



Welcome to the family! Enclosed you will find all the information you need to make your fostering experience successful!


# PAWS AND PRAYERS

## Cat Foster Handbook


### Table of Contents

- SECTION 1: Welcome to the Family
  - 1.1 About Paws and Prayers
  - 1.2 Contact Information for Paws and Prayers
  - 1.3 Selecting Your Foster Pet and Fostering Expectations
- SECTION 2: Assimilating Your Foster Pet
  - 2.1 Preparing the House
  - 2.2 Meeting the Residents
- SECTION 3: Finding Foster Pet a Home
  - 3.1 Advertising Your Foster Pet
  - 3.2 Adoption Process
  - 3.3 Paperwork and Adoption Folder
  - 3.4 Saying Goodbye to Your Foster Pet
- SECTION 4: Medical Protocol
  - 4.1 Medical/Vaccine Schedule of Cats
  - 4.2 Pregnant and Nursing Cats
  - 4.3 Medical/Veterinary Scheduling
  - 4.4 Cleaning Procedures
  - 4.5 Health Problems
- SECTION 5: Behavioral How-To Notes
- SECTION 6: Questions, Answers and Tips
- APPENDIX: Useful Forms and Other Instructions
  - A.1 Adoption Fee Guidelines
  - A.2 Cat Meet and Greet Tips
  - A.3 Adoption Contract Examples
  - A.4 Ooak Post-Operative Care and Pregnant Cat Care
  - A.5 Foster Home Release Form



 (330) 475-8300  
(330) 940-2340 (fax)

 [www.pawsandprayers.org](http://www.pawsandprayers.org)  
@PawsandPrayers

 MAILING: OFFICE:  
PO Box 1407-A Main St,  
2864, Akron, Cuyahoga Falls,  
OH, 44309 OH, 44221

 [info@pawsandprayers.org](mailto:info@pawsandprayers.org)

### Your Mentor's Information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Cat Foster Handbook Confidential,  
**For Internal Use Only**  
OFFICIAL Copy, V.1.11.16



## SECTION 1: Welcome to the Family!

### CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR DECISION TO FOSTER!

Fostering is a rewarding experience and we are so happy to have you! Check out some of the things we find awesome about fostering:

1. One saved animal = one less animal in the shelter!
2. Adopters can make a more educated decision on adoption because you know more about the animal than if they were to have adopted it from a shelter.
3. Fostering ensures animals are healthy, happy, safe and well-socialized prior to adoption.
4. You create relationships with volunteers and adopters that last a lifetime!

### WELCOME TO THE FAMILY!

Congratulations on your decision to save lives by fostering! We are happy to have you! You will meet many volunteers, animals and adopters that touch your soul and soon learn how wonderful an experience it is to work with our organization. The following pages describe everything you need to know about fostering, including explanation of the adoption process, medical information, contact information, and even some basic how-to notes on behavioral concerns. Paws and Prayers, its volunteers and fosters are here to support you and your foster pet 100% through adoption!

---

### ABOUT PAWS AND PRAYERS

Paws and Prayers was incorporated as a rescue in July 2001 during which 200 dogs' and cats' lives were saved. Adoptions have grown and grown since then; in our last year of 2015, we rescued nearly 1,500 animals. The name Paws and Prayers originated in a deep seeded sentiment that our ability to touch lives and save so many cast-offs comes from a higher power. It is only with the support of our followers, friends and family that we are able to save so many.

Adoption fees and donations go entirely towards saving lives, even if not during the adoption process. Although our mission is to rescue, rehabilitate and rehome unwanted, neglected and forgotten animals, another very important aspect is community outreach. Weekly, we have community adoption and outreach events spreading awareness to animal neglect, abuse, and welfare. In addition to medically updating animals for adoption, funds are used to help the public spay/neuter pets and feral colonies, to help promote animals for adoption in county animal control facilities, and so much more!

Our organization firmly believes that an animal's best chance at finding a home is by first showing them human love in our own homes: we are a foster-based rescue and thereby have limited hours at our office **cat-only** adoption center ("Jessica's Kitty Corner"). We use adoption events, online media and networking to market our adoptable animals and programs. Fosters, foster mentors, volunteers and dedicated staff work hard every day to see that our beloved rescue pets find the best homes possible!

# Paws and Prayers Contact Information

Paws and Prayers is built of staff, volunteers, volunteer mentors, fosters, foster mentors, committee members, and board members. Volunteers report to volunteer mentors and fosters report to foster mentors; mentors report to the board. **Your mentor is your primary contact for Paws and Prayers; his/her contact information is on the front of this handbook!** Your mentor is responsible for approving any animal you take to foster and helping you find a foster pet when needed, for helping you process applications, for questions regarding behavior, medical, etc. Your mentor is your go-to person for all of your questions and if s/he does not know the answer, one will be found for you. The primary contact for Paws and Prayers is email, so you are expected to check yours daily. A g-mail email account is also required.

Below are e-mail accounts to keep on hand and when to reference each:

## **cats-paws-and-prayers@googlegroups.com**

You will be added to this email group for fosters. This message board is your source of support. Here, adoption applications will be communicated to you, questions can be posted here, etc.

## **pawscats@googlegroups.com**

This email group is where you can email concerns or questions to all the cat foster mentors.

## **staff@pawsandprayers.org**

This email is for emailing staff questions (e.g. office hours, etc.).

## **medical@pawsandprayers.org**

Medical questions that your mentor has not been able to help you with should be emailed here. Allow 24 hours for a response. Emergencies should initially be directed to your mentor. Appointment scheduling is done online or via your mentor.

## **pandpboard@googlegroups.com**

This email can be used for reaching the board; problems you'd rather not share with other fosters or a mentor can be directed here. Allow 24 hours for a response.

Concerns you have can be anonymously submitted to the board here:

[www.pawsandprayers.org/AboutUs/ContactUs/Feedback/tabid/199/Default.aspx](http://www.pawsandprayers.org/AboutUs/ContactUs/Feedback/tabid/199/Default.aspx)

## **Board Members:**

Marty Habas (President) and Jennifer Rocco (Vice President)  
Staci Melvin (Secretary)  
Micki Thomas (Treasurer and Office Manager)  
*Other Members and Trustees Vary*

## **Staff Members:**

Megan Napier (Medical Coordinator)  
Julie Carter (Cat Acquisition Specialist)  
Jamie Ternes (Office Assistant)  
Marie Milano (Kennel Attendant)

# Selecting Your Foster Pet & Foster Guidelines:

**One of the greatest things about Paws and Prayers is the foster's ability to choose his/her own foster pet(s)!** Your foster mentor will assist you with this until you have enough experience choosing your own. Each foster pet will come with a foster folder describing its background and health information. While you get to choose your foster pet, you **must** have your mentor's approval prior to choosing your foster. Once you select an animal, any needed supplies will be given, if the animal is not fully vaccinated/fixated, it will be prior to adoption. It is your responsibility, with the help of your mentor, to see the animal through to adoption, including scheduling medical appointments with the medical coordinator, attending adoption events, meet and greets, and more. All Paws and Prayers animals are vaccinated, spayed/neutered, and microchipped prior to adoption. \*

## **Expectations of our foster families:**

- **All resident pets must be spayed/neutered and kept up to date on vaccinations at all times.** This is for your pets' safety and the foster pets' safety.
- If you need assistance caring for your foster pet while on vacation, moving, etc. or if you are unable to continue fostering, **you must give your mentor two weeks' notice.**
- **Fosters are expected to attend two adoption events with their foster pet each month.** All adoption events are listed on our website at [www.pawsandprayers.org](http://www.pawsandprayers.org); this is also where you sign-up for events.
- Do not accept a foster animal unless intake has been done and a folder has been made for the animal or accept an animal that your mentor has not approved.
- Possible adopters must have their personal pets spayed/neutered and vaccinated before adopting if not already up to date.
- Fosters are expected to ensure their foster pet is treated the same as their resident pets, including keeping foster animals indoors at all times that are not for transportation purposes, caring for the foster pet as their own, and seeing that they are medically healthy enough to be adopted.
- Fosters must check e-mail daily and establish phone or email communication with possible adopters within 48 hours. A g-mail account is required.
- Cat bites should be taken seriously and you should seek medical attention if necessary.
- Do not be afraid to bother your mentor. Mentors are there to answer your questions and concerns.

*\*Under certain circumstances, an animal may be adopted without being fixed. This is covered in depth in section 3.*

# SECTION 2: Assimilating Your Foster Pet



Before you bring home your foster pet, there are some steps you should take to prepare. Your foster pet is new to you and you are new to him/her. Paws and Prayers has recommendations to help bringing home your new foster pet go as smoothly as possible. The key? Take things slow!

