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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 24, 2020

Shelter In Need of Volunteers to Foster and Adopt
Bottle-Fed Kittens, Working Cats

Kitten Foster Volunteers Needed

The Lafayette Animal Shelter and Care Center (LASCC) needs foster volunteers to care for orphaned kittens that require specialized care. During kitten season, from April to October, it's common for shelters to receive an influx of orphaned kittens which puts a strain on the kittens as well as the staff.

Shelter Director Shelley Delahoussaye explained, "The shelter environment is not ideal for newborn kittens. They need to be bottle fed, kept warm and require constant love and attention. Their age makes them more susceptible to disease, stress and respiratory issues, which are all common in a shelter. Our staff doesn't have the time necessary to properly care for the kittens, which is why we ask for volunteers to open their homes."

LASCC does everything possible to set up the kittens and volunteers for success. Volunteers receive hands-on training, bottles, milk and a how-to manual for reference. Volunteers also have the support of other trained volunteers through a private Facebook group when questions arise.

According to Delahoussaye, volunteers are essential during kitten season, "We have over 75 kittens in foster care, some are still at the age to be bottle fed. Volunteers make a huge difference. If we didn't have them, many of these kittens probably wouldn't make it."

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Foster volunteer Ashlyn Broussard said she was interested in fostering, but thought it would be too difficult with her busy schedule. After caring for a litter, she discovered just the opposite. “We have been drawn to kittens and bottle baby kittens and they are incredible souls. They have taught me and my family so much. I feel so blessed to love on these kittens and give them a comfy place to rest,” she said.

The shelter has a several kittens remaining, but Delahoussaye is certain she will receive more. During the stay-at-home order in March, more than 50 cats and dogs were placed into foster homes, in part because more people were home with time on their hands, and all were adopted within a month. With many people still working from home, Delahoussaye is hoping more volunteers will be part of the program. “We like to keep people on deck to sign up. Even if none are available now, at the drop of a hat, we can receive dozens of kittens.”

Those interested in volunteering as a kitten foster are encouraged to contact the shelter at: LASCC@lafayettela.gov.

Cats Clocking In Working Cat Program

Since the Lafayette Animal Shelter & Care Center and WildCat Foundation/SpayNation launched the Cats Clocking In Working Cat program in March 2019, 141 unwanted cats have been hired to patrol businesses and residences throughout the Parish.

The program offers an all-natural pest control solution, free of poisons and traps and matches cats that are unsuitable for a traditional adoption with business and home owners. “We often receive cats that come off the street, and they’re used to living outdoors. They’re resourceful and may not be a typical adoption candidate, but they deserve to live and need a place to reside and thrive,” Delahoussaye said.

In exchange for food, water, shelter and basic medical care, the cats protect their new home from rodents. Kathryn Reaux was one of the first to request a cat through the program and is satisfied with her employee. “Our working cat, Roz, has done a fantastic job keeping rodents off of our property. Even with sugar cane fields nearby, we haven’t seen a mouse in over a year.”

Working cats are employed where pest control is needed such as barns, farms, factories, warehouses, stores and private property. Cats are spayed or neutered, microchipped, vaccinated, and ear tipped at no cost to the adopter. Typically, working cats are adopted in pairs to keep each other company.

Adopting a working cat, in part, helps the shelter to reach and maintain no-kill status, meaning 90 percent of the animals that enter the shelter leave alive through adoption, owners reclaiming them, transferring them to rescue partners or the Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program.

Year-to-date, the shelter has an 88 percent live outcome rate. Delahoussaye added, “Our staff and volunteers are dedicated to every animal in our care, but we need the help of our community to obtain this goal. Adopting, fostering, spaying and neutering pets are sure-fire ways to not only achieve no-kill status, but maintain it.”

To sign up for Cats Clocking In, email the shelter at LASCC@lafayettega.gov.

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