two-week old kittens, was left in a box at the Alexandria Petco. Mom and babies were so flea-ridden, that the vet feared anemia, a disease often fatal to young kittens. A bath, a good meal and a warm place to sleep, was all this family needed, though. They have settled in at their foster home and are thriving. Lucy Lu and her babies will be available for adoption in mid August.



Blue (above) was rescued during the bad snow storm in February, (the REALLY) bad storm. His owner left him behind when she moved to Colorado. Previously an indoor cat, she left Blue to fend for himself outside. He would wander from yard to yard crying for food. By the time a neighbor finally realized his plight and took him into her home, Blue had been surviving on his own for six months. An injury to his tail required that it be partially amputated. Now, after lots of TLC and drug therapy for his phantom tail pain, Blue is happy and healthy again. All he needs is someone special to love and who will love him—forever.

Angel, hungry and emaciated, wandered into the garage of a 4Paws volunteer... lucky for her! The collar around her neck was so tight that it nearly strangled her. Starved for attention as well as food, Angel quickly made friends with her rescuer, jumping in his lap for some cuddling. Without any contact information on her collar, the volunteer tried, but was unable to locate an owner. Now, Angel, a pretty tabby not yet fully grown, is looking for a new permanent home.

Katie and Groucho, a pair of older gals, still have a lot of love to give. Their original owner relinquished the girls to 4Paws when she became seriously ill. They are ideal pets for a family with children... they are gentle, interactive, and calm. Katie and Groucho love attention. They love to sit with their person and soak up all the love, petting, and back scratching you have to give.

Tom and Bill were tossed out into an alley in DC after their owner died. Terrified and hungry, they wandered the streets until a 4Paws volunteer rescued them. Now, having learned to trust people again, these boys are enjoying the



good life in foster care while waiting for their adoptive family to find them. Tom and Bill (above) are very close and need to be adopted together. They do enjoy the companionship of other cats, though, so... if you already have a cat or two, Bill and Tom won't mind letting them join in the fun.

Many, many more cats and kittens are looking for loving forever homes. 4Paws always has at least 75 and sometimes as many as 150 cats in the adoption program looking for homes. Visit the Virtual Adoption Fair at www.fourpaws.org to learn more about some of the many cats looking for someone to love. Actual adoption fairs are held every few weeks, see the list of dates and locations below or visit the web site for details.

For more information about Blue, Angel, Katie, Groucho, Tom and Bill, visit www.fourpaws.org/adoptioncenter/virtualfair.html.



2003 ADOPTION FAIR SCHEDULE

August 23, 1-5 p.m.	Tysons Petco
September 13, 1-5 p.m.	Fairfax Petco
October 4, 1-5 p.m.	Tysons Petco
October 25, 1-5 p.m.	Fairfax Petco
November 15, 1-5 p.m.	Tysons Petco
December 6, 1-5 p.m.	Tysons Petco
December 20, 1-5 p.m.	Fairfax Petco

ADOPTION SITES

Alexandria Petco	703/660-1300
Arlington Petco	703/276-7387
Burke Petco	703/455-2007
Chantilly Petco	703/817-9444
Fairfax Petco	703/352-3300
Gaithersburg Petco	301/975-9888
Tysons Petco	703/448-3401
Animal Medical Center of Springfield	703/455-1188
Ashburn Farms Animal Hospital	703/726-8784

4 Paws t-shirts and sweatshirts available for sale at adoption fairs.

VIRTUAL ADOPTION FAIR
WWW.FOURPAWS.ORG



M E M O R I A L S

Our hearts go out to Stephanie who lost her beloved **Thomas** after months of battling kidney disease. Thomas and his brother, Midnight, were former pets, given to 4Paws by their owner who could no longer care for them.

Stephanie took them into her heart and home for what she expected to be a temporary time until they found their permanent home. Thomas and Midnight figured it out before Stephanie...they had found their forever home with her. Thomas is deeply missed by Stephanie, his feline brother, Midnight, his canine brother, Lucky and Snuggles, his feathered friend.

In loving memory of **Maggie**, who shared her life with Ed and Carole. A teacher at Forestville Elementary, each year Carole coordinates the students' efforts to support 4Paws' and homeless cats as they donate food, toys and litter throughout the school year.

"**Willow** always had on-going issues...but his overwhelming sweetness and goodness made it unimportant to me. It kept him from being adopted, but it kept him in my life. He was known to wrestle with the babies and allowed other cats to gently groom him. Most of the foster kittens spent time playing with his tail, which he tapped rhythmically when annoyed. He never did more than turn around and firmly, but quietly, meow to show that it was enough of that...He was a special guy...he taught me a lot about patience and unconditional love. Willow never held anything against me... [not with the] bathing, grooming, numerous trips to the vet, and in the end, fluids injected twice daily under his skin. Willow was loved by all and will not be forgotten." - Deena

"**Precious**—1996 to 2003. We have so many fond memories of you and your sweet little ways. We miss you every day, but we know that you are in a happier place now. You are forever in our hearts." With love always—Mike and Mary

In continuing memory of **Maggie**
—Zimmie

The 4Paws volunteers also say "good-bye" to those that we were unable to save...though certainly not for a lack of trying. Here are a few of their stories:

Carter, one of a dozen cats rescued from a rural area where cats were being drowned in the river for sport, ended up dying from a brain tumor.