## PREPARING YOUR HOME

The first step prior to bringing home your foster pet is to make sure your pet is vaccinated and given prevention against fleas/ticks. Paws and Prayers makes every effort to make sure your foster pet is as healthy as possible prior to bringing it home (unless you choose to take on a sick animal), but because we don't know everything about the animals' backgrounds, sometimes an animal may have an underlying illness, etc. that you need to make sure your animals are protected against.

Step 2 is to pick-up the house! Yes, clean it up! You don't know how your new foster animal will react: does it like to chew on cords or shoes, does it climb, does it like to hide in small spaces, eat plants? All of these things are often unknown, so expect the unexpected and tidy up as best possible. Put away cleaning supplies, make sure plants are out of reach, cords wrapped up and little toys put away.

Paws and Prayers recommends a decompression time, which is different for every animal. We strongly encourage you to find a foster space in your house where your foster animal will spend most of its time until it is comfortable in its new surroundings. Some fosters use a spare room (such as a bathroom or office), or even a crate.

## SET-UP FOR MOTHER CATS AND KITTENS

If you are fostering a mother with kittens or a pregnant mother, you will need to provide a box with clean towels for her to nest in. We recommend you keep the mother and kittens in a dedicated space at all times. As many of the mothers are strays, their instinct will be to save themselves and abandon their litter if they feel threatened by your other pets. Consider keeping food, water, and litter box close for the mother cat's convenience. See the appendix for more information on pregnant/mother cats and kitten care.

## UPON ARRIVAL...

Upon your foster cats' first arrival, you should take him/her/them to your dedicated foster space.

First thing's first, put your foster pet into the litter box and remind them how to use it. This is important to avoid accidents, although you should expect some until the animal is comfortable in it's surroundings.

Keep the animal's food and litter box separate, if possible. If keeping the animal in a cage at first, put the litter box in the back and the food in the front.

Spend some time with your new foster pet. Don't be too assertive. Foster cat is likely scared in its new surroundings. We recommend you sit in the room with the foster pet and allow it to approach you. You have to show foster pet that s/he does not have to fear you; this is how you create trust. Leaving the pet alone in his/her new space for the day is perfectly fine. Make certain foster pet trusts you and other human family members before introducing to resident pets. Do not flood foster pet's space all at once. We recommend everyone in the family visit the foster pet one on one until it trusts everyone. You don't want to overwhelm him/her!

If young children are a part of your family, properly introducing your foster pet to them is important. If you are fostering kittens, remember they are both fragile and rambunctious. Adult cats may be unsure of loud children, playing, etc. so all introductions (kittens and cats alike) should be taken slowly. Just as you did, make sure your child is as calm as possible and have him/her sit with you in your foster pet's dedicated space. Feel free to have your child give foster pet many treats!

## Meeting the Residents (Section 2 cont.)

### IT'S TIME TO MEET THE FAMILY CATS!

Once your foster pet has learned to trust the humans in the house, there are some steps to take to introduce them to your resident pets, especially the other cats. Remember, most of the time, we are not aware of how the foster pet will react with other animals, so take things slow!

- Put the cats in separate rooms from one another. Allow the cats to smell each other through the door. Depending on the personalities of the cats, it may be prudent to keep your foster in a separate room for a day or two. You can ease the transition by putting objects with the other cat's smell by their food. To do this you can take a dry rag and rub your foster cat with it on its face, top of its head, and the pads of its paws by the claws. These areas have the most scent glands and will make the rag smell like them. Do the same for any of your other cats. Place the rags near the opposite cat's food.
- Whether meeting a cat or a dog, it is normal for your foster cat to be nervous. Hissing or growling is not uncommon and simply a warning that the cat does not want to be bothered. Above all, make sure that your foster cat and other pets have somewhere to retreat to if they become agitated. A cornered cat can become aggressive and it is your responsibility to make sure your other pets do not corner them.
- Calm dogs or cats will not bother many cats, but some are. If a pet gets too close and is too energetic, your foster cat may swipe at them. Usually cats will not use their claws and though your pet may be startled, no harm is done.
- Like dogs, cats will establish a hierarchy through play and communication. This play can seem rough, but it is okay so long as no one is hurt. If they do not break off the encounter after a sign that one cat is unhappy (e.g., a loud yowl/scream), you may need to remove your own cat. Never get in the middle of a fight; use a squirt bottle or loud noise instead.

### IT'S TIME TO MEET THE FAMILY DOGS!

Once your foster pet has learned to trust the humans and cats in the house, there are some steps to take to introduce them to your resident dogs. Remember, most of the time, we are not aware of how the foster pet will react with other animals, so take things slow!

- Beforehand, exercise the dog and feed him a nice meal; put him in a relaxed mood. Put the dog on a short leash or in his crate.
- First, let your dog smell your foster through the door. If the dog is calm, you can introduce them face-to-face. Put your foster cat in their carrier if they are a scaredy-cat by nature; otherwise let them walk around. Be armed with lots of treats for good behavior.
- Let dog and cat check each other out at a distance. Pet and talk to the dog soothingly. It's not time for the dog to approach cat just yet. Give the dog and cat some treats and praise as rewards.
- If the dog bolts toward your cat, correct them with the leash. If they show any signs of excessive excitability, calm them. If this doesn't do the trick, cut the visit short and try again later.
- Repeat these short visits several times a day, gradually giving the dog more leash as appropriate.

**Do not move to the next phase until you have several consecutive days of incident-free visits in which both animals demonstrate to your satisfaction that they are comfortable with each other. Proceed with caution.**

- Once the dog and cat consistently get along during leashed visits, you're ready for the next step. Take the dog off the leash, and supervise the two closely. If you see problems, and they don't abate with a few simple voice commands, back up to the previous phase for a few days. Gradually make the no-leash sessions longer. Do not leave the cat and dog alone until you're sure they're both fully comfortable with each other and there will be no trouble. Make sure your cat has places they can jump to for safety. Make some private space in your home for each animal. Use cat doors or baby gates if practical, as well as gentle discipline and rewards to enforce the rules. Keep kitty's litter box and food bowl out of the dog's reach.

## ADVERTISING YOUR FOSTER PET

### Online Advertising

If your new foster pet hasn't already been named and/or placed on the website as available for adoption, this will be your next step. A name, pictures, description/biography (with information on what breed s/he is, his/her mannerisms, etc.) and adoption fee needs to be included in your foster pet's listing. Your mentor will assist you with doing this until you have had experience with multiple foster pets. Read below for an example of what to include in your description:

*Meet Kitty! Kitty, a long-haired kitten, is about 2 months old! This handsome boy is good with other cats and children, but doesn't do well with dogs. Fido loves curling up with you on the couch, playing with his feather toy and loves begging for wet food. He is litter box trained and would make a great family pet. His favorite toy is his squeaky mouse; he rubs up against your legs when he meets new people and loves any and all affection! Fido's adoption fee is \$100, which means that he is neutered, microchipped, and up to date on age appropriate vaccines. Interested adopters should fill out a non-obligatory adoption application at [www.pawsandprayers.org](http://www.pawsandprayers.org)!*

Email pictures and a biography such as the one above to your mentor once your foster pet is ready for adoption and s/he will list the animal on various websites for you.

- **Under no circumstances are your foster pets to be listed on Craigslist or other third party websites.** Paws and Prayers handles all marketing of your foster pets. You may request to have your foster pet featured on Paws and Prayers' social media pages via your mentor. You are welcome to share your foster pet on your own personal social media, but not third party groups.
- **Adoption fees are NOT negotiable.** See the Appendix for more details.

### Adoption Events

In addition to listing your foster pet online, you are required to bring your foster pet to two adoption events monthly. More than half of our adoptions take place at adoption events, so it is imperative you attend! Monthly adoption events can be viewed and signed-up for here:

**[www.pawsandprayers.org/Events/Calendar/tabid/56/Default.aspx](http://www.pawsandprayers.org/Events/Calendar/tabid/56/Default.aspx)**

Routinely scheduled adoption events include weekend events at Chapel Hill PetSmart, Montrose PetSmart, Green Pet Supplies Plus, and Cuyahoga Falls Pet Supplies Plus. These rotate in addition to other special events, so be certain to check the calendar in bold above.

#### Guidelines for Adoption Events:

- Some foster cats may be overwhelmed at adoption events or you may not have a schedule permitting you to stay the whole time, so you do not have to stay at the event the entire time but should whenever possible.
- Bring plenty of treats along to reward good public behavior.
- Do not wear sandals/flip-flops or other open shoes while attending.
- If you are unable to be present at an event, you may arrange for someone to take your foster cat for you or your mentor can help you secure a volunteer for this.
- Kittens must have 2 vaccines prior to being shown; adult cats must have 1 vaccine.



