

# Holiday 2023

Dear Friend of the Pet Paw-see,



In this season of joyous giving, we thank all of our volunteers, foster families, and donors for the much-needed gifts of time, compassion, and funds they give throughout the year for the care of the abandoned and abused felines in our community. Many thanks also to the generous people who open their hearts and their homes to give these pets the loving homes they deserve.

## You make beautiful transformations happen.

**Luck was not something that Patricia had known in her short life, not so far, at least.**

On St. Patrick's Day, she arrived on the doorstep of a stranger's house, looking for help. She was in sorry shape and was beginning to give birth to a litter of kittens. We received a call about Patricia's situation and brought her to a vet clinic immediately.

Diagnosed with feline infectious anemia and a severely injured leg, Patricia had an extensive stay at the vet. Her condition required multiple blood transfusions and, once she was well enough to endure the surgery, her hind leg had to be amputated. The amputation required two separate operative sessions. All total, her stay at the vet clinic lasted over a month. Although it certainly must not have felt like it to her, Patricia's life was at a turnaround point, and things were going to get much better for her.

One of our volunteer foster parents took in Patricia while she healed and waited to be adopted. With the removal of her hind leg, she had to relearn her sense of balance. Walking, running, jumping—it all took time for this kitty to move around confidently. And while being in a home was so much better than living outside, Patricia was tentative in her new environment. She was shy. She often hid. But she also felt the need to be comforted, the need for affection. With patience and sympathy, her foster mom drew Patricia out of her shell and soon her shyness simply melted away.

Never having known the comforts of indoor life, everything was new to her. Her foster mom gently worked at brushing the tangles and mats out of her coat. With her sense of balance regained, it was not long before Patricia was romping around the house and even climbing a cat tree to look out the window. It seemed she had adjusted perfectly to the safe life of an indoor kitty. And now all she needed was the love of a "furrever" home. Thankfully, the right family came along and Patricia was officially adopted this September. We are so happy that this sweet cat, found in such unfortunate circumstances, has been given a loving home.

While Patricia is one lucky cat, it was not through mere luck that she was rescued. It was because when she showed up on the doorstep of a stranger's house out on Bootlegger Trail, that person did not look away. She intervened; she called us to help this poor creature. It was because of exemplary veterinary care, made possible by generous donations. It was because we have volunteers who are willing to help the cats in our program. It was because of the woman in our foster program who was willing to open her home and her heart to Patricia. And, it was because of her loving family who chose to adopt her.

**Cat rescue requires so much more than one person or even one organization—it requires a whole community.** It requires that we do not look away when animals in need ask us for our help. Working together, we can all continue to help our homeless cat population.





## Miniature Kitten with a Big Personality

**Shetland was born in a horse barn along with her two sisters. While her siblings, Clydesdale and Appaloosa, grew quickly, Shetland remained tiny. She was half their size. At eight-weeks-old, Shetland was not even a full pound.**

We brought her to Dr. Culver in Helena where Shetland was diagnosed with a severe heart defect. Essentially, she has a sizeable hole in her heart. There is no treatment and, because of the severity of the defect, she is at great risk for developing congestive heart failure. Dr. Culver's prognosis was devastating. Shetland is likely to live only about one year. Perhaps less.

It seemed an impossible situation. We could not in good faith adopt her out because little Shetland may not live long enough to even get adjusted to a new home. We could not put her in a boarding facility because she needed care and she needed a low-stress environment. Normally, our volunteer fosters open their homes temporarily, knowing that the foster kitties will eventually be adopted. What we needed was foster hospice care. Thankfully, Pam, one of our deeply devoted volunteers, welcomed Shetland into her home, providing the "fospice" care that this little one needs.

When Pam first brought her home, she expected Shetland to be meek, shy, maybe frail. Perhaps it would take a long time to earn her trust, to bond with her. Much to Pam's surprise, Shetland bonded to her almost immediately, looking up at her with large, trusting eyes. And, what's more, Shetland soon started acting much like any other kitten. She plays with cat toys, she runs up and down the stairs, she gobbles up the wet cat food, she climbs up onto the dining room table to sneak a lick of cream cheese from Pam's bagel. As small as she is, she even figured out how to climb up the cat tree and go out into the catio to watch the birds and squirrels. And slowly but surely, she has grown these past few months. Shetland has become a very enthusiastic eater and we were happy to learn that she now weighs four pounds.