Maizie's entire litter of kittens all suddenly fell ill and died only three days after being rescued from a shelter where, unbeknownst to 4Paws, they had already been infected with the deadly pan-leukopenia virus. Though their lives were cut tragically short, they did not die in vain...in order to help safeguard other cats in the shelter, 4Paws provided the facility with one hundred vaccines, needles and syringes.

Noah, runt of his litter, was born with serious congenital defects that caused his premature death.

Paolo, the wildest of kittens, who was lovingly and patiently tamed, succumbed to the feline leukemia virus at the tender age of 14 months. He was much loved and is terribly missed.

Anthony, a sweet cat, had no faults other than bad luck. When his original owner moved and could not take him, Anthony was given to a friend. Later, the friend moved to an apartment that did not allow pets and took Anthony to an animal shelter. Bounced from home to home, this poor boy, ended up in a shelter simply because the people that he trusted to care for him did take their responsibilities seriously. Anthony was euthanized when the facility became overcrowded with stray and relinquished cats and kittens...and 4Paws, though desperate to find room, could not take him due to lack of foster home space.

Though not all listed here...each loss is deeply felt and each will be missed.



COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN

The 4 Paws Rescue Team is embarking on its sixth year of participation in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). The CFC allows Federal Government workers to contribute a portion of their paychecks to the charity of their choice. This fundraising effort has become an increasingly important source of operating revenue for 4Paws over the years.

If you, or any of your friends or relatives, work for the Federal Government, please consider designating 4Paws as your charity of choice. **Our CFC number is 7540.**

NEEDED: COUNTRY BARNS FOR CITY CATS

We often find cats that are too shy or skittish to be adopted into homes. We are able to vaccinate and sterilize these animals, but unfortunately, they often cannot be returned to their original location due to any number of dangers—marauding dogs, construction, busy streets.

Do you know a cat lover who keeps horses? These sweet, but shy, city cats have few options for a decent life— they would love to move to a warm barn in the country!

Please call (703) 715-6369 or e-mail us at info@fourpaws.org if you or someone you know can provide a barn for a homeless cat or two. We'll be happy to deliver these cats (altered and vaccinated) and provide advice on how to integrate them into the barn.

Placing city cats in country barns is a winning situation for all concerned. Your new barn cats will certainly earn their keep by helping to control the rodent population, and you'll be saving a feline life or two.

MAKE A DONATION TO 4PAWS ONLINE!

You can make a donation to 4Paws quickly and securely with Paypal. Just visit www.paypal.com, create a login and instantly send a donation using your credit card.



KITTENS, KITTENS EVERYWHERE continued from page 1

lifestyle of your family. Remember, a kitten will only be eight weeks old for one week, but with proper care an indoor cat can bring you joy for fifteen or twenty years. Take your time and don't just adopt the first furry face that catches your eye.

One rule of thumb to consider, older kittens—five months or more—are usually better companions for young children. In the few weeks between two and five months of age, kittens gain much better control over and understanding of the use of their claws and teeth. Consequently, while still playful and full of cute antics, teenage kittens are less likely to unintentionally bite or scratch a small child during play. Teenage kittens also tend to be calmer and more tolerant of young children.

When choosing a new furry family member, personality is extremely important. A cat's personality is not fully developed until five or six months of age, but with careful observation you should be able to glean some clues about the future. Spend time observing and interacting with different kittens. Try handling each kitten; watch how each plays with his siblings; and observe the kittens interacting with children and visa versa. How a kitten responds to a new situation with strangers will give some insight into whether he will be comfortable in a noisy or active house.

If you don't already have a pet, you should consider getting a pair of kittens. Contrary to popular belief, cats are social creatures. Cats can be seen playing, cuddling together, and grooming each other. Furthermore, the eight or nine hours that most people are at work is a long time for



a cat, especially a young kitten, to be home alone. Caring for two cats is no more work than caring for one... often a kitten will get into less trouble when left in the company of another animal as opposed to being bored and getting into mischief by himself.

When you first bring your new kitten home, start him in just one room for the first week. The smaller space will help him to acclimate to his new home and family more quickly. You will also be better able to keep a close eye on the kitten, making sure he is eating, drinking and using the litter box. Sometimes stress from a new environment or separation from mom and siblings will cause a kitten to get sick. Contact your vet if you see any vomiting, lack of appetite, sneezing, congestion, or discharge from eyes or nose. Also, if your kitten is lethargic, not using the litter box at all or eliminating outside of the box, he may be sick and should be seen by a vet.

