

GRI welcomes the spring kitten season

Last spring a kind citizen reported finding a newborn kitten to Garfield's Rescue Inc. (GRI). The kitten, Apollo, required bottle feeding every three hours.

Later Apollo's mother and siblings were located and reunited with Apollo in foster care and all was well. The best news is that Apollo's family were all adopted, reported president Ann Bedford.

"If you find a kitten(s), please do not pick them up. First, observe the kitten(s) from a distance. Yes, they are precious, but this is a critical time for a kitten," said Bedford.

According to Alley Cat Allies, "Separating kittens younger than 8 weeks old from their mother is harmful to their wellbeing. Kittens need their mother and she is their best possible caregiver."

The kittens may seem abandoned, however, the mother cat may not be far away. She could be hunting, hiding, or waiting for intruders to move away from her babies. If the kittens are sleeping and seem content, then the mother is probably nearby, said Bedford.

Check on the kittens every few hours, she continued. When checking the area again and there are fewer kittens, the mother is most likely moving them to a new area. If unsure, sprinkle flour around where the kittens are located and look for paw prints in the disturbed flour when revisiting the site. The only time one should want to move the kittens is if they are in obvious danger.



Apollo near two weeks.

If it is determined that the mother is present, continue to observe the family from a distance, she will most likely move the kittens to a new area. It is best for the mother cat to nurse the kittens for a greater chance of survival.

Around six to eight weeks the kittens should be socialized by humans. When the kittens have reached that age, contact GRI at 480-2066 or garfieldsrescue@gmail.com. GRI will foster the mother cat and

kittens and prepare them for adoption into their "forever" home.

Call GRI before contacting the local animal shelter, said Bedford. GRI works closely with all Northern Neck animal shelters during kitten season. The animal shelters will contact Garfield's to take un-weaned and very young kittens they have in custody. Let Garfield's know if the found kittens have been reported to an animal shelter.

In 2020 GRI rescued 321 cats and 208 of those rescued found their forever homes. Garfield's is a volunteer organization and relies solely on donations and grants. Donations can be sent to Garfield's Rescue Inc., PO Box 257, Kilmarnock, Virginia 22482 or donate at www.garfieldsrescue.org.

GRI will host a fundraiser through Big Red Auctions, May 2-8. To donate items for the auction contact GRI.

"We offer drop off or pick up service for donated items," said Bedford.

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