

CRITTER CHATTER MAGAZINE



NEWS FROM THE
SPCA OF WAKE COUNTY

ISSUE 3 | SUMMER 2024

DO GOOD HAVE FUN VOLUNTEER

Pictured: Lawson the puppy benefits from volunteerism.

PAGE 8

LET COMPASSION LEAD THE WAY

PAGE 4-5

PUTTING THE CAT IN CATAMARAN

PAGES 2 & 3

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nonprofit tax ID # 56-0891732



ABOUT US: Founded in Raleigh in 1967, SPCA Wake is an independent, 501(c)(3) animal welfare organization. Funded by charitable support,

we provide vital community programs that pick up where local government agencies leave off. We work in 59 NC counties through collaborative partnerships that save pets and help people.

We are not affiliated with the ASPCA and we do not receive tax dollars or government funds. We are supported by caring donors like YOU.

SPCA Wake holds a 4-star rating (highest rating possible) from Charity Navigator – the nonprofit sector's premier trust indicator.



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RIGHT: Rescued from the talons of a hawk by a good Samaritan (pictured here holding Catfish), Catfish needed a refuge to regain her strength.

OPPOSITE PAGE: It takes a special kind of pet to live aboard a catamaran — but Catfish is no ordinary cat!



FROM THE CLUTCHES OF A HAWK TO SAILING THE HIGH SEAS

How One Brave Kitten Found Her Forever Family

The urgent call came in one afternoon – *“I just rescued a kitten being chased by a hawk outside my apartment. But I don’t know cats, and I’m leaving town in a couple days...can you please help?”* While we receive many calls from good Samaritans who have found pets needing help, the unique urgency of this one caught our attention.

Hours later, the kitten who narrowly escaped harm at the claws of a preying hawk was safe in the SPCA’s care. It was immediately evident she was both scrappy (likely having survived on trash from the nearby dumpster where she was found) and extraordinarily calm (she rested contentedly in her somewhat confounded finder’s arms at intake, perhaps aware that sticking close to people would keep her safe).

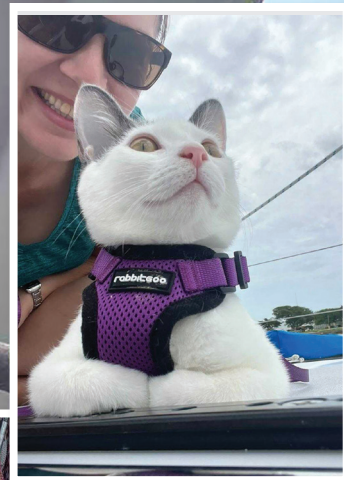
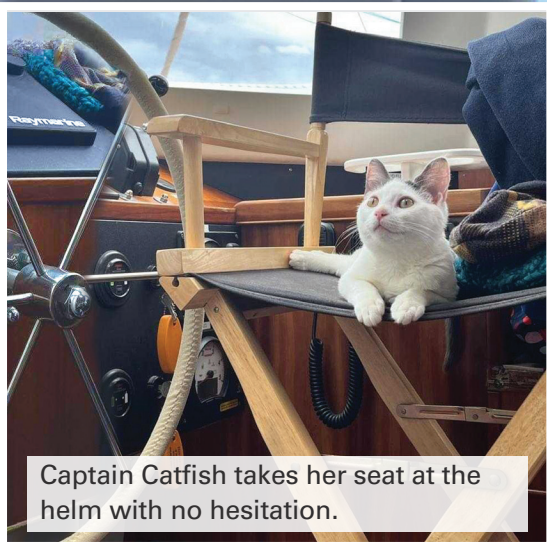
Once in the care of an SPCA

foster caregiver, the resilience and ease with which this plush little kitten, now dubbed “Catfish,” navigated every new situation was striking. We had a feeling she was going to make an extra special connection with her future adopter.

A Family Missing a Piece

More than 100 miles away, a couple living aboard their sailing catamaran with their beloved dog Gopes wondered if it was time to add to their crew – still grieving the loss a year earlier of their sea-savvy Tabby cat Boe. They knew it would take a really special cat to live aboard – it had to be social, confident, and calm in changing conditions. That the cat also be affectionate and adventurous, just as their beloved Boe was, would be only a bonus, not a requirement.

