

Feral Cat Foundation



Summer 2016

An all-volunteer non-profit organization

OUR COMMITMENT

The overpopulation and suffering of homeless and unwanted cats in our society demands a humane solution. Feral Cat Foundation (FCF) accepts the challenge to promote public recognition of this problem, to pursue workable solutions and, without euthanasia, to humanely reduce the population while improving the quality of life for these innocent victims of human neglect.

It is such fun watching the little kittens play! They run and jump, posture, puff their tails as if they were battling a fierce opponent instead of one of their litter mates. These kittens race across their space with their ears back, hell-bent on attacking the world. They charge at each other, only to meet in a spectacular collision that sends both of them into the air at least a foot. Down they come, only to race off to attack another as fast as possible. These kittens, like so many other litters that are born in the wild, are playing in a parking lot where there is great danger of cars hitting them, or in a field where there is broken glass to cut their little paws, or food that some kind person has tossed them that has long since rotted and will make them very sick if eaten. If lucky, this litter was born in someone's backyard where it is safe, if only for a little while until they are discovered. Life is not easy for a feral mother and her babies.

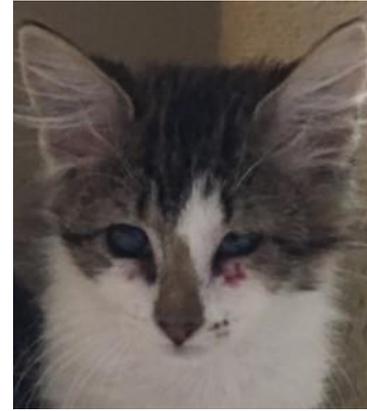
One of Feral Cat Foundation's feeders came across a very tiny kitten close to a feeding station. So weak, the kitten could not run, its eyes were glued shut with infection, and it was very dehydrated. The kitten was scooped up and taken to an experienced FCF member. Phoenix would again rise from the ashes, but not without a fight. We immediately gave the little guy sub-q fluids, antibiotics, and started slowly dripping formula into his mouth. He was so weak he was hardly able to swallow, but we persevered. Then we addressed his eyes. They were compressed with warm water on cotton balls and slowly pried open. The eyes looked intact, and with luck they were not damaged by the infection. Only time would tell.

It took four days of fluids twice a day, antibiotics three times a day, and countless applications of ophthalmic antibiotic salve before the little guy was able to hold up his head. He was fed formula very slowly many times a day, and finally he figured out that it tasted pretty good and he could swallow. We also gave him nose drops and nebulized him several times a day to help clear out his severe congestion. What a shock we had when his decline was finally halted and we took the time to really examine him. Phoenix weighed 8 ounces the day we got him. But careful examination indicated that he was at least 7 to 8 weeks old, and should have been at least a pound and a half, or possibly two pounds! His back-to-health regimen was continued, slowly cutting back on the fluids and increasing the number of times he was fed daily. We celebrated when six days later he had gained an ounce and a half! Little Victories!

Six weeks later, Phoenix is now a big boy, tipping the scales at that pound and a half. He races around the kitchen with the other kittens, giving as good as he gets. His ears go back as he charges another kitten twice his size. But he doesn't care, and sometimes even wins. He has been through the worst, and he survived. Oh, I forgot to mention that he is a polydactyl on all four feet. Apparently he was so sick in the beginning that he didn't notice that he had extra digits. The first few days after he was well enough to move around on his own, we put him on the bed to lounge in the sunshine. He tried to shake off whatever was stuck on his feet, one foot at a time. His feet were the biggest part of him, and he didn't understand. He has finally accepted that he has extra toes, and does just fine with them.



Phoenix rising.



The illustrious Pearl

And then there is Pearl. She was found at the Bart station in Dublin. She also was very tiny, just 15 ounces, and she, like Phoenix, had severe eye infections. After contacting several rescue groups and veterinarians in the area (all who said the little kitten would have to be euthanized), the man who found Pearl contacted FCF. Time was of the essence, as the good Samaritan was leaving on his honeymoon the next day, and he did not want to abandon this little baby at the Bart station. Our member met him immediately and took the kitten. Although all our foster homes were full, we never turn our backs on a suffering kitty that has the chance to survive.

She was first taken to the regular vet, then on to Animal Eye Care for assessment. Pearl was not as lucky as Phoenix. Her eyes were badly infected, and the prognosis was not good. The corneas in both eyes were badly damaged, and it was possible she would lose both eyes. But her foster parent, who is also a nurse, was determined to give Pearl the best chance she could have. She had several different eye medications, including plasma, that had to be given eight times a day, in addition to her oral antibiotics.

Because Pearl was blind at that point, moving around, eating, and even using the litterbox were a challenge. She had to be syringe fed, and put in her litterbox several times a day. But gradually she learned all the kitten necessities and even began to play a bit. As the infection began to clear, the foster noticed Pearl was able to track the movement of toys.

At her 2-week checkup, the doctor was very pleased with her healing. The swelling had gone down so she was able to open and close both eyes and there was very little discharge. There was cautious hope that the right eye could be saved, though it would always be cloudy and vision would be impaired. The left eye will have to be removed when Pearl is a bit bigger.

Over the last few weeks Pearl has continued to improve. Her eyes look almost normal now. She is very playful and energetic, and has gained 1 ½ pounds. She is a loving little girl with a big purr. Animal Eye Care has cleared her for surgery, which will be done soon. A few weeks of recovery and she will be ready for adoption.

These are just two of the many stories about Feral Cat Foundation. Our members work tirelessly to help control the number of feral cats in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Only by spaying and neutering every cat that crosses our path will we be able to help decrease the number of cats and kittens that go into the shelters to be almost certainly euthanized. Last year FCF members again altered two thousand cats. We are making a difference, as shown by the shelter statistics. But there is so much more to do!

Of course, we could not do the work we do without the help of our donors and the public. The purchase of each book of raffle tickets puts us one step closer to our goal of no more feral kittens. You are a very important part of our rescue work.

Our annual raffle tickets are enclosed. We again have many wonderful prizes, all donated. How does a trip to Hawaii sound? Or perhaps wine tasting with 12 of your best friends? Won't you consider buying the book for \$10.00? If you can purchase more, please call our hotline at 925-829-9098 and leave your name, address, and the number of books you would like us to send you. Thanks to you, and your purchase of these raffle tickets, or your donation, FCF can continue to help improve the lives of these innocent victims of human neglect. Feral and abandoned cats endure a difficult life. They deserve better, and with your help we can improve their life. All proceeds of this raffle are spent directly on the cats we rescue. We know there are many worthy causes that ask for help. However, FCF is one of the few all-volunteer rescue groups with no paid staff, and no professional fund-raisers. Your purchase of these tickets will have a real impact on the work we do. We hope we can count on you for help. Please send in your ticket stubs and donation TODAY.