When the kitten is ready to move out of his room, you will probably want to relocate the litter box. Move the box to its permanent location and then put the kitten in the box. Let him explore the house from the reference of his litter box.

If your house has multiple levels, placing litter boxes on a couple of floors will ensure that the kitten does not have to go too far to find a box. Be sure to introduce the kitten to each box as explained above. Scoop the boxes each morning and evening, completely changing the litter and cleaning the boxes every couple of weeks. Some cats are more fastidious about their litter boxes than others. It is best not to test the boundaries of your cat's tolerance, though. No doubt you want to do everything you can to promote good litter box habits from the beginning.

During quiet time, after play, is a good time to get your kitten comfortable with being groomed. Many cats enjoy being brushed. Regular brushing sessions are a great way to bond with your new pet...with the added bonus of reducing the accumulation of loose hair throughout the house.

A kitten should have his claws clipped twice a month. Kitten claws grow much faster and are much sharper than those of adult cats. Keeping the claws short will significantly reduce the kitten's need to scratch. Be sure to provide scratching posts with varying textures in order to




determine which materials your kitten finds most enjoyable. Options include carpet, twine, and cardboard. Sturdy posts that won't tip over when the kitten pulls on them or cardboard scratchers that lie flat on the floor should be located throughout the house. Rub or spray cat nip on the scratching posts and use positive reinforcement to encourage their use.

Soon after your kitten settles into his new play world...otherwise known as your house... it is time to start considering his medical needs. It is important to establish a relationship with a veterinarian. In the first months after you adopt him, your kitten will need to go to the vet three or four times—initially for vaccines and later to be spayed or neutered.

Keeping your kitten up to date on his vaccines will protect him from many common, yet fatal diseases that can be transmitted even to a cat that remains indoors. Equally as important to the long-term health of your kitten is spaying or neutering at the appropriate age. Cats that are sterilized before reaching sexual maturity have lower incidence of developing reproductive cancers—mammary cancer in females and testicular cancer in males.

Veterinarians vary as to what age they are willing to perform this surgery. All kittens should be spayed or neutered by six months of age in order to avoid unwanted pregnancies and undesirable hormone-driven behaviors. Many vets are starting to perform surgeries on kittens between four and six months—some as early as eight weeks or two pounds.

Whatever age your vet is comfortable spaying or neutering your kitten, make sure your new pet gets fixed at the earliest possible age. Doing so is one more step you can take to give your new furry family member his best chance at having many happy years to share with you. 



4 Paws Rescue Team
P.O. Box 2908
Merrifield, VA 22116
(703) 715-MEOW
www.fourpaws.org

Presorted Standard
 US Postage
PAID
 Merrifield VA
 Permit #2880

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Now, more than ever, your financial support is critical to our success. Remember, as a grassroots organization with very little overhead, 93 cents of every dollar donated to 4paws goes directly toward helping the cats. Your money will be used to feed homeless cats, provide medical care to sick or injured cats and kittens, and pay for wellness care—vaccines, neutering, and parasite elimination—as the cats are readied for adoption. Last year, your donations made it possible to save almost 600 cats. Help us continue our important work.

- \$15 will pay for a rabies shot
 - \$20 will feed a litter of kittens for a month
 - \$25 will pay for a distemper shot which provides protection against four deadly viruses—one of which, panleukopenia, kills more than 75% of infected kittens
 - \$40 will pay for a feline leukemia/AIDS test
 - \$60 will pay for a neuter
 - \$85 will pay for a spay
 - \$150 will pay for the vet services necessary to get a cat ready for adoption
- YES**, I would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to 4Paws Rescue Team in the amount of \$_____

- I can't make a financial contribution at this time, but please keep me on your mailing list.
- I have moved. Please note my new address below.

Name _____
 Address _____

Please take me off your mailing list.
 Please make checks payable to 4Paws Rescue Team, P.O. Box 2908, Merrifield, VA 22116

OUR WISH LIST

- Foster homes
- Towels
- Cat/kitten food
- Stamps
- Cat Litter
- Cardboard boxes from cases of canned cat food (to be used as litter boxes at adoption fairs)
- Most importantly—we wish for a day when there are no more homeless cats. Please spay or neuter your pet.

4 PAWS WEBSITE

WWW.FOURPAWS.ORG

Please visit our site for updated information about adoption fairs. Also, some of the many cats available for adoption can be seen on the virtual adoption fair at www.fourpaws.org/adoptioncenter/virtualfair.html.
 4Paws Rescue Team is a 501(c)(3) organization and all contributions are fully tax deductible as allowed by law.