

## Teaching Cats New Tricks



By Cyndi Lee

**W**hen cats and kittens arrive at Garfield's Rescue Inc. (GRI), we don't always know the background circumstances. A cat may have an

apprehensive disposition or shy away from volunteers because he or she may have been exposed to a painful or frightening event. What we do know is that with time and patience, an older cat or kitten can learn new ways.

Two years ago, Daniel and his brother Charles, arrived at GRI as older kittens. Having spent the first several months of life outdoors, they were wary of a new environment. As the weeks passed, Charles was greeting volunteers with leg

rubbs and begging for pats. Daniel, however, remained aloof and scampered away with the slightest movement toward his direction.

Every day, different volunteers tended to the daily cat care needs of both. It became apparent that the amount of exposure to people was not Daniel's issue. Charles became more engaging while Daniel chose to observe a volunteer and his brother's behavior from a distance. Daniel needed a different approach.

One volunteer tried a new approach to gain Daniel's confidence. She would enter the room quietly and sit on the floor offering treats to both. She never looked Daniel directly in his eyes. This pattern of calm visits continued for several weeks.

After a short period of time, the volunteer noticed that Daniel was moving closer for

treats. She tempted Daniel into a game of hunt by tossing a ball, a cat's favorite game. Over the course of a week or so, Daniel's behavior began to change.

One day as the volunteer sat playing ball with both boys, Daniel approached the volunteer from behind and rubbed himself along her back. With words of encouragement, the volunteer reached out slowly to pat Daniel. He did not bolt or withdraw. To this day, Daniel remains cautious, but approaches volunteers throughout the day for a gentle pat.

GRI is proud of Daniel's success story. With a small investment of time and patience, caregivers can win the trust and affection of shy or anxious cats showing that you can teach a mature cat a new trick! *Cyndi Lee is Vice President, Garfield's Rescue Inc*

## Every Move Counts

By Sandra C. Fykes

**I** know the importance and benefits of exercise! It's frankly almost impossible not to know in this day and time. If you have an exercise program, see your doctor on a regular basis, receive physical therapy, go to a gym, viewed before and after pictures of fitness programs, watch commercials and infomercials—if you really have time on your hands—own fitness tracking devices, or have friends and family that are fitness buffs, you will know about it, too.

Knowledge is good, but it won't count unless you act on it! I say

exercise. My inclination to avoid exercise is not new. I have used every excuse in the book over the course of my life, even going back to my jr. high school days. My physical education class was two days a week during the fall semester, and three days a week in the spring semester. Our uniform was a one-piece ensemble with green and white stripes on top and solid grey shorts on the bottom. We also had to wear white ankle socks and gym shoes. I may not remember everything I need from the grocery store, but I vividly remember that uniform. If you were excused from participating in class,

the uniform and could sit on the bleachers during the entire class. Oh, how I savored those moments.

My attitude about exercise improved slightly over the years. As a young adult, I voluntarily joined gyms, tried a variety of exercise classes, walked around my neighborhood, and occasionally went on beginner-level hikes. However, each time I started off in high gear and then quickly lost momentum, so I was never able to reap the benefits of a consistent exercise program.

When I was in the hospital a few years ago, I was instructed to do certain exercises. If I could not

score one at home! Now as a senior citizen with limited mobility, I try to move as much as possible albeit at a snail's pace. I count every move as exercise during the course of my day! This includes walking from room to room, cooking, washing dishes, and doing laundry. I am also proud to report that I am faithfully participating in a weekly virtual exercise class tailored for those with chronic medical conditions. I really enjoy the class and can finally feel the benefits of a regular exercise program. For the very first time, I no longer desire a pass. I believe that God has changed my heart about exercise. I am thankful for