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## Making a Difference on the Northern Neck, One Cat at a Time



By Ann Bedford

**D**ixie was surrendered to Garfields Rescue Inc (GRI) from a woman who was moving in with her grown children. They would not allow her to take

her pet cat of many years. The woman was in tears as she dropped Dixie off at a Garfield's volunteer's home. The volunteer cried right along with the owner.

In October of 2020 Dixie was sighted on Petfinder.com, an online site where rescues can upload pictures of adoptable cats with the adoption agency's contact information. A young woman was looking for a pet to keep her company since her retirement from the military. She contacted GRI about a few cats she saw on Petfinder.com.

She met GRI's foster mom virtually. The foster mom answered questions and provided support on preparing the house for the homecoming of a new pet. She went to the foster home to meet the foster and all of her foster cats. She immediately

knew she would adopt a cat.

Dixie was initially shy but she had fallen in love with her sweet face. She adopted Dixie and added Reese to her name. The new owner sent an update to GRI saying "Dixie Reese licks me and loves her cheeks

and chin rubbed. She loves any attention she can get from anyone and always wants to know what I'm eating.. She loves watching birds and playing mice games on YouTube". The new owner said that her life will never be the same after adopting her fur companion.

During the Spring season and continuing into summer, kitten season significantly increases the number of calls to GRI requesting rescue of homeless momma cats with litters of kittens.

A dedicated group of rescuers launched GRI to take action with the thousands of homeless cats in the 880 square miles in the counties of Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond and Westmoreland.

No other rescue organization was addressing the issue.

GRI categorizes rescued cats as strays, owner surrenders, and kittens born while in foster care and can be social or unsocial. Homeless cats in the community suffer greatly from lack of food, shelter and medical care.

Homeless cats reside in colonies and many wonderful community

residents feed those colonies.

As the cats continue to breed, the numbers become overwhelming and residents request assistance. Two ways to prevent suffering of homeless cats is to spay/neuter the cats so they can't reproduce, and adoption. Strays have typically been left behind by residents who have moved away, have been dropped in an area because they are unwanted, or have been born in the wild.

Social homeless cats can be adopted. The unsocial cats, often referred to as feral or wild, are not suitable for adoption. The unsocial cats must be trapped, spayed/neutered by a veterinarian, then returned to the location where they were trapped but only if there is



someone who is responsible for the colony. This process is referred to as TNR and is a very humane way to deal with unsocial homeless cats.

To donate to feed, house and provide medical care for the foster cat—currently 104—go to our website, [www.garfieldsrescue.org](http://www.garfieldsrescue.org). Garfield's also accepts donations of household items for online auctions and yard sales and offers pick up of items by calling 804 480-2066 or emailing [garfieldsrescue@gmail.com](mailto:garfieldsrescue@gmail.com).  
*Dixie Reese and Emma*  
*photos courtesy GRI.*

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