## SECTION 3: Finding Foster Pet a Home



## PAWS AND PRAYERS' APPLICATION AND ADOPTION PROCESS

Fosters are asked to determine the best home for his/her foster animal by prescreening applications and meeting with potential adopters. The general process for application and adoption of your foster pet is as follows:

1. **Interested adopters may apply for adoption online at [www.pawsandprayers.org](http://www.pawsandprayers.org) or in person at an adoption event.** \* Applications submitted by adopters online will be communicated to you via email; you should acknowledge applications within 48 hours and always thank adopters for expressing interest in rescuing. Meets are not to be scheduled without an approved application on record.

*\*If a written application is accepted at an event, the foster is responsible for taking that information and using it to fill out an online application; this is required.*

2. Once an application is received, as a foster, **you must complete several references in order to deem the application “pre-approved” to meet an animal.** Feel free to clarify any unclear information you obtain with the adopter. In the instance that you receive multiple applications, we recommend you work the applications in the order they were received, although your foster pet should ultimately go to the home best suited for him/her. Complete these references to either determine pre-approval or denial:

### WHY ARE ADOPTERS “PRE-APPROVED” RATHER THAN “APPROVED”?

Paws and Prayers uses the term “pre-approval” with reference to the adoption process rather than the phrase “approval”.

**While our basic qualifications for adopters include the ability to own a pet at the applicant’s residence and a proven record of continued veterinary care for their pets, every foster pet has a subset of requirements that should be taken into**

**consideration.** Even the most responsible pet owner may not be the perfect owner for your foster pet. For example, some dogs may require a fence, another animal companion, or a home without children. It is important for adopters to understand that, even if their references come back great, they are only “pre-approved” in their search for a new pet because other foster homes may not find their foster pet to be a good fit for any given adopter. Foster homes reserve the right to turn down an adopter if their pet is not a good fit.

- a) **Verify the applicant’s ability to have a pet at their residence.** This means one of two things for applicants: that they own their residence (which is verified using property searches on county auditor websites, which your mentor will help you to locate if needed) or that they have provided landlord contact information for you to check with. Restrictions often exist at rented properties (such as a deposit or requiring that they declaw an animal, **which we do not allow**).
  - b) **Verify that the applicant’s current pets or previous (if any exist) are up to date** on vaccines and spayed/neutered per their veterinarian’s recommendations. Ask if they had their pet declawed. Different doctors have different interpretations of adequate veterinary care; confirm that the adopter has followed their veterinarian’s instructions for care (e.g. medical or age related reasons may prevent an animal from being fixed or vaccinated).
  - c) **Verify the applicant’s personal, non-family pet reference.** This reference is everything you make of it; good questions to ask may be “How does applicant interact with your pet?” “How long have you known applicant?” “How many pets has the applicant had in the last few years?”, etc.
3. If there are no problems with an application’s references, you can **pre-approve the application for a meet and greet** to be scheduled at a time and place that is convenient for you (e.g. a pet store, Paws and Prayers’ office, or another neutral location). Your mentor should also be there for your first meet and greet. All human residents are required to meet the potential new pet; resident pets are welcome to meet them too, but cats are generally too fearful to react positively to strange animals right off the bat. Never guarantee adoption! Always leave yourself an opportunity to discontinue the adoption process if you don’t feel your foster pet is a good fit for the adopting family. If the meet and greet goes well, you are welcome to adopt your foster pet out on the spot. You can also arrange to finalize adoption at a later date if needed.

## Application and Adoption Process

(Section 3 cont.)

## PAWS AND PRAYERS' APPLICATION AND ADOPTION PROCESS CONTINUED...

4. When the time comes to move forward with adoption of your foster pet, you will need to help the adopter through the adoption paperwork and with digesting all the information in their adoption folders. The medical form and adoption contract must be explained to the adopter and filled out by the adopter fully. Prior to adoption, make sure your foster pet is as fully up to date on vaccines as possible. Explain the contracts thoroughly.

White copies of both of these documents are retained by the organization; place them inside the manila folder. Yellow copies should be placed in the adopter's **green folder**.

Refer to the appendix for samples of a completed medical form and a completed contract.

### • **Contract highlights:**

Often times, adopters are quite excited to be taking their new pet home! While they read over the contract, make sure they understand some of the most important agreements they are making:

- Adoption is a **LIFETIME** commitment and their newly adopted pet is to be an **INDOOR** animal.
- Adopters must take their new pet to a vet within **30 DAYS**.
- Adopters **CANNOT** have any cosmetic surgery/alteration performed to their animal unless deemed necessary for their wellbeing (e.g. declawing).
- Adopters have a two-week trial period; the animal may be returned to us within this time and they will receive a partially reimbursed adoption fee (\$25 less than the original fee).
- All Paws and Prayers animals have a lifetime umbrella over their heads: should an adopter ever be unable to care for their pet, they are contractually obligated to return the animal to us.

**DEPOSITS:** Deposits should be collected from the adopter on any animal that is being adopted at a future date (particularly, puppies and kittens). Deposit amounts are non-refundable and are subtracted from the total adoption fee. The deposit amount is equal to half of the adoption fee.

### WHAT'S IN A FOLDER ANYWAY?

Adoption folders are your foster pet's passport to adoption! As previously mentioned, an adopter will receive a green folder with their copies of the adoption contract and medical form (to take with them to their first vet visit) amongst other information including:

- Information on how to register their new pet's microchip
- Coupons for a **FREE** vet visit from Banfield Pet Hospital
- A Paws and Prayers car decal
- Information on **FREE** pet insurance through a trial period with Embrace
- Paws and Prayers information
- Other promotional materials (which vary)
- A manila folder in which all office copies should be retained.
- **Feel free to add your own touches! Include pictures, a fact sheet, or other useful information personalized for your foster pet!**

### REMEMBER:

**All payments and adoption contracts must be turned in with the manila folder within one business week from adoption!**

Unused contracts should be returned inside the manila folder.

## SAYING "GOODBYE" TO YOUR FOSTER PET

Fostering a pet in need is one of the most selfless things an animal lover can do and everyone at Paws and Prayers is thankful that you made the decision to work with us and take a helpless animal into your home. As thankful as we are, all of us know first hand that fostering is one of the most emotional, life-changing experiences to have. Saying "goodbye" to your first foster pet is the hardest; it will get easier with time. Find some tips below on how to make peace with the adoption process:

- **Focus on the ultimate goal:** It's only natural to find you have a stronger bond with certain animals and may even question whether or not to adopt your foster pet. At these times it's important to remember why you became a foster parent—it's about helping to save a life. Shelters across the country are overflowing with adoptable animals, but in the absence of available foster homes, many have no choice but to turn to euthanasia. As a foster parent, it's vital to keep your original goals in mind and remain committed to helping foster pets find loving, forever homes.
- **Learn to celebrate.** One simple action you can take to help alleviate the "letting go blues" is to celebrate the occasion. From throwing a little goodbye party to treating yourself to a special dinner, it's good to commemorate the fact that your foster pet has found a new forever home. It's also important to acknowledge your hard work. So go ahead, pat yourself on the back for a job well done and celebrate!
- **...and Celebrate with Everyone!** Even celebrate with your foster animal! Set aside a night prior to adoption to do something fun! Take one final opportunity to bond—play with them a little extra, give them a treat they really love, and let them snuggle with you all night. Some fosters even have a "talk" with their foster pet to help them through the process. You can also pack your foster cat a "bag". It helps both you and the foster animal transition when you send him/her to his/her new adoptive home if you provide the adopter with a bag of your foster cat's favorite treats, his/her favorite toy or blanket.
- **Don't feel guilty.** After days, weeks or even months of bonding, it can be painful to say goodbye to a foster pet. You may even experience strong feelings of guilt for not adopting the animal yourself or for making your foster pet change homes again—this is to be expected. However, it's important to understand that while these feelings are natural for you, animals are incredibly resilient and adaptable—your foster pet will become part of his new family and be living happily ever after in no time!
- **Stay in touch!** The best moment of fostering a pet is when you receive updates of your foster cat in his/her new home. Help the adopter through any bumps or questions they may have; support your adopter and in return, you will likely receive updates as your foster pet thrives in his/her new home.
- **Reassure Yourself.** Friendship is not about who you know the longest, it is about the ones that touch you the most. While you may not be able to see your foster dog through his/her lifetime, you should take peace in knowing that you were the bridge between what was and what can be for your foster pet and that your foster cat will live out his/her life in a home that will love him/her unconditionally. Your foster cat may have come to you scared, maybe even underweight. When s/he leaves you, his/her heart will be filled with happiness and familiarity of human love. There may be tears, but there will not be regret.  
A new cat needs you now.

"HOW LUCKY I AM TO HAVE  
SOMETHING THAT MAKES  
SAYING GOODBYE SO  
HARD."