Their living situation was, of course, unique, and would



ABOVE: Catfish inspects the ropes and sails before hitting the high seas.

BELOW: Catfish got her sea legs right away, and had no problem finding the best lookouts onboard!



take one really unique feline. It occurred to us pretty quickly that we may have just the co-captain they were hoping for – now, we just needed them to meet.

Daniel and Catherine made the drive to SPCA Wake after Catfish had time to be vaccinated, spayed, and given a clean bill of health following her life on the streets. When we peeked into the room to see how the meeting was going, the scene spoke for itself – Catfish lay upside down in Catherine’s lap, purring and making air biscuits. As we suspected, she was instantly right at home.

Putting the Cat in Catamaran
Catfish’s transition to life aboard the Allure was just as seamless. With all the necessary precautions in place, she adjusted to life on the waters of the North Carolina coast as though she had always been there. Gopes the dog, embraced the kitten’s arrival with immediate affection. As Catherine reports: “Catfish is the self-declared captain on a 42ft sailing

catamaran, and is the perfect boat cat. We are so grateful to SPCA Wake for bringing us together. She loves exploring the sights and smells of new anchorages and meeting people.

Her favorite activities are snuggling and chasing birds off the decks. She’s looking forward to adding more countries to her sailing resume this coming year!”

Sailing Off into the Sunset

This love story is special not just because we were able to help usher this wily little kitten into her new life but because it speaks to the very heart of the work we do here at SPCA Wake – work that you make possible every day.

For the broader impact we are able to make on a pet-loving community, we are equally as moved by each individual story of a family made complete and a precious life saved. Thank you for being a part of extraordinary stories just like this – Catfish’s adventure has only just begun.

YOUR GIFTS IN ACTION

FIRST TASTE OF FREEDOM



Community Impact Director and Animal Behaviorist, Molly Stone-Sapir, evaluates Braham during his first time outdoors in years.

BRAHAM, BEFORE

BRAHAM, AFTER



Can you believe this is the same dog just weeks later? Medicine and foster care have done wonders for Braham's skin and spirit!

In the quiet outskirts of our community, an enormous effort recently took place to rescue dozens of cats and dogs from confinement and squalor in a heartbreaking hoarding case in Johnston County.

SPCA Wake's intake team and staff veterinarian, Dr. Zurlinden, in conjunction with local law enforcement, responded to a desperate distress call from an elderly man who realized he could no longer care for his declining wife and their more than 40 cats and dogs.



Ricotta, Ralcetta, and Romano are friends who shared a cage in their former home, so we made sure they could stay together at the SPCA.

As soon as we entered the home, we realized that, besides a few small dogs, all the animals lived within the confines of stacked cages that filled the would-be dining room. Cats paced wildly across their three-foot quarters, little dogs scurried around our feet, and two larger dogs watched us with sullen eyes from their dark crates in the corner.

Braham, one of the crated dogs, is nine years old. According to the husband, Braham only leaves his crate twice a day for a brief bathroom break on the back deck. **Francesca, the dog next to him, never leaves her crate at all.**

Nearby, Earl, a 13-year-old orange cat with huge cheeks, was so unaccustomed to human touch that it took three people to coax him from his small cage into a transport carrier.

A Heartbreaking Situation for Everyone

As the husband walked us around the room, he told us each animal's name and story, punctuated by heartfelt professions of gratitude. His wife suffers from dementia, and her condition had declined rapidly over the past year.

He explained that as her well-being worsened, so did his, and he recognized that their animals' conditions had become unacceptable. It was singularly important to him that their animals would all be safe in SPCA Wake's care.

It couldn't have been easy for this couple to welcome us into their home, knowing that it came with the possibility of judgment or shame. **But he made the brave choice to ask for help anyway**, and because of that, these animals got help sooner rather than later.

Back at the SPCA, it took all hands on deck to medically examine and begin treating each pet individually. Our medical team found chronic infections, rotting teeth, broken bones, and advanced-stage mange plaguing many of the cats and dogs. Providing these pets the relief and happiness they deserve is no small feat, but your support came through when they needed it most.

