

Garfield's Gazette

Serving the Northern Neck
counties of Lancaster,
Northumberland, Richmond and
Westmoreland

Spring 2022
4th edition



Making a Difference on Virginia's Northern Neck - one cat at a time!

President's Message

I have always loved animals. Growing up there were always cats and dogs in the house. I even owned two horses. Post retirement to the Northern Neck, I met other wonderful people who loved animals, especially cats. We volunteered for an animal welfare organization and then realized there was a significant homeless cat issue across the Northern Neck! We pooled our experience and decided to do something to prevent suffering of homeless cats on the Northern Neck.

I am so proud of Garfield's Rescue Inc. accomplishments. To date we have rescued **757** homeless cats and **675** of those cats have are no longer homeless. The GRI team works very efficiently to save many homeless cats and kittens on the Northern Neck. Our wonderful volunteers are focused on their specific job(s) and perform their duties beautifully. Our donors continue to provide us with funds and sellable items to support our monthly vet bills.

Members of our organization are important in promoting our mission. Currently there are **45** paid members. We need to increase that by 50%. I ask you to recruit just one other member! Memberships are only \$25 for the year and for that you can vote on important issues, receive 2 newsletters, and help to reduce suffering of homeless feline.

We are full into kitten season so please keep your eyes open and read the article on what to do if you find kittens. Homeless cats did not ask to be abandoned, and I know that you did not abandon them, however, others have. Please join us and prevent suffering of homeless cats.

In Appreciation,
Ann Bedford, President
Garfield's Rescue Inc.



Welcome New Board of Directors

Garfield's Board of Directors (BOD) serve a 2-year term. At the General Membership meeting in February this year, four new BOD members were elected. We are excited to welcome Mary Beane, Maggie Dominick, Teri George and Vicki Kinsel to the BOD. These ladies have taken a step to support Garfield's mission to relieve the suffering of homeless cats on the Northern Neck of Virginia. We look forward to continued progress with new ideas.

2022 Officers and Directors-at-Large

Ann Bedford, President

Karen Peterson, Vice-President

Charles Yarbrough, Treasurer

Teri George, Recording Secretary

Kathy Haurand, Corresponding Secretary

Ginger Landry, Director of Fosters

Mary Beane, Director at Large

Maggie Dominick, Director at Large

Vicki Kinsel, Director at Large

Louise Mohardt, Director at Large

Kitten Season Is Here

People often tell us that they've heard the term 'kitten season' but do not know what the term means. It refers to the season when unsprayed cats bear litters of kittens. The exact time of year depends on the region and the climate that given year. On the Northern Neck, and most all of Virginia, kitten season is between April and October. During this time of year, shelters and rescues are over capacity

with momma cats and their kittens. With last Fall and this past Winter being warmer than normal, kitten season has been extended. We received calls for litters of kittens into late Fall and Winter. With the arrival of Spring, the calls just keep coming.

If you come across a kitten or litter of kittens alone outdoors, you may feel the need to scoop them up and take them inside, but that might not be the best thing for them. While it might seem like the kittens have been orphaned, *most kittens are not abandoned by their mother*. It's important to give the mother cat time to return as keeping kittens with their mother is the best nutrition for the kittens. If the kittens are in an exposed or unsafe area (e.g., near a street), you can move them a short distance to a safer location, such as under a nearby bush.



Once the kittens are in a safe spot, wait for the mother to return. It could be several hours before she comes back. Often, she has simply been away getting food. Sometimes she's nearby, but is hiding until you leave. Watch from inside, or at least from a good distance, so the mother cat feels comfortable returning to her kittens. If the mother cat seems friendly, you may opt to bring all of them into your home. It's best to keep the entire family together in a small, quiet, enclosed space such as a bathroom or spare bedroom. You'll want to provide cat food, water, and a litter box.

If the mother cat is not socialized with people, you should ideally leave the kittens with her outdoors unless they are in immediate danger. If the mother is unsocialized, her kittens will need to be socialized to be able to be adopted into a home. Kittens need to be socialized as soon as possible.

If after several hours and no mother cat returns, you may decide to take the litter in. You may choose to care for the litter yourself, at least until the kittens are old enough for adoption. If you are seeking support from a rescue group such as Garfield's Rescue Inc. (GRI), call or email first to make sure there is foster space available.