-A.A. MILNE

# SECTION 4: Medical Protocol



**Paws and Prayers has set medical protocol that should both be taken seriously and strictly adhered to.**

Any questions should be directed to your mentor. Please carefully review the following information regarding vaccinations, alterations, health problems, etc.

- Your resident pets must be kept up to date on vaccines at all times. You are not to foster for any other agency at the same time that you are fostering for Paws and Prayers.
- It is your responsibility as the foster to ensure that your foster pet is medically up to date prior to being adopted; it is also your responsibility to notify your mentor and medical of any concerns in a timely fashion. Medical care outside of Paws and Prayers' medical staff must be preapproved, no exceptions.
- The medical coordinator sets the adoption fee at the time of intake. Adoption fees range from \$60 to \$200 based on age, breed, health condition, behavioral conditions, etc.
- Vaccines are given in two-week intervals; e.g. if a vaccine is administered on the 1<sup>st</sup>, the second vaccine can be given on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

## MEDICAL SCHEDULE FOR KITTENS

(BETWEEN 0 AND 4 MO.S):

**At 4 weeks:** Kittens are given their first round of dewormer.

**At 6 weeks:** Kittens are dewormed again and given an FVRCP vaccine. They are tested for FIV/FeLV. Flea/tick prevention is administered.

**At 8 weeks:** Kittens are dewormed again and given another FVRCP vaccine and a microchip.

**Between 8 and 10 weeks** or at the medical coordinator's discretion: Kittens will be spayed/neutered. Kittens must be at least 2 pounds to be spayed/neutered. Alternatively, kittens can be adopted unfixed by providing the adopter a spay/neuter certificate.

**At 10 weeks, if in our care:** Kittens are given a third vaccine. If the kitten is not in our care, the third shot is the responsibility of the adopter.

**At 12 weeks, if in our care:** Kittens are given a rabies vaccine. If the kitten is not in our care, the rabies vaccine is the responsibility of the adopter.

## MEDICAL CARE FOR KITTENS

(BETWEEN 4 MONTHS AND 1 YEAR):

**At age of 6 weeks or older:** Kittens are given a dewormer and given an FVRCP vaccine. They are tested for FIV/FeLV.

**Two weeks later:** Kittens are again dewormed and given another FVRCP vaccine. Kittens can now be fixed and microchipped (so long as they are at least 2 pounds).

**Another two weeks:** Kittens may be given a third vaccine at the medical coordinator's discretion based on age.

If the kitten/cat in your care is over the age of 12 weeks, the animal must receive a rabies vaccine prior to adoption.



## MEDICAL SCHEDULE FOR CATS

(OVER 6 MO.S):

**At intake:** All adult cats will receive an FVRCP vaccine (if no medical records are available), a microchip, and a FIV/FeLV test. All cats will also be given a dewormer.

**Two weeks later:** At the medical coordinator's discretion, usually based on age, a second vaccine may be needed.

**Monthly:** Cats must receive flea/tick prevention monthly while in our care.

**Prior to adoption:** All animals in our care must be spayed or neutered prior to adoption. There are occasionally, although rarely, animals who are not healthy enough or have extenuating circumstances that makes it unsafe for him/her to be fixed.

OTHER MEDICATIONS MAY BE ADMINISTERED AT THE MEDICAL COORDINATOR'S DISCRETION, AS NEEDED.

## Health Problem References/Solutions (Section 3 cont.)

Below are several health problems that are common medical occurrences that you should be aware of. Contact your mentor and medical if you think your foster pet is encountering any of the below:

### KITTENS: FAILURE TO THRIVE, FADING KITTEN, SUDDEN DEATH

It is an unfortunate estimate that 20% of kittens will die within the first 12 weeks of life. This often takes the form of a kitten refusing to eat or not gaining weight. Kittens that do not quickly gain weight and lag behind their littermates are said to “fade” or “fail to thrive”. If a kitten appears to be lagging behind the rest of the litter, contact your mentor or medical. However, some kittens may appear healthy and die suddenly without an apparent cause. This, too, is not uncommon. Contact your mentor or medical if you encounter this; you are welcome to bury your foster pet.

### EAR MITES:

Ear mites are tiny parasites that live in the ear canal.

**Signs and Symptoms:** Itching, scratching, head shaking, dark brown discharge in the ears.  
**Treatment:** Veterinary care including an injection or ear drops.  
**Transmission:** Contagious to other dogs and cats, but usually requires direct contact with the infected animal.

### EYE INFECTIONS:

Like humans, cats often develop mucus in their eyes called “rheum”. It is normal for dried rheum to collect in your cats eyes, which you can carefully remove if it builds up. However, if a cat has too much rheum, this can be a sign of an infection or damage to the cornea. If your cat has excessive dried or wet rheum, for a few days, contact your mentor or medical.

**Signs and Symptoms:** Excessive discharge from eyes, sometimes dark in color when dried. Red, swollen inner eyelid.  
**Treatment:** Veterinary care, salves or eye drops.  
**Transmission:** Some eye infections are contagious or can be a sign of another infection.

### RINGWORM:

Ringworm is a fungus related to athletes’ foot, not actually a worm.

**Signs and Symptoms:** Circular-shaped areas of fur loss. The skin of the areas will usually appear rough and scaly.  
**Treatment:** Veterinary care including an injection and/or topical treatment.  
**Transmission:** Very contagious to other dogs, cats, and people, but usually requires direct contact with the infected animal.

### UPPER RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS:

Upper respiratory infections are caused by viruses and bacteria. Cats commonly develop upper respiratory infections when stressed or when in close contact to other infected cats. Antibiotics are often given to prevent secondary infections. Upper respiratory infections can be confused with allergies; if your cat shows symptoms for a couple days in a row, contact your mentor.

**Signs and Symptoms:** Sneezing congestion, runny nose and eyes  
**Treatment:** Veterinary care including antibiotics.  
**Transmission:** Contagious to other pets.

### URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS:

These are medical problems affecting your cat’s urinary tract and bladder. There are a number of problems that fall into this category ranging from infections to kidney stones to blockages.

**Signs and Symptoms:** Urinating out of the litter box, painful urination or bloody, abnormal, absent or frequent urination.  
**Treatment:** Veterinary care varies by cause.  
**Transmission:** Rarely contagious.

### FLEAS:

Fleas are tiny insects that feed on the blood of dogs, cats, humans, and other animals. Although each flea only consumes a small drop of blood, fleas usually attack in large numbers.

**Signs and Symptoms:** Intense itching and scratching.  
**Treatment:** Veterinary care including an injection and/or topical treatment.  
**Transmission:** Very contagious to other dogs, cats, and people.

### VOMITING/DIARRHEA:

Many cats vomit for common reasons such as overeating, stress, hairballs or eating foreign objects. However, excessive and frequent vomiting can be a sign of infection, blockage, or poisoning and must be dealt with promptly. Keep all cleaning supplies, medicines, plants, insecticides, etc. secured and out of the cat’s reach.

**Signs and Symptoms:** Frequent vomiting/diarrhea. Refusing to eat.  
**Treatment:** Fecal sample to be submitted to medical; care varies by cause.  
**Transmission:** Causes can be contagious.

## Health Problem References/Solutions (Section 3 cont.)

### ROUND, TAPE AND HOOKWORMS, AND TOXIDIA/COCCIDIA:

Worms affect a cat's digestive system. They are most commonly seen in kittens and young cats.

**Signs and Symptoms:** Large belly, diarrhea, sometimes discolored, and an inability to gain weight.

**Treatment:** Veterinary care including deworming medication.

**Transmission:** Contagious to other dogs and cats, but only through contact with (and subsequent ingestion of) feces.

### CLEANING PROCEDURES:

To ensure that all foster and resident animals stay healthy, it is important that all items and areas used by both healthy and sick foster animals be cleaned thoroughly. You can use a 10% bleach solution to reliably kill most viruses and bacteria. Items to be cleaned should be thoroughly wetted with the bleach solution and allowed to stand for several minutes before rinsing. Foster homes that have recently fostered a cat with an extremely contagious disease WILL be asked to wait a period determined by the Medical Coordinator before fostering again.

### COMMON FOODS

### DANGEROUS TO CATS:



## Pre- and Post-Operative Care

Below are some guidelines for seeing that your foster pet makes it through his/her surgery and recovery successfully. Find extended details in the Appendix.

**Before surgery:** Your foster pet is not allowed to have food or water after 10 pm the night before his/her scheduled surgery.

**Food and water instructions (the first night):** Start with a very small (1/8 cup) meal of your pet's regular food. Offer a small (1/4 cup) amount of water or ice cubes. If this stays down for an hour, then offer another small meal and drink. Do not allow your foster to "guzzle" unlimited water or food; this often leads to stomach upset. Vomiting, shaking and trembling are not uncommon side effects from surgery.

