



Cat Tales

THE NEWSLETTER OF HOMELESS CAT NETWORK

AUTUMN 2024



Abandoned —and Rescued

When a young mother and her babies were abandoned, HCN volunteers teamed up to save them.

Who abandoned a mama cat and her two babies under a staircase in South San Francisco? We will never know. When the cats were discovered by Homeless Cat Network volunteers, their plight inspired people to help.



Mama Clove



Paprika



Pepper



Who found them: Maria

I had started my usual Friday community cat feeding rounds. I glanced over to the outdoor staircase next to where I'd parked my car: I saw a cat feeder in the small space underneath it. I took a closer look — and saw a small shelter, too!

I heard meowing nearby. I knew something was odd! The meowing stopped. I left a note by the new feeder, and I let the weekend feeders know to be on the lookout for a cat.

Saturday's feeder, Paulina, didn't see anything at first. Then she checked the small space under the staircase: There was a dilute tortie right there, who was friendly! And in the small shelter, Paulina saw two kittens!

After double-checking the area for any additional kittens, Paulina scooped up the little family in a carrier and brought them home, where the start of their good life began!

Who rescued them: Paulina

My partner and I were preparing to move across the country in a month. Nevertheless, I wasn't going to leave this mama and kittens on the street.

The first few days, the family mostly ate and slept. One can imagine they were probably exhausted from the stress of being abandoned outdoors.

We named the mother Clove. She clearly cared for her babies deeply. We noticed

that Clove also liked her "me time," so we would give her breaks from her babies. She showed us that she loved to cuddle, purr, and make biscuits.

We named her two daughters Paprika and Pepper. Pepper loved to snuggle with us. Paprika was the boss, smart and adventurous. As a group, we called them the Spice Girls.

As our cross-country move loomed, HCN found a new foster home for them. It was difficult and sad to say goodbye, but I was very grateful for all the support HCN was able to give to the family, and to me.



Who fostered them first: Sarah

I almost didn't foster the Spice Girls, because of a busy summer travel schedule. When my upcoming trip was cancelled, I was able to provide the temporary landing spot they needed while Paulina prepared to move. I was elated! (There is nothing I love more than kittens!)

Maria brought Mama Clove and her kittens to me. I knew it was hard for her to let them go – rescuing the little family really tugged on her heartstrings!

I fell in love with them quickly, too. Mama Clove was the sweetest girl. Her babies were full of that intoxicating, silly kitten energy. I loved having them, and they loved testing out all of my cat toys and cat towers!

Naomi came to meet (and hopefully adopt!) Mama Clove. I mentioned that I was leaving soon, and HCN needed to find a foster home for the babies. Naomi didn't even hesitate: She said she would take them all, and work with HCN to adopt out the kittens. We packed the little cat family and their supplies into her car, and off they went!

One of the best parts of volunteering with HCN is that a love of cats connects you to other incredibly kind, caring humans. It was a joy and an honor to be part of the volunteer team that helped this little family in their journey to their 'forever' homes!

I went to Sarah's house to meet Clove, and I fell in love with her and her kittens. (Who wouldn't?!) I jumped at the chance to take them all home and try my hand at fostering kittens.

The Spice Girls quickly made themselves at home in our spare room. Although it was a lot of work taking care of them along with everyone else, my human baby was delighted with the furry babies. Watching all of them play together broke the cuteness meter.

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Keeping them all crossed my mind more than once. Then a wonderful family applied for both kittens, and it was clear they were going to a home that would adore them. I was able to let go.



I worried Clove might be anxious once her kittens left, but she happily gave up her responsibilities. Since then she has enjoyed playing, cuddling, and trying to steal scraps of chicken from our dinners.

I recently took Clove to our vet for her first checkup, and she was very annoyed. I think she thought she was moving again. After we returned, she spent the entire afternoon cuddling with me and purring. I know she has shown her appreciation for everyone who has helped her and her babies. I think she's extra-happy now that she knows she has her forever home.

Fosterer and adopter: Naomi

I was grieving the loss of a cat companion when I saw an email about Clove and her kittens. With a household of two dogs, a human baby, and one shy cat, I was wishing for a snuggly kitty like the one I lost. Clove's outgoing personality sounded like it could be a good match.

Clove and her kittens inspired HCN volunteers to team up! If you love animals and like working with people too, email info@homelesscatnetwork.com to learn how you can help rescue kitties.



Nougat: Sweet? Yes. Fun? Oh yes!

We can't believe this special kitty is still looking for a home!

By Jess Miller



Nougat is happy and friendly!

It's true: Nougat, one of the newest arrivals at Homeless Cat Network's Socialization Center, is as sweet and fun as her name. Only 15 months young, Nougat is happy, playful, and friendly. Anyone looking for a "perfect" kitty should put Nougat on their list!