The only way to end 'kitten season' is to spay/neuter pets and community cats. Kittens become sexually active at four months of age, making



them parents by the time they are 6 months old! A female can have up to 4 litters per year. You can help prevent the unnecessary birth of so many homeless kittens.

A Cat Café Friend

In December 2021, Garfield's Rescue Inc. (GRI) was introduced to Kitty Kingdom Cat Café (KKCC) in Chesapeake, VA. Cat Cafes are social enterprises, helping local rescues find homes for adoptable felines. By definition, a cat café has an eating establishment in the same



building as the feline showrooms. For a fee visitors interact with the cats while enjoying a beverage and a bite to eat. KKCC is the only cat café in Hampton Roads fitting the definition of cat café. Cat cafés showcase foster cats seeking a match between a loving family and a homeless cat. All adoption fees go to the sponsoring rescue group such as GRI.



The GRI and KKCC partnership has created loving homes for many of our foster cats and kittens. The felines at

KKCC are truly royalty in every sense. They have their own TV and sleep wherever they want. The

kitties have access to food and water 24/7. Staff keep the litter boxes clean and sanitized. KKCC is truly a royal place for homeless cats to live as they wait for a loving family.

KKCC has facilitated over 420 adoptions working with GRI and other rural rescues. If you are in the Hampton Roads area, please visit KKCC and let them know that you heard about them through GRI. KKCC is the PURRFECT place to discover your inner cat personality, enjoy a beverage and find peace amongst the chaos of daily life. To learn more about KKCC visit their website, <https://kittykingdomcatcafe.wpcomstaging.com> or better yet, pay them a visit.

Management of Homeless Cat Colonies

St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of animals and environment, said "all the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of a single candle." Garfield's Rescue, Inc. (GRI) elected to light that candle to resolve the suffering of homeless (community) cats. Homeless cats, often referred to as "feral", live in managed cat colonies throughout the Northern Neck (NN). GRI and other community volunteers provide care with daily food, fresh water, warm shelter, necessary medical attention, and spay/neuter/vaccinations to approximately 23 colonies. A colony may consist of two to seven cats. These cats may have been abandoned or born in the wild and have reverted back to an instinctual state in order to survive.

Volunteers provide daily care pursuant to a monthly schedule, eager to switch days or vacation weeks with each other to ensure the care of all colonies is provided daily.

Feeding and watering continues during inclement weather. Volunteers with SUVs take over the



care of multiple colonies when others cannot get out of their driveways due to snow or downed trees. All of the cats have names as it personifies them and gives them an identity. All have a tipped ear indicating they have been spayed/neutered,

received medical exam and state required vaccinations.

Cat colony populations are reduced and stabilized through sterilization. All state required vaccinations are administered when the cats are trapped, spayed/neutered. All kittens are removed from the colony and placed into GRI's successful foster to adopt program, immediately reducing the colony size. Friendly stray cats are scanned for microchips and returned to their owners, or re-homed. Any cats that can be socialized enter our foster to adopt program. Unsterilized, a female cat can have up to four litters per year, 4-5 cats per litter. It is the responsibility of our entire NN community to humanely manage the reproduction of owned pets through spay/neuter/vaccinate programs to assist in the stabilization of a healthy cat population.

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amazonsmile

An advertisement for Amazon Smile. It features a purple background with the text "BE OUR HERO THIS MOTHER'S DAY". Below the text, it says "Buy the perfect gift at smile.amazon.com and Amazon donates" and "You shop. Amazon donates." The Amazon Smile logo is prominently displayed. In the foreground, there are three items: a gold-toned watch, a silver Pentax camera, and a bottle of Dolce & Gabbana perfume.

1. Visit smile.amazon.com
2. Sign in with your Amazon.com credentials.
3. Select Garfield's Rescue Inc. as your charity organization to receive donations.
4. Always start your shopping at [Smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com). GRI will receive 0.5% of the price of your purchases.

Love cats?

Have some **spare time?**

Like to **do more to help** them?

Then **Volunteer!**

with





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Garfield's Rescue, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose vision is to "Eliminate suffering of community/homeless cats on the Northern Neck of Virginia" which includes Lancaster, Northumberland, Westmoreland and Richmond counties.



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MAKING A DIFFERENCE ON VIRGINIA'S NORTHERN NECK, ONE CAT AT A TIME!