**Animals may be groggy** for the first night home and not themselves after surgery. Please allow your foster pet to rest quietly and limit exposure to other pets and children. It is best to confine your pet to a separate room for the night and be certain to leave a blanket under him/her. By morning, the anesthetic will have worn off, and the cat can be allowed to roam the house as usual.

**Monitor your pet's incision/surgery site:** It is imperative that you closely monitor your foster's incision site. Check it at least once a day for the next two weeks. Mild swelling, bruising, and even a little pinkish discharge from the surgery site is all very normal. If any of these signs do not clear up within a few days, contact medical.

**Other things to keep in mind for the next two weeks: Do not let your foster pet lick the incision, this is vital!** Request an e-collar if your foster pet persists licking the area; licking could cause the incision to open, herniate, or worse.

**Animals can be adopted 1-2 days after surgery; surgeries with complications may require longer.**

## Scheduling Medical Appointments and Emergency Contacts

**Routine appointments** for check-ups, vaccines, weight checks, etc. should be scheduled with our medical coordinator. Later, your mentor will show you how to do this on our website, for now, email your mentor when your foster cat is due for an appointment and they will provide you with the availability of available appointments.

When you have an appointment with the medical coordinator, you must bring your folder with the animal.

**Surgery appointments** should be made through your mentor. At this time, routine surgeries, such as spays and neuters, are done at One of a Kind Clinic. You must schedule these appointments at least one week in advance; **all animals receiving surgery must be at the office by 7:30 am Wednesday morning** (with your mentor's permission, you may drop your animal off Tuesday night) along with his/her folder. **Surgery will not be performed without his/her folder.** Food and water are not permitted after 10 pm on Tuesday night. Animals can be picked up on Wednesday after 6 pm. You must check-in with a staff member prior to bringing your animal home; verify the animal's folder has been appropriately updated.

Requirements for surgery: All animals receiving surgery must be up to date on vaccines. Kittens must have received at least one vaccine prior to surgery. Kittens must weigh at least 2 pounds. All animals must be in good health to receive surgery.

**Any concern or question you may have about your foster cat should be communicated with the medical coordinator via emailing [medical@pawsandprayers.org](mailto:medical@pawsandprayers.org).** All emails will be replied to within 24 hours. You should also communicate with your mentor for advice. Emergency situations do occur. Follow the below protocol for acting quickly during an emergency situation.

### EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

**An emergency situation is defined as your animal experiencing any of the following:** vomiting that lasts more than 24 hours; diarrhea that lasts longer than three days; labored breathing (**not** panting) respirations over 60 breaths per minute; retching (if a large dog over 50 pounds); active labor that lasts longer than four hours or if a kitten is stuck in the birth canal; collapsing (if pet falls over and is unresponsive or disoriented for a short period of time after collapse); unconscious/unresponsive; hit by car; compound fracture bone sticking out of the skin; more than three seizures in 24 hours; blood in vomit; any temperature over 105; signs of complications after spay/neuter, or any surgeries (such as excessive bleeding from a neuter site or a spay incision open).

**In the event of an emergency as defined above, at any time, call your mentor.**

**After calling your mentor (whether or not s/he picks up), call the emergency medical number at (234) 200.6620.**

**If your call is not answered immediately, keep calling.**



## LITTER TRAINING:

Nearly all cats will know how to use their litter box if you show them where it is. The litter box should be placed in a calm, quiet place that is easily accessible. There are a few reasons your cat may not use the litter box:

- Too dirty – clean box every day. Recommended you have at least one box per cat. Make sure there is enough litter (at least 1 inch).
- Dislikes cover, litter, or location – Uncommon, but try changing these if there is a problem.
- Upset about something or underlying medical issue.

Kittens may need to be trained to use the litter box. Newborn kittens' waste will be dealt with by the mother cat. She will lick them to stimulate them to pee or poop and clean up the waste herself. However, it is a good idea to line the cat's nest with towels that can be changed if they become soiled. Once they are old enough (about 4 to 5 weeks), they will begin to explore and find the litter box. You can help them find it so they know where to go. It is their instinct to bury their waste, so most will take to using the litter box quickly. Make sure the box is easy for the kitten to access (e.g., not down a flight of stairs) and that the kitten can get in the box (i.e., the sides are not too high). Remove any other places your kitten might mistake for an appropriate place to excrete, such as large potted plants.

## SCRATCHING:

Most cats will instinctively scratch and kneed objects, especially carpet. This is usually not a destructive behavior and they do it to remove old sheaths of nail. In cases where it is a destructive behavior, the cat is usually expressing anxiety and stress through scratching. Try to see what may be causing your cat stress. Exercise/play may be the answer (see below).

If your cat is a destructive scratcher and exercise/play does not help, there are some tricks that can help:

- Provide a scratching post or pad.
- Placing double-sided tape on the object they are scratching. Cats do not like how it feels. They sell special tape at pet stores that will not damage your possessions.
- Spraying surface with an unpleasant smelling/tasting liquid, such as bitter apple or water with citrus.
- Using "Soft Paws" or nail covers.

**Note: Paws and Prayers has a strict "no declaw" policy. We will not declaw any cats that come to us and adopters must agree to not declaw as well.**

## SPRAYING:

Most cats, male and female alike, do not spray, especially after being altered. If your cat is spraying, contact your mentor or [medical@pawsandprayers.org](mailto:medical@pawsandprayers.org).

## EXERCISE:

Don't forget to make sure that your foster cat gets plenty of exercise. The best way to give your cat exercise is to play with it. Some cats are ball crazy while others prefer feather toys. It doesn't take much to figure it out.



# SECTION 5: Behavioral How-To Notes

We get it! Not every foster pet is perfect. We understand that many of them come with their own unique challenges and quirks, so use the quick reference notes to the left on some how-to ideas for basic behavioral training. **Contact your mentor if you are experiencing problems you are unsure of how to handle.**





## SECTION 6: Questions, Answers and Tips!

### WHERE DO WE GET CATS?

Paws and Prayers' priority is to assist Ohio-area animal control facilities who are at or nearing capacity in order to help them avoid euthanizing animals; generally, they reach out to us when they need assistance. With cats, we often assist the public with rehoming their cats by having them surrender it to us and having a foster home take it. Paws and Prayers occasionally takes in stray cats.

### WHAT IS FOSTERING GOING TO COST ME?

All supplies needed for fostering a cat will be provided to you by the organization; under no circumstance should you purchase your own supplies and expect reimbursement without first talking to your mentor. All supplies (food, dishes, toys, kennel, litter etc.) can be picked-up at our office. Arrange with your mentor a time to pick-up items.

### ARE THERE CERTAIN PEOPLE THAT WE JUST DON'T ADOPT TO?

They have to keep their cat inside—not outside. We do not believe in “outside cats.” Their other animals must be spayed or neutered. If they are not, we may adopt to them if they spay or neuter their other pets and show us proof. Resident pets must also be vaccinated. We go by references; general application, good fit and general feel for the people. We are looking for good homes for cats that without us would not have had a chance. Adopters are not allowed to declaw pets.

### DO WE HAVE A SAY IN WHO GETS TO ADOPT THE ANIMAL?

Yes, you get to help decide. Once you have done a few adoptions you will be doing this on your own and can ask for help or guidance. We all see the applications come through and many times other fosters will comment as well. If ever you have questions, just ask.

### WHY IS THE ADOPTION FEE WHAT IT IS?

Due to the staggering medical costs of our animals, the adoption fee goes towards the cost of rescuing (there is sometimes a fee when pulling animals from pounds) and medical expenses, which includes spaying/neutering. Standardized adoption fees help to keep adoption costs affordable for all. Adoption fees vary from \$60 to \$200 for cats based on age, breed, and medical/behavioral background.

### THE ADOPTION FEE INCLUDES SHOTS. DOES THIS MEAN ALL SHOTS – EVEN THE SHOTS DUE AFTER ADOPTION?

Paws and Prayers is responsible for any medical care while the cat is in our custody and care. Once adopted, the new owner takes over this responsibility with the vet of their choice. Prior to adoption, all cats receive one to three FVRCP vaccines based on age, a microchip, FIV/FelV test and is spayed/neutered (or provided a voucher redeemable at One of a Kind Clinic for such).

### WHAT TYPES OF PAYMENT DO WE ACCEPT?

Paws and Prayers' preferred method of payment is cash or check; if an adopter wishes to pay with a credit card it must be discussed ahead of time. FOR CHECKS: verify the check address matches their Driver's License address and write their license number on the check next to the adopter's address.