Heartbreak Transformed into Hope

Over the next several days, there were many special moments we won't soon forget: Braham's gentle smile during his first bath in years; the rumbling purrs from Earl and all the other frightened cats who came to realize they were safe; and the way Francesca took off running, tennis ball in mouth, when we brought her out into our play yard for the first time.

Your support through this case has touched every person and animal involved. The former caretakers were met with compassion and open hearts.

Our own team was deeply moved and grateful for the ability to show these pets love and witness their transformations before our eyes. **And for the animals, each new day since their rescue has been the best day of their entire lives.** Many of them are already settled into new homes where they are pampered and adored.

Consider the Power of Your Generosity

Your compassion and support are the bedrock upon which stories of hope like this are built. You are a lifeline for those who cannot speak for themselves, and we are profoundly grateful that because of you, every animal can receive the care and love they deserve.



Earl's big cheeks made an impression on everyone!



Dr. Zurlinden takes note of Earl the cat's medical needs.



Edna watches from her crate as the SPCA team carries animals to their rescue.



After years of only living in a crate, Francesca is thrilled to have free run of the SPCA yard.

RISING FROM THE ASHES

Despite all she's been through, Faith has nothing but love for everyone she meets!



Faith was a trooper through the rigorous skin treatments.

One early morning in June, a staff member at an SPCA partner shelter in Warren County found a sweet grey dog tied to a fence post near the entrance of the shelter. Extensive, bright pink burns covered the entirety of her back. She needed help and fast.

That's when the SPCA intake team received the urgent plea to transfer her into the care of SPCA Wake. **And because of your ongoing support, we leaped into action.**

Within a few hours, she was in our care. Based on the look in her eyes, our staff decided to name her

Faith. Even though she couldn't verbalize it, it was clear she knew we were there to help.

Once the shock from the extent of her wounds faded, our minds automatically tried to make sense of it all. Our veterinary team was able to decipher that the burns along her back were potentially chemical, acid, or oil burns.

Her resilience inspired the staff not to give up.

Though in pain, Faith's tail never stopped wagging. Our veterinary team created a 3-pronged treatment plan to prevent infection, reduce inflammation, and promote the healing of the burns. The process was slow, but Faith's smile never faded. Even when it was uncomfortable, she willingly let our team apply topical antibiotic cream used to prevent and treat bacterial infections in burns.

Within a month of her rescue, Faith's story caught the attention of a lovely couple who wanted to give her the life she always deserved. And with the wounds healing nicely, it was time for her to set off on her next adventure — this time with a family who loves her dearly.

We want to express our deepest gratitude to you, our supporters. *Your generosity and compassion are the true heroes in Faith's story.* Her treatment and adoption wouldn't have been possible without you.



Faith's smile says it all! She and her new family were a match meant to be.



Hashbrown has shown us just how resilient pets are in the face of uncertainty.

WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS, BE A HASHBROWN

We could never imagine the fear and terror

Hashbrown felt as she dangled from a split rail fence by her back leg. It's hard to imagine ourselves in her place. So, we often

choose not to think about it. And to be quite honest with you, based on Hashbrown's handling of the entire event, it's easy to believe she would rather forget the whole ordeal and move along too. What fence?



A split-rail fence, similar to the one where Hashbrown was found dangling by her leg.

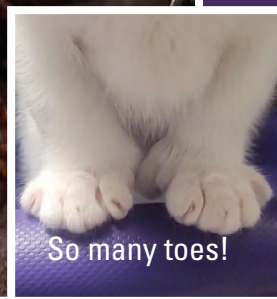
You see, moments after she was rescued by a good Samaritan while being rushed to the emergency vet, she sat patiently on her rescuer's lap — purring. Yes, purring. Though her ankle was completely dislocated, her skin torn away, and she was unable to stand up without assistance, **she was purring and stretching while “making biscuits” or kneading with her paws (a sign of affection and comfort for cats) during a thorough veterinary exam.**

That day, Hashbrown decided to leave the pain, risks, and fear of the unknown at that fence post — and she never looked back.

Her leg was broken beyond repair and needed to be amputated to give her the best quality of life. **And to her, whatever life that looked like, she was going to live every moment with maximum joy and optimism!** Your generous donations gave this bubbly ginger cat the second chance she deserved. Thank you for making the sparkle in her eyes even brighter.



