



# FieldHaven Feline Rescue

## FieldHaven Feline Rescue - Foster Care Program Overview

**Importance:** The foster care program is vital to saving lives. Taking cats or kittens into foster care gives them an opportunity to be socialized. Without foster homes, we cannot rescue as many pets.

**Time involved:** This will depend on the needs of each animal. Some foster cats/kittens are young or have health issues so it is important to understand the needs of each foster cat/kitten and how much time you have available. We can match you up with the appropriate foster cats/kittens depending on your time. Time required also depends on the number of animals fostered. The length of time you will foster also greatly depends on the individual cats or kittens. The foster period could be from 2 weeks to several months.

**Qualifications:**

Most important is love and concern for pets.

Time and desire to socialize pets.

Willingness to provide food, water and medication, if necessary.

Provide a clean living environment and daily care.

**Expense Involved:** FieldHaven will provide food, medical care and medications. Foster parents provide litter, toys and other items. We will also provide you with a Foster Kit of supplies you may need during the foster period. This kit remains the property of FieldHaven and should be returned if you discontinue fostering.

### Is Fostering for You and Your Family?

- Will you be able to spend quality time with the foster animal(s)? Socialization can be as important as feeding them and keeping them clean.
- Are you willing to work with our vet care system? Please understand that foster cats/kittens are only treated by our shelter vet or selected facilities. Some procedures are done for a substantial savings to our organization. Additionally, all medications must come from our sources only. If you choose to go to a vet outside our system without our prior consent (other than life-threatening emergencies) or get medications from outside our system, then any cost incurred will be the fosters responsibility.
- Do you feel comfortable explaining to friends that these animals are not yours to adopt

out and that they must go through the regular adoption process at FieldHaven? And, they are not to be “promised” to anyone prior to being available for adoption.

- Can you commit to spend the entire foster period with the animal? If something unexpected happens we work to place your fosters in another approved foster home.
- Do you have a place you can keep your fosters separate from your own pets? This is essential for the health of your pets as well as the foster cats/kittens. We recommend you discuss with your veterinarian any concerns you may have regarding the health of your personal animals and exposure to fosters prior to bringing any fosters home. Your own pets’ vaccines history should be reviewed with your veterinarian as well.
- As with anything else that involves change, there may be an adjustment period for you and your foster cat/kitten. Please be patient — many of our animals have come from rough situations and are frightened. Many times, their only way to communicate their fears is what we humans refer to as abnormal or deviant behavior. Some will hide, while others may exhibit any number of signals: inappropriate urination/defecation, growling, hissing, snapping (also called fear biting), cowering in corners, etc.

### **Your Responsibility as a Foster Parent**

- You will be responsible for scheduling weekly or bi-weekly appointments with our Animal Care Specialists to examine your fosters and provide medical treatment, vaccinations and other preventive measures.
- Weekly reports on your fosters progress and growth (ie, weight) is necessary to record in our medical database. It is your responsibility to provide that information.
- If fosters have any medical problems or need assistance with anything it is necessary to contact FieldHaven Foster staff ASAP. Please try to contact us before the situation becomes an emergency/after hours event. If it is necessary for your foster to see a vet a FieldHaven Foster staff will authorize the visit and let you know which vet to call.
- Your Foster Manual provides guidelines for care and medical information.
- Please keep fosters separated from your own pets. This is critical for the well being of your current pets as well as the foster cats/kittens.
- If you have any changes in your status and ability to foster, please contact FieldHaven.
- When your fosters are ready for adoption you will be responsible for transporting them to and from adoption events. We always appreciate the assistance of foster parents in

screening potential adopters and/or follow-up calls. After all, you will know your fosters best.

### **Bringing Your Fosters Home – Getting Started**

As with anything that involves change, there may be an adjustment period for you and your foster pet. Please be patient, many of our animals have come from rough situations and are very frightened. Many times, their only way to communicate their fears is through what we humans refer to as abnormal or deviant behavior. Some will hide, while others may exhibit any number of signals: inappropriate urination/defecation, growling, hissing, snapping (also called fear biting), cowering in corners, etc.

When you bring your foster cat or kitten home for the first time, try to confine it in a small room (bathrooms are ideal) that can be shut off from the rest of your family and pets. Put out water, food and a litterbox for your foster. In addition, consider leaving the carrier out, with the carrier door open for the cat or kitten to crawl into until it feels secure enough to explore the room on its own.

Be sure to remove toilet paper and clear things off of the bathroom counters, and any other surfaces the cat or kitten could jump onto and accidentally knock over. Talk very softly to it anytime you are in the same room. Try to avoid sudden loud noises. Depending on its previous circumstances, it may be ready to explore and let you gently pet it shortly after its arrival, or it may take several hours or days before it trusts you. This is okay. When the cat or kitten decides to go to the next level of friendship, it will let you know. Many times, this occurs as soon as it realizes you are the food giver!

FieldHaven will tell you everything we know about your foster pet with regard to its behavior, general health, eating preferences, etc. Please keep in mind that although it may appear healthy, we often do not know if it has been exposed to any diseases, infections or parasites, other than what we have already tested or treated it for. This is why, it is imperative to isolate it from your other pets. We also strongly recommend that you wash your hands after handling it. A few things, like ringworm are contagious to humans.