### WHAT IF THE ADOPTION DOESN'T WORK OUT AFTER ALL?

Paws and Prayers will allow a two-week trial for all adoptions. If the pet is returned within that two-week period, Paws and Prayers will refund all but a \$25 administrative fee for the adoption. Animals are legally required to be returned to Paws and Prayers at any point an adopter is unable to keep it.

### HOW LONG ARE CATS IN FOSTER HOMES?

It completely depends on the cat and the situation. The average stay in a foster home is about 2 months. However, most kittens and some cats with great photos and stories on the web may stay only a few weeks. Others, recovering from an injury, certain breeds and senior cats, may stay much longer.

### CAN I ADOPT MY FOSTER CAT?

YES! As long as foster parents meet the organization's requirements necessary for adoption, foster parents have first choice to adopt their foster cat.



# Questions, Answers and Tips Continued

## DO WE DO ADOPT TO PEOPLE OUT OF STATE?

Yes! Paws and Prayers has no aversion with adopting to well qualified families out of state. It is at each foster home's discretion to decide whether or not is in the animal's best interest, however, to be adopted to any home at such a distance. We have had countless successful out of state adoptions, however, adopters must have a clear understanding that should their adopted animal not be a good fit, they are legally required to return the animal locally to Paws and Prayers. We do NOT ship animals.

## HOW MANY CATS CAN I FOSTER?

Our foster volunteers are welcome to foster as many cats as they are permitted to have in their home (which may vary based on landlord rules and/or city/county ordinances). The only stipulation for how many cats you may foster is based on medical history: we do not allow fosters to have cats from more than two sources if any cat in your house is not fully vaccinated. Each existing foster cat must have two FVRCP vaccines and a rabies vaccine prior to taking in another animal from any source. Kittens must have two FVRCP vaccines prior to bringing in another foster cat. No more than two litters of kittens under 8 weeks old can be mixed at once.

## WHAT IF MY FOSTER ANIMAL ISN'T WORKING OUT?

We understand that, much like for adopters, sometimes, animals just aren't a good fit for a particular foster home. In any circumstance, you need to stay in regular communication with your mentor regarding any problems you experience. You will never be forced to keep an animal but, except for emergencies, we will ask that you give us at least a week to make arrangements to move your foster cat as a last resort.

## WHAT IF I HAVE TO GO OUT OF TOWN?

We ask that you give two weeks notice to your mentor if you need assistance having your foster pet watched/boarded while you are out of town.

## CAN MY FOSTER CAT OR KITTEN PLAY WITH MY RESIDENT PETS?

While we want your foster cat to be as regular a part of your household as possible, we ask that you know your foster pet well before letting your pets interact with one another. Foster cats should have at least one vaccine and foster kittens should have at least two vaccines prior to comingling with your resident pets.

## FOSTERING TIPS (FROM OUR VERY OWN!)

**Listen to your mentor, not your foster!** This is very true! Your foster pet will sometimes try pushing boundaries, act strangely well-behaved, or will just plain fool you. Always take your mentor's advice and follow their guidelines; they have the experience and know-how to guarantee a successful fostering experience.

**White Vinegar is key to getting rid of pet odor!** Putting a little bit in the wash with pet linens and/or using it to scrub surfaces where accidents may have happened is one of the best tricks we have found to fight against pet smell!

**Remember: adopters are about as perfect as the animals.** That should say a LOT! All of our foster animals are flawed in some way, and sometimes, adoption applications may come across questionable, but it's important to give folks the benefit of the doubt. So maybe they forgot to fill out a question, or maybe they didn't know how important heartworm prevention was. It's important to remember that while we are all about saving lives, we are also about **education**, a little kindness and understanding goes a long way and it would be a shame to miss out on a great home by making snappy judgments.

**Give each new foster a tour.** While this may feel silly, this is important! For dogs, keeping them on the leash for an initial tour and for the following week(s) allows you to redirect any unwanted behavior. You can even tie the leash to your waste if you're unsure of leaving him/her alone. For cats, it allows you the opportunity to make sure they know where their resources are (food, water, litter box) and will give you the chance to see all the nooks and crannies they plan to hide in.

**Every animal is different!** What did work for one animal, may not work for the next. Some take longer to warm up or learn proper manners, so always have patience and have no expectations.

**Very importantly, make sure your whole family knows what to expect with fostering.** Fostering pets is not only one of the most rewarding experiences you will have, but one of the most emotional. Prepare your family for learning curves and the ultimate goodbye. Be sure everyone enjoys every step of the process!

# APPENDIX: Other Forms and Instructions



## PAWS AND PRAYERS ADOPTION FEE GUIDELINES

*Note that the below guidelines are not firm; adoption fees vary from animal to animal and are set by the medical coordinator at time of intake.*

### **For Cats:**

2 months to 6 months: \$100

7 months to 1 year: \$80

1 year or older: \$60

Declawed cats of any age: \$100

Depending on breed, cat adoption fees can be as much as \$250.

Adoption of two Paws and Prayers cats at the same time initiates a 25% discount off the lesser of two adoption fees. Verified repeat adopters receive 25% off the adoption fee of the animal they are adopting.

### **For Dogs:**

2 months to 6 months: \$300

7 months to 2 years: \$250

3 years to 7 years: \$200

8 years or older: \$150

Depending on breed or known medical conditions, dog adoption fees can be as much as \$400 or as little as \$100.

Adoption of two Paws and Prayers dogs at the same time initiates a \$50 discount off the total adoption fee. Verified repeat adopters receive \$50 off the adoption fee of the animal they are adopting.

**BONDED PAIRS:** Pricing for bonded pairs (of dogs and cats) will deviate from the above amounts.

## MEET AND GREET TIPS

Unlike dogs, cats are unlikely to quickly adapt to new places, which can make meet and greets with potential adopters a challenge because your foster cat may not act like his or her usual self in a new place.

Because Paws and Prayers generally discourages our volunteers from doing meet and greets at their personal residences (under most circumstances), you have a few options to make meet and greets go as smoothly as possible.

When possible, utilize the meet and greet room at Paws and Prayers' office. There is a room dedicated for cat meet and greets, filled with toys and cat trees. Meet and greets here must be done during office hours or by arranging a time with your mentor.

Prior to doing a meet and greet with your cat it is recommended you not feed him/her in the time immediately preceding the meet and greet. If your foster pet tends to get nervous in new places, this will help assure s/he won't get sick. If it is possible that your foster pet will be adopted, adopting him/her on an empty stomach gives the opportunity to bond with their new pet by feeding them as soon as the pet gets to the new home!

We encourage cat fosters to attend adoption events, as well. Arrange with your mentor ahead of time to get a large travel crate and other supplies to show your pet off in. With pre-approval from your mentor, you can also arrange a time to put your foster pet in one of the cages at the pet store to be considered for adoption.

Kittens that aren't fully vaccinated should not be in contact with surface in public; e.g. kittens should always be in a travel carrier or crate.

# PRE-FILLED ADOPTION CONTRACT EXAMPLE

## CAT ADOPTION CONTRACT

**\$80**

Paws and Prayers Pet Rescue  
P.O. Box 2864 • Akron, OH 44309  
330.475.8300 • info@pawsandprayers.org



Foster Parent: **Cat Feeny** Foster Phone: **330-555-2009** Foster Email: **Catfoster@gmail.com**

Animal Number: **16001** Cat Name: **Kitty** Age: **1 yo** Sex: **M**  **F**

Adopter Name: **Jane Catatack**

Address: **1600 Penguin Avenue**

City: **Meowville** State: **Ohio** Zip Code: **44300**

Phone: **330-555-9002** Email: **janeloveshernewcat@yahoo.com**

Check here to not be added to the Paws and Prayers weekly newsletter email.

