

[Feature](#)

## Clear Creek on a mission to help homeless cats



By Nichole Smith

### Homer Tribune

For the last few years, Clear Creek Cat Rescue volunteers and Judy Price, coordinator of Clear Creek Cat Rescue have been taking in homeless cats from the Homer area and helping the cats find forever homes through temporary foster care. However, most of the homeless cats, either because they are strays or owner surrendered, are fostered outside of Homer and Clear Creek Cat Rescue wants to change that.

Kevyn Jalone of Homer Animal Friends, who works with Clear Creek said, The idea for fostering animals was born as a solution to the problem of overcrowding in animal shelters. Many shelters, no matter how dedicated their staff, often lack the resources and people to give individual attention to all the animals in their care.

Clear Creek Cat Rescue relies on its network of foster families to take in the homeless cats until they are adopted. One of the biggest struggles is to have a foster home available. Price said, we don t rescue a cat unless we have a foster home for it to go. Price may take a cat that is rescued in Homer as far as the Central Peninsula or Anchorage/Mat-Su areas and places them in established foster bases. Soldotna, Kenai, Wasilla and Anchorage all have foster bases but Homer does not. Price said having a foster base in Homer would keep the cats that are rescued here in Homer, making it more likely and easier for people and families here to adopt.

As soon as a homeless cat is rescued they go straight into foster placement. Because of the lack of a foster base in Homer, many of the cats leave the area, such was the case of Gizmo, a year and half old female calico.

Gizmo is one of three cats that Price rescued from the Homer area and transported to Kenai last month. Gizmo has since been adopted but had there been a foster home in Homer, she likely would have remained in Homer. Currently Price is one of only two foster homes in Homer and is at present fostering two kitten siblings, Easy and Della, who just became ready for adoption.

Clear Creek Cat Rescue relies on donations in order to rescue and foster the cats. Cats and kittens may come to the rescue sick or injured. Clear Creek Cat Rescue pays for all the medical needs for the foster cats. In the case of Easy and Della, to neuter, spay, microchip and vaccinate the siblings the cost came to over \$400.

While people can make donations to the rescue; donations can be made directly to Homer Veterinary Clinic, which also works with the rescue, to help defray the cost of the necessary medical attention. In addition to monetary assistance, the rescue always needs help with everything from transporting cats, website help, social media, accounting, and data entry. Being a foster home has many gratifying benefits and not just for the cats. Providing a nurturing and caring temporary home and knowing you are helping a cat find a forever home is rewarding, said Jalone. Becoming a foster parent can also serve as a try out for adopting a pet. You can learn a lot about having a cat in your home and it may help you decide if you want to adopt, said Jalone.

Acclimating a cat to a home environment, such as living with children, other cats, or dogs, allows for discovery of their natural personalities and gives the cats a chance to de-stress in a normal environment and helps the rescue learn what their best home environment should be. This is something that is not possible inside a shelter, said Price. Just as Clear Creek provides medical care for the rescues and foster cats, the foster home provides not just the food and litter but also the love,

[3 captures](#)

28 Jan 2016 - 26 May 2016

When a foster home is found, then the cat can be rescued from its location to the home where it will receive medical care if necessary, vaccinations, spayed or neutered and microchipped.

Once the cat has been socialized and ready to go, then the rescue is able to advertise the cat for adoption. Foster cats are featured through Clear Creek s website and Facebook page, and local adoption events. Jalone said, “Once a foster network is established in Homer, we plan on holding adoption events at Homer Animal Friends store on Main Street.”

“Really we’re just sitting and waiting to have a foster base,” Price said. “As to the ability to be able to rescue more cats in Homer, without foster homes, we are unable to rescue cats or adopt cats out.” Four hundred and fifty cats were rescued and fostered in Kenai, Wasilla, and Anchorage last year. Besides sibling kittens Easy and Della, there are other cats in need of foster homes in Homer now.

To become a foster family, Price said to call Clear Creek. From there you fill out a foster application, have an interview and a home check. Kevyn Jalone and Amy Ware of Homer Animal Friends have offered to serve as logistics coordinators for Clear Creek in Homer. They will provide the home checks as well and support to the homes while a cat is being fostered. There are many diverse adoptive and foster homes to go along with the different kinds of cats that need homes. Price believes that Clear Creek is the only rescue in the state of Alaska that is willing to take feral cats. For example, the Barn Cat Project at Clear Creek is one of the ways more independent cats, or feral cats can find the perfect forever home. Rescued cats who prefer more independence or fare better in outdoor situations may be an excellent barn cat.

The mission of Clear Creek Cat Rescue is to take in homeless cats and find a happy home for the cats they rescue. We want the cat’s personality to fit the adopter’s home situation so that everybody is happy with them. We want to do the best for each individual cat.

“The Homer Animal Shelter looks forward to working with both Judy and Kevyn through this process of finding stable and reliable, safe foster situations here in the Homer area, said Homer Shelter Manager Sherry Bess.



Besides Clear Creek’s mission, a goal for the rescue is to reduce the population of homeless cats by getting every cat spayed and neutered.

To find more details on becoming a foster home, or to give a cat a forever home, call (907) 980-8898 or email [clearcreekkitties@gmail.com](mailto:clearcreekkitties@gmail.com).

You can also visit the Clear Creek Cat Rescue website at <http://clearcreekcatrescue.org/> and Kevyn Jalone and Amy Ware may be reached at [clearcreekcatshomer@gmail.com](mailto:clearcreekcatshomer@gmail.com).

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