What Porter lacks in eyes, he makes up for in toes!



So many toes!

WHAT HAS ONE EYE AND 12 FRONT TOES?

One can hear the “thump thump thump” a mile away as Porter prances down the halls. His feet are outrageously full of toes. His paws look like gigantic mittens! They are so eye-catching that it's easy to overlook the fact that he only has one eye.

Porter was found by a good Samaritan and rushed to our partner shelter in Scotland County, which took him in as an after-hours emergency. His eye was so swollen he couldn't blink. With pain medication on board, the veterinary team at SPCA Wake assessed if the eye could be saved. Would his quality of life be better without it?

Due to the nature of the infection and injury, the answer was an overwhelming yes. Pets, especially young ones, typically recover and adapt quickly to this type of surgery. And with paws the size of his, you can be assured he “bounced back” with vigor and enthusiasm! And bounce he did — over and over again, chasing his favorite mouse toy up and down the halls of his new home.

Thank you for being there for Porter. Your support was integral to his recovery. He may have lost his eye, but in doing so, he found his true self!

DO GOOD. HAVE FUN. VOLUNTEER.

Volunteers are absolutely critical to achieving the mission of the SPCA of Wake County. From our board of directors, to daily shelter operations, to community outreach and marketing, *volunteers are active in every aspect of SPCA Wake's work.*

Now, a technology upgrade is helping SPCA Wake to re-energize its volunteer program in order to better serve the needs of both the animals in our care and people in the community. With a renewed focus on recruiting, training, and retaining volunteers, the SPCA is looking to expand the volunteer base and increase our lifesaving impact.

"SPCA Wake is at a place where it needs more volunteers," says Pam Schmalenberger, Director of Volunteer Services. "Volunteering is a great way to give in your community, plus it helps people to do good by volunteering your time for something you believe in."

How to Get Involved

New online training options are making the volunteer program more accessible to more people. For new volunteers or any current volunteers who have been inactive for six months or longer, the first step is to register online at spcawake.org/volunteer. We do ask you to commit to volunteer 48 hours over 12 months with at least one shift worked every six months.

A Phased Rollout

The new program is rolling out in phases, with the initial focus on core shelter duties, as well as tasks helping our community impact program. Currently, only people aged 18 and older are eligible to volunteer, but opportunities for youth are being developed.

The re-energized volunteer program aims to create an even more positive and rewarding experience for volunteers while also increasing the impact they can have on the lives of the animals and people in need.

Begin, or renew, your volunteer journey today.

Visit: spcawake.org/volunteer

Contact: Pam Schmalenberger, Dir. of Volunteer Services
volunteer@spcawake.org | 919-532-2085



FOSTER CARE CHANGES LIVES

Above: When Lawson, a 2.5-month-old puppy, came to SPCA Wake, his eyelids turned inwards, making life very uncomfortable for him. Lawson needed delicate eye surgery **and time and care to recover.**

Fortunately for him, SPCA Wake foster care volunteer Renee was ready to step up for him. Lawson spent 28 days in Renee's care, recovering from his eyelid surgery in the comfort of a home.

"We have fostered pets through SPCA Wake since moving to Wake County over two years ago," said Renee. "The caring staff, their compassion for the animals and support of fosters is absolutely unbeatable! We loved every single one of our 31 foster furbabies and this made room for 31 more homeless furbabies in local shelters."

Being a foster caregiver to pets in need is one of our specialized and most needed volunteer roles. At any given time, over 200 SPCA pets are in volunteer foster homes.

Foster care affords the SPCA the chance to increase our pet capacity and offer high-intake animal shelters an instant relief valve from shelter overcrowding. Foster care also helps protect the most vulnerable pets – very young kittens and puppies are routinely sent directly into the foster care program.

Currently, we are in great need of foster homes for adult dogs and mother dogs with nursing puppies.

Wondering if becoming a foster parent is for you? Read the FAQ at spcawake.org/foster. *(This role does not require the standard volunteer training.)*

Visit: spcawake.org/foster

Contact: Shelby or Jenna, Foster Care Coordinators
foster@spcawake.org