1. I/We agree that I/we are making a **Lifetime Commitment** to this animal and will provide quality food, fresh water and proper housing. I/We understand that this is a **COMPANIONSHIP** animal and I/we will not keep it primarily or permanently outside. This animal is to be an **INSIDE** pet.
2. I/we will take this animal to the veterinarian of my/our choice within thirty (30) days from signing the contract. I/we agree to provide a regular program of veterinary care for this animal. I/we will give flea prevention as directed by my/our veterinarian.
3. Paws and Prayers is not responsible for the physical condition or the temperament of this animal. I/we understand that we have been provided free short-term pet insurance that must be activated to be used. I/we agree that I/we will not hold Paws and Prayers responsible for damages which the animal may do to any person or property. I/we will accept all future liability with regard to this animal holding Paws and Prayers harmless of any costs.
4. I/we understand that the foster parent or other representative of Paws and Prayers may make a home visit(s) to check on the animal. I/we will cooperate in making the animal and its home available upon request. I/we specifically give permission to Paws and Prayers, at their discretion, to remove the animal from my/our premises if the animal is not properly cared for as I/we have agreed in this contract and entry shall not constitute trespass on my/our premises.
5. I/we understand that if I/we have any questions or concerns at any time regarding this animal, I/we can contact the foster parent or Paws and Prayers at 330-475-8300. I/we understand that we can contact the foster parent or Paws and Prayers with any medical questions up to thirty (30) days after this contract has been signed. If an emergency, I/we understand to seek veterinary care immediately.
6. Paws and Prayers requires that all animals adopted through our organization are altered by six (6) months of age. If you are adopting an unaltered kitten under six months of age, you are required to have the animal altered within thirty (30) days of the animal's six (6) month birthday. Paws and Prayers will confirm all alterations. If the animal has not been altered, Paws and Prayers has full rights to reclaim the animal.  
**This animal is not altered (spayed or neutered); I/we will do so by six (6) months of age. N/A (initial if applicable)**
7. I/we will not have this animal cosmetically altered in any way (i.e. declawing, tail docking).
8. Adoptions have a two (2) week trial period. If for any reason Paws and Prayers and/or I/we decide that the adoption is not in the best interest of the animal or other family members during this period, I/we will return the animal to the foster parent as soon as possible. Any adoption charges will be refunded, minus a twenty-five dollar (\$25.00) administrative fee. If for any reason after the two (2) week trial period I/we decide not to keep the animal, I/we will contact Paws and Prayers immediately for re-homing.

**I/WE HAVE READ, UNDERSTAND AND AGREE TO ALL OF THE ABOVE PROVISIONS RELATING TO THE ADOPTION OF THIS ANIMAL AND AFFIX MY/OUR SIGNATURE(S) BELOW:**

Adoptive Family: **Jane Catatack** Date: **31 December 2016**

P & P Representative: **Cat Feeny** Date: **31 December 2016**

Pet Store Employee: **N/A** Date:

# PRE-FILLED MEDICAL FORM EXAMPLE

## CAT MEDICAL INTAKE FORM

Paws and Prayers Pet Rescue  
 P.O. Box 2864 • Akron, OH 44309  
 330.475.8300 • info@pawsandprayers.org



Date Received: 12/10/2016	Animal Number: 16001	Name: Kitty
Sex: M (F)	Weight: 5.6 pounds	Birthdate (Est / Act): 11/2015
Breed: DLH mix	Color: black w/white	Owner Surrender: (Y) N Shelter: N/A

Vaccinations	Date Due	Date Given	Type/Brand	By Whom	Attach Sticker
Booster 1		12/10/2016	5-way	PNP	
Booster 2*	12/24/2016	12/27/2016	5-way	PNP	
Booster 3*	N/A				
Rabies		12/12/2016	RV-1 year	OOAK	

\*For kittens under 6 months

Surgery	Date Performed	By Whom
(Spay) Neuter	12/12/2016	OOAK

Lab/Blood Test	Date Performed	Result	By Whom
FELV/FIV/HW	12/10/2016	Negative	PnP

Prevention	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Flea												R10

A=Advantage C=Capstar F=Frontline H=Heartguard M=Multiguard O=Other R=Revolution W=Wormshield

Dewormer	Date Due	Date Given	Type/Brand	By Whom
Dewormer 1		12/10/2016	Strongid	PnP
Dewormer 2*				
Dewormer 3*				

\*For kittens under 6 months

Microchip
Microchip Number: 9991002346
<b>Next Step:</b> Register at homeagain.com/chipfurkeeps or 1-866-802-5650 using Shelter ID#OH113.

Medication/Other Medical	Date Performed	By Whom	Notes/Follow-Up Req'd

**Next Vaccine Due:** 12/11/2017 | **Next Rabies Due:** 12/13/2017 | **Med Follow-Up Due:** 01/31/2017

By signing this document, I signify that Paws and Prayers, Inc. has explained the current medical needs of the animal. I also understand the remaining medical needs and agree to comply with them as required.  
 \*For kittens under 6 months: I have adopted a feline under the age of 6 months that is not spayed/neutered. By initialling below, I signify that I have been provided a Spay/Neuter Certificate and that the responsibility of getting aforementioned feline altered has been explained to me. N/A

Adoptive Family: <u>Jane Catatack</u>	Date: <u>31 December 2016</u>
---------------------------------------	-------------------------------

## POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR FOSTERS

Paws and Prayers uses One of a Kind Spay/Neuter Clinic to perform spays and neuters of our adoptable animals. Other surgeries are done as needed at area veterinarians, but the below instructions provide guidelines important for post-operative care of all surgeries. **If an animal is being adopted within two weeks from surgery date, provide a copy of the below instructions to adopters.**

Also accessible at <http://www.oneofakindpets.com/site/our-clinic/pre-post-operative-instructions/>

### THE FIRST NIGHT:

- **Food and water:** Start with a very small (1/8 cup) meal of your pet's regular food. Offer a small (1/4 cup) amount of water or ice cubes. If this stays down for an hour, then offer another small meal and drink. Do not allow your pet to "guzzle" unlimited water or food – this often leads to stomach upset. Likewise, no strange foods or treats should be given the first night after surgery. If your pet has no interest in food or water the first night after surgery, this is not a cause for concern. If he or she does not eat the day following surgery, please contact us.
- **Animals may be groggy** for the first night home and not themselves – even the most tolerant and sweet animals can be cranky after anesthesia and surgery. Please allow your pet to rest quietly, and be careful with other pets and small children.
- **Look at your pet's incision** – It is important to monitor your pet's incision closely – check it at least once a day for the next 2 weeks. Mild swelling, bruising, and even a little pinkish discharge can all be normal for the first 24 hours. After that, the incision should look nothing but better from there. Any redness, discharge, or discomfort is cause for concern and you need to contact us. One of a Kind will recheck any incision at no charge anytime within the two weeks from the date of surgery. It is better to be over cautious than to wait too long.

### THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND FOR THE NEXT 14 DAYS:

- **Do not let your pet lick the incision.** If you see your pet licking the incision, it is VITAL that you purchase an e-collar (a cone collar) and put it on your pet immediately. Allowing an animal to lick its incision can lead to many problems from infection to opening of the incision line. E-collars can be purchased at One of a Kind or at any pet store, but make sure to take your pet with you to be fitted properly.
- **Dogs should be leash walked only (no running loose or rough housing) for one full week after surgery.** Excess activity can lead to swelling at the incision or tearing of the sutures and opening of the incision.
- **No baths or swimming for one week after surgery.** There is no need to clean the incision with anything, and do not apply any ointments, bandages, or medications.
- **If any of the above instructions are not followed, complications could arise.** This is considered self-trauma and One of a Kind will not cover the cost of these complications; Paws and Prayers will not cover the cost once the animal has been adopted.
- Your pet can gradually return to normal activity 14 days after the spay/neuter procedure.

### COMMON POST-OP QUESTIONS AND COMPLICATIONS:

- **Vomiting** is the most common post-anesthesia complication. Vomiting once or twice the night after surgery is very normal. However, if your pet vomits several times, or if the vomiting persists into the next day, you need to contact us. We can give medication to help stop the nausea. Your pet could be at risk for dehydration and severe illness if he or she is not seen quickly.
- **Shaking or trembling** for the first night home can be a normal side effect of the anesthesia wearing off. It should resolve completely within 24 hours.
- If **pain medication** is sent home, it is to be started the day after surgery. All animals receive pain medication during surgery that will last the first 24 hours. Neither Metacam nor Carprofen have any sedative effects, so they will not make an animal "loopy." Tramadol can cause mild sedation. If your pet is vomiting, no pain medications should be given (they can be irritating to the stomach) and you need to contact us.
- A small, firm, knuckle-sized swelling at the incision can be a normal reaction as the suture knot under the skin dissolves. It should be completely gone within a month of surgery.
- Your pet should be acting 100% back to his or her normal self 48 hours from surgery.
- If you have a question or concern that is not an emergency, please contact Paws and Prayers at (330) 873-4500.
- Emergency care for fosters (while the animal is still in your care) should first be directed to the emergency phone number. Emergency care for adopters should be directed to your personal veterinarian or emergency veterinary clinic.
- Please note, there are many cases when underlying health issues are present in your pet and emerge after spay/neuter surgery. Any health concerns about an animal in foster care should be directed to the Medical Coordinator. These underlying problems are not a result of the spay/neuter and therefore Paws and Prayers does not cover medical costs once the animal has been adopted.

# CARING FOR YOUR PREGNANT OR NURSING FOSTER CAT



## SUPPLY LIST:

Make sure you have all of the following supplies for your foster family!