For such a miniature kitten, her personality is larger than life. We don't know how much longer Shetland will remain with us, but while she is here, we can give her the best life possible. She has shown us how sustaining love can be. Thanks to her foster mom, Shetland gets to have the life she deserves. And, in the process, this tiny little kitten has captured Pam's heart.

Without our foster homes, we would not be able to rescue as many cats as we have this year. We do not have a shelter facility. It is thanks to our volunteer foster parents, those generous souls who open their homes to these cats and kittens that are waiting to be adopted, that we can continue to care for the many homeless felines in our community. It is through patience and understanding that our foster parents help the cats in our care thrive during this transitional period in their lives. By providing a safe and loving environment, a foster home can make all the difference for our kitties. Of course, it is a commitment that requires work and dedication, but it is undoubtedly worth it when you see them finally find their new family.

***If you are interested in becoming a volunteer foster parent, please do not hesitate to get involved.***



**Shetland**



**Calisto**



## A Story of Resilience

**This spring, a family noticed a cat walking along a fence line in Cascade. She was following the fence line as if it were guiding her direction.** Although she was not blind, Callisto was very sick and had such a bad infection that she could not open her eyelids. Thankfully, this family reached out to us and we were able to get Callisto the medical attention that she so desperately needed.

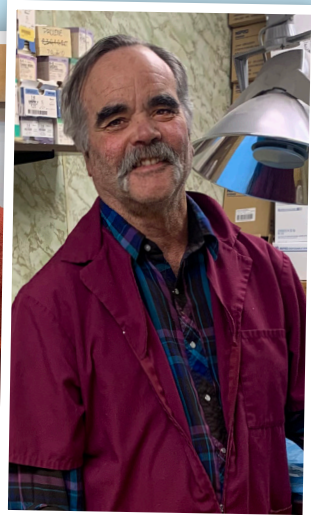
She was extremely malnourished. Weighing roughly four pounds, Callisto was treated but it took some time before she was well enough to be spayed. During her spay surgery, the vet was shocked to discover that this slight, slender cat was pregnant with four kittens. Sadly, three of the litter were not alive and the fourth was helped to pass. Had she given birth to them outdoors, she would not have been well enough to nurse and care for her kittens.

In addition to our wonderful volunteer fosters, we are grateful to our local partners that provide temporary housing for the cats in our care. And Callisto has been to all of them. She first stayed at PetSmart, and soon after, she came to Petco. Next it was Happy Tails, and after that, she returned to PetSmart.

Callisto is still patiently waiting for her special person to come along. All throughout this difficult journey, Callisto has been such a sweet and calm cat, adjusting easily to each new situation. She simply loves every person she meets and she is friendly with her fellow felines at the boarding facilities. She is, however, very fearful of dogs. We know that Callisto will be the perfect fit for someone out there eventually. Until then, she will remain in our care and serve as a reminder of resilience. She has taught us all how to be strong in the face of difficulty, to handle change with grace, and to be patient even when it feels that you have been waiting forever.

Through no fault of their own, these cats in need often find themselves in the most dire of circumstances. Somewhere along the way, some person failed them. Thanks to donors like you, we are giving Callisto a second chance for a life filled with love.





**No matter how many cats we rescue every year, we cannot even begin to fulfil our mission if the homeless cat population is multiplying faster than our rescue operation can handle.**

**Please support our clinics with your year-end donation!**



**this is NOT the answer!**

## A lucky litter in the garbage heap



It is difficult to imagine a place more inhospitable than a landfill. And yet, that is where Momma Ayra was living, struggling to survive as she searched for food scraps. Thankfully, a kindhearted landfill worker named Amy spotted her among the piles of trash. Amy could not bear to see this cat suffering in such a grim place. With gentle care, she scooped her up and reached out to us.

*As this family found out, it's harder to find good homes for kittens than most people think.*

Momma Ayra was brought to a local vet clinic. There they discovered she was a nursing mother. Not only had she been trying to sustain herself at this landfill, she had been taking care of kittens, too. It was clear that the kittens would not survive without their mother. So, she was taken back to the landfill where she led Amy to her kittens. Momma Ayra walked to a hidden



corner and worked her way down into a slight crevice where her babies were awaiting her return. This tucked-away home amidst the trash proved too narrow for human hands to reach. Amy was unable to access the kittens without putting them or herself in potential danger. So, she decided to coax them out. Amy imitated Momma Ayra's calls and softly meowed until the tiny kittens began to emerge. One by one, Momma Ayra's offspring came forward and she was then able to scoop up the three kittens and their mother.