All of the cats at the Socialization Center have their stories. Nougat's story began as an unspayed female who started having kittens, probably when she was still a kitten herself. She was found living among a group of tame strays in South San Francisco.

HCN rescuers stepped in to help. Nougat was spayed and brought to the Socialization Center.

Unlike some Socialization Center kitties, who need tender care and patience to win their trust, Nougat is ready for her forever home now! Nougat loves to interact with both the volunteers and the other cats at the Center. When she's ready to play, Nougat goes crazy for tunnels, string toys, and little mice.

Nougat is a little cat with a big personality — who clearly hasn't let her rough past get the better of her. She would thrive in a lively household. She is a precious girl.



Even a perfect kitty like Nougat can have a hard time being adopted because she's no longer a tiny kitten. Please tell your friends about Nougat and the other wonderful kitties at the Socialization Center.

Donate

As an all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) non-profit rescue organization, our work is supported entirely by donations from caring people like you.

- \$50 pays for basic medications.
- \$100 subsidizes vaccinations and spay/neuter.
- \$250 feeds kitties in colonies and at our shelter.
- \$500 funds veterinary care for rescued cats.

Go to homelesscatnetwork.com/donations.html.

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Volunteer

- **Fostering:** Open your home to a cat or kittens.
- **Professional help:** Vet/vet tech, PR/marketing, CPA, attorney—anyone with special talents!
- **Rescue:** We'll teach you how to humanely trap community cats.
- **Colony feeder:** Bring food and water to a colony of fixed community cats.
- **Cat socializer:** Care for rescued cats at our shelter.
- **Social Media:** Help us communicate HCN's mission and promote adoptable cats.

Your Kindness Helps!



Recycle Bottles and Cans for the Cats!

HCN volunteer Judy H. collects CRV aluminum cans and plastic bottles and cashes them in for the cats. You can help! Collect your empty plastic bottles and aluminum cans (no glass please) with the CRV or Ca Cash labels and schedule a drop-off by contacting judyh@homelesscatnetwork.com or (650) 508-9013 x5.



TNR Tales: Creekside Kitties



A local resident told Holly about a mom and kittens at the creek.

This is the story of one of HCN’s active TNR projects, which stretches along a mile of creekland in East Palo Alto. This is also a story about HCN volunteer Holly, who has TNR’d more than a dozen cats from this area, just in 2024 alone.

Holly first heard several years ago from a resident named Jess about cats living at the creek. Holly told her cat-loving friend Mark about them, and he immediately offered to help. She told him where he could find her on Saturday afternoon: “Trying to catch a gorgeous family: Mom and six kittens.”

Mark joined her on Saturday. Climbing around the steep banks of the creek, and avoiding poison oak, they set up a couple of traps. They attracted a lot of humans — folks coming over to tell them about other cats they'd seen — but no cats.

They kept at it, training the cats to eat in the trap, and communicating with local residents to pause feeding while they trapped. At last, success: They caught four of the kittens, which were placed in foster care.

With just two more kittens and the mom left to trap, tragedy struck: Jess's husband found one kitten hit by a car. A week later, Jess herself caught the mom and the sixth kitten together in the same trap. They, too, went into foster care.

The story continued, as residents stepped forward with more cat sightings. Holly TNR'd six cats from the bank of the creek, as well as from the apartments facing the creek. A few big males were trapped, neutered, and returned as well.

Holly even helped trap a cat whose front leg was caught in its collar. The cat's microchip allowed for a heartwarming reunion with its person.

While walking along the creek one March night, Holly spotted eyes under a truck. She set a trap, and caught a pregnant female. Because a female cat's descendants can account for the births of several hundred kittens in just a few years, rescuers were especially relieved with this successful TNR. And the work continues, to save more lives.



The mama cat, Maya, was fostered along with her kittens.



One of the big tomcats TNR'd at this creekside project.

Thanks to teamwork between new friends and old; thanks to caring residents who look out for animals in their communities; HCN volunteers are able to focus their efforts and make the greatest possible impact. Your donation helps us continue this essential work!



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Winter is coming...with more kittens

We still need food, litter — and holiday foster homes



Credit: Shutterstock

In California, “kitten season” extends well into fall and winter. We still find kittens in November and December — and it’s harder to take them in, because so many foster homes travel around the holidays.

More kittens means more food, litter, and medical care, all the way through the new year.

Your donation can help keep us going through the fall and holiday periods.

Are you staying home for the holidays, or do you know someone who is? Please help us rescue more kitties by opening your home to a litter of kittens, or a gentle adult cat.

Thank you for your support! You are helping us make a difference.

Please email info@homelesscatnetwork.com for more information.