- Litter box
- Appropriate Non-Clumping Litter
- Food bowls (for wet and dry food)
- Water bowl
- Scratching post
- Bedding
- Toys
- Crate, box, or other “safe” area for mom

Fostering a mom cat with kittens is a very exciting and rewarding job. You will get to see intimately how a mom cat cares for her kittens as well as the stages of development in their relationship. This section will help you be the supportive foster parent and will address what to expect, normal behavior, and problem behavior and troubleshooting.

### What Type of Setting Do Mom Cats Need?

In one word: CALM. Instinct tells mom cats to keep their kittens safe and, in order to feel safe they need privacy, quiet, and minimal activity. Stress can cause cats to become aggressive, to not take care of their babies properly, and, in some instances, even cause extreme behaviors such as cannibalism. Your role is to give the mom cat the type of environment where she can feel comfortable raising her young.

Every household that intends to foster a mom cat with kittens should have a separate room away from the hub of daily activity. A home with no other pets is ideal but, if you do have pets, you should be able to prevent your pets from going up to the door of the fostering room. If you have children or other pets, we recommend both have a mellow personality should you choose to foster a mother cat and kittens.

**Foster home may not foster more than 2 litters (with or without mothers) at the same time; if a foster chooses to foster 2, they must be kept separate at all times.**

**Home Introduction** — Prior to bringing home your foster, you will need to set up the room for your foster mom and babies before you let any of them out of the carrier. The room should have one or two larger “safe spaces” or nests, boxes on their sides, crates, or an empty litter box lined with towels, etc. Mom will want to choose somewhere to keep her kittens.

When you first let mom out, do not pet her or make too many advances. Leave her alone with the kittens to explore her new home. Adult cats can take a while to adjust to new places and mom cats are no exception. They may take a few days or more to come out of hiding.

**Litter Box** — Ideally, the litter box will be as far away from the food and water as possible. It should have regular, unscented clay litter in it, be scooped 2 times a day, and be dumped out once weekly. Once the kittens start using the litter box, you will likely need to add low-sided boxes that are easy for the kittens to get in and out of, and/or clean more frequently.

**Handling and Socialization** — Proceed slowly with any adult cat you do not know — let her come to you, pet her only as much as she is comfortable with, and stop petting at the first signs of discomfort. These signs may include: swishing tail, ears laid back or to the sides, head jerk towards your hand or the area where you were petting her, tensing up, cranky overdrawn meow, moving away, hissing, or growling.

Even a momma cat needs playtime. Make sure to have solo-play toys as well as interactive play sessions with mom. After kittens are 2-3 weeks old, she may show more interest in play.



## CARING FOR YOUR PREGNANT OR NURSING FOSTER CAT CONTINUED

### Mom's Care of the Kittens

For the first few weeks of life, mom should do everything necessary for the kittens. After that, you can start sharing some of the kitten care duties with her, if she is willing! Below is an explanation of the normal care a mom cat gives to her kittens, with an approximate timeline, so you will know what behaviors to expect. All cats are slightly different, with some being more attentive moms than others, but if a mom cat fails to care for her babies in any of these important functions, let us know as soon as possible so they can all be evaluated by medical staff.

**Nursing** — Kittens begin to nurse 1-2 hours after birth. Though born with their eyes closed, they can find their mother by her warmth, and she should make this easier by lying near them on her side.

The nursing/suckling relationship occurs over 3 stages.

- In the beginning, mom initiates each nursing episode, waking the kittens by licking them and then encircling them with her body. After a little searching, kittens quickly latch on.
- The second stage occurs after the second or third week, when the kitten's eyes and ears are functioning and they can interact with the mother both inside and outside the nest. At this stage, the kittens also initiate some of the nursing episodes. The mother generally cooperates by lying down and taking up the nursing position.
- In the third stage, starting at about 5 weeks postpartum, the kittens initiate virtually all nursing. The mother becomes gradually more evasive and uncooperative. Near the end of this stage, the mother begins to wean her kittens by becoming less and less available. In wild cats, this is the time when the mom would begin to provide them with fresh killed prey. You can help in the weaning process by encouraging the babies to eat canned and, later, dry food.

**Grooming** — Kittens receive a lot of grooming and licking from their mothers during their first 2-4 weeks. This anogenital grooming stimulates elimination, and the fecal matter and urine are consumed by the mom. This is effective in keeping the nest and babies clean. Later, as the young are able to leave the nest area, the anogenital licking subsides, and the young deposit feces and urine nearby. At this point, providing low-sided litter boxes nearby will teach them to use the litter box. You generally do not need to intervene at this point, though there is more cleaning as things certainly get messier!

**Weaning** — If all members of your feline family are healthy and well-socialized, there may be no reason to separate babies from mother before 8 weeks. However, sometimes there are medical or behavioral reasons to separate mom from kittens earlier. These include: Mom not taking care of the babies, mom is under socialized or has other behavior concerns, and is not readily handleable by people, or mom is taking care of the babies, but there are medical concerns for the mom or the babies, which warrant separation. If you believe mom should be removed from the babies, contact your mentor prior to doing so.

### Other Important Things to Note:

- About 8% of kittens die from inadequate maternal care; cats should primarily be left alone the first 2 weeks postpartum except to feed, clean, and check in on the babies a few brief times a day as to not cause environmental stress.
- Aggressive behavior towards cats or dogs is very common in mom cats, as they are trying to protect their young. Please do not try to introduce your foster cats to other animals. This can be very stressful and offers no advantages. Mom cat may be interested in exploring other areas of her home, so watch carefully that she does not get loose.
- Occasionally, mother cats have strong protective instincts against humans as well. They may hiss, growl, or strike out if you approach the kittens. Treat all mother cats carefully until you know her very well.

# PAWS AND PRAYERS FOSTER HOME RELEASE FORM

This Release, Indemnification and Hold Harmless Agreement is made between Paws and Prayers, Inc. and the foster parent who has signed this agreement below, in favor of and for the benefit of Paws and Prayers, Inc. and all of its officers, directors, employees and all other persons or entities doing action through them. The agreement between the foster and Paws and Prayers, Inc. is ongoing and Paws and Prayers reserved the right to update policies at any given time. The undersigned has read and agrees to abide by all of the following:

**In consideration of participating as a foster parent the foster parent agrees that they are assuming certain risks and agrees to participate in fostering voluntarily, waiving, releasing and forever discharging any and all claims for damages of property or personal injury.**

**The undersigned is aware there are no guarantees, warranties, or full knowledge of the pets that Paws and Prayers, Inc. acquires as to the health and temperament of the animals.** The undersigned volunteer agrees to accept the animals they foster to their charge as a humanitarian act and agrees to release and hold harmless Paws and Prayers, Inc. from any and all liability or responsibility in connection with fostering a cat or dog obtained by Paws and Prayers, Inc. If the foster has any issues with the foster animal (s)he shall make the mentor aware of these issues immediately. If the foster is unable to continue caring for his/her foster pet(s), (s)he will make arrangements with his/her mentor to move the animal within two weeks time.

**Paws and Prayers, Inc. shall supply food, medical care and supplies for the foster animal.** The undersigned agrees to care for this dog or cat in a responsible manner providing the food, shelter, and medical care as needed, and will restrain this pet appropriately at all times keeping the dog on a leash or in a fenced in yard. All medical treatment shall be directed through Paws and Prayers. In addition, the foster volunteer agrees to carry the appropriate house or rental insurance on their property as required by his/her insurer.

The foster parent agrees to play an active role in finding an adoptive home for any animals in their care, including to but not limited to responding to public inquiries, writing online-listings for the pet, attending adoption events and pre-approving adopters based on Paws and Prayers, Inc. guidelines. **The foster agrees to attend at least two adoption events per month but can attend more if willing.**

Paws and Prayers, Inc. shall do its best to supply all food, medical and pet supplies for the foster dog or cat. If there are additional items needed, the foster volunteer must seek pre-approval for purchase from the Office Manager or the Board; this includes items such as grooming. **Reimbursements will not be made for any purchased supplies without prior consent.**

**The foster parent is held to a level of confidentiality regarding personal information about adopters or other matters that fosters, volunteers, and board members may discuss in meetings and via the group email(s).** If the foster finds any of these matters to impugn the character of the organization or its members, the foster shall bring it to the attention of their mentor, the Board or Office Manager; all of which are still held to the standard of confidentiality. Through the foster's words or actions, the foster shall not place Paws and Prayers in a poor light in the community.

The foster shall grant Paws and Prayers the use of the foster's and the Paws and Prayers cats or dog's image or likeness in connection with the volunteer experience, for the benefit of the organization.

**Finally and very importantly, the foster agrees to read the Paws and Prayers Foster Handbook and policies and procedures and abide by them to their best ability.** Further, if any other questions shall arise, the foster shall go to their mentor, the Board or Office Manager for resolution.

Foster Volunteer Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address (street, city, state, zip): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Foster Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Paws and Prayers Mentor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_