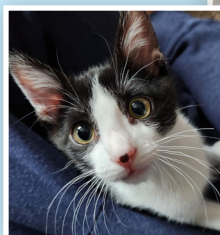
We lovingly call Momma Ayra and her kittens the "landfill kids." After a trip to the vet clinic, and a temporary stay with one of our foster families, Ayra and two of her kittens, Zuko and Sade, are waiting to be adopted. They endured so much, surviving in such a bleak place. We owe them a better life.

It seemed clear from the start, a cat does not just end up at a landfill, someone dumped this momma cat off there. Many of these situations like Momma Ayra's could have been avoided by

a simple phone call to an animal shelter, a rescue group, or even just asking a friend to help. Yet we often see cats who have been dumped—abandoned for no reason other than they were deemed unimportant. *Our feline companions should never be thrown out like yesterday's trash.* Through education we can make progress, and prevent these sad situations. It is through education that we can find our humanity by treating animals humanely.

Our first step in education begins with the importance of spaying and neutering. Momma Ayra's story had a happy ending, but there are so many others that do not. Unaltered cats that are no longer wanted inevitably end up making more unwanted cats. And that cycle continues. It does not take long for things to get out of control. That's why every cat we adopt out is already fixed.

**That's also why we are addressing the overpopulation problem head-on by putting on weekly, low-income spay/neuter clinics at Animal Medical Clinic with Dr. Tim Gilligan and a dedicated crew of volunteers.** We have fixed 428 cats in the 13 months we've been doing these clinics. Your donations make this possible! And it is now through your generous support that we will be able to continue these clinics, so crucial in our efforts to decrease the number of homeless and unwanted cats in Great Falls and beyond.



**Zuko**



**Ayra**



**Sade**

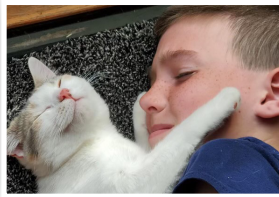




## LOOKING FOR A FELINE FRIEND?

We are at the Great Falls  
Petco & PetSmart stores on most  
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## Feline facts and figures: January 1– October 31, 2023

Thanks to your support, we took in **163 cats and kittens**.

In addition to the routine spay/neuters, shots, and microchips, many of our cats needed additional medical care such as amputations and critical care after accidents, resulting in **vet costs of \$62,803!** We spent an additional **\$18,473** on **346 spay/neuter surgeries** for low-income pet parents.

With the limited number of foster homes, and so many cats and kittens, we have to put many in boarding. Even though we are blessed to partner with great boarding facilities, it is still costly, with **our year's boarding costs totaling \$6,897**. We are now housing cats at Petco again and are grateful for the dedicated volunteers who clean there daily.

In spite of these challenges, we continued to persevere.

**We found adoptive homes for 57 cats and 55 kittens!**

**No matter what we face in the upcoming year, we are determined to continue making a difference, one cat at a time.** It is through the support of our generous community that we are able to continue our life-saving efforts. We truly appreciate every donation, big and small, because every penny helps cats and kittens live better lives.

**Whatever way you choose to support us—whether by adopting, fostering, volunteering, donating, or giving to our Amazon wish list, we thank you and wish you the blessings of the season this holiday.**

For the animals,

Leslie Raynes,  
Pet Paw-see Founder

You can  
donate an  
item from  
our Amazon  
wish list.

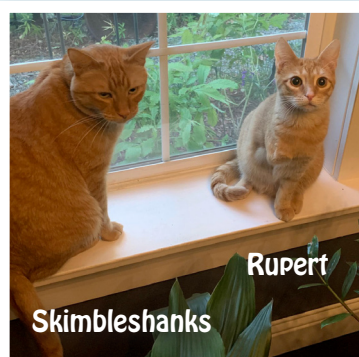


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## One of our happy tales ... your gifts make these stories happen!



"My husband Garrett and I first saw Rupert at PetSmart. He was in his 'cubicle' and came hopping up to the glass. Rupert had to have his front leg amputated due to an injury when he was just four months old. When we saw him, he started rolling on his back and stretching for us with his front paw, which melted our hearts. We adopted him and now he has five 'brothers' who have accepted him as one of the family. He is a happy, energetic little guy who is not letting his disability slow him down. He still wants to jump up where his big brothers are or chase them around the house. He loves to be outside in the patio or watch birds and squirrels from the windows in the house, too!" – Kari

