

A HOPE MEWSWORTHY

August 2021 Edition



**Future site of the front entrance
to our spay/neuter clinic!**

At this point, we have the property for the future clinic, and we've finished preliminary clearing. Now, we're working on the permits and paperwork necessary to move on to the next phase of construction. Step by step, we're getting closer and closer to achieving this dream.

To support this project, donate at www.ahope4src.com/hopesheroes and designate your donation for the spay/neuter clinic. We appreciate all you give to move our mission forward into the future!

WHAT ARE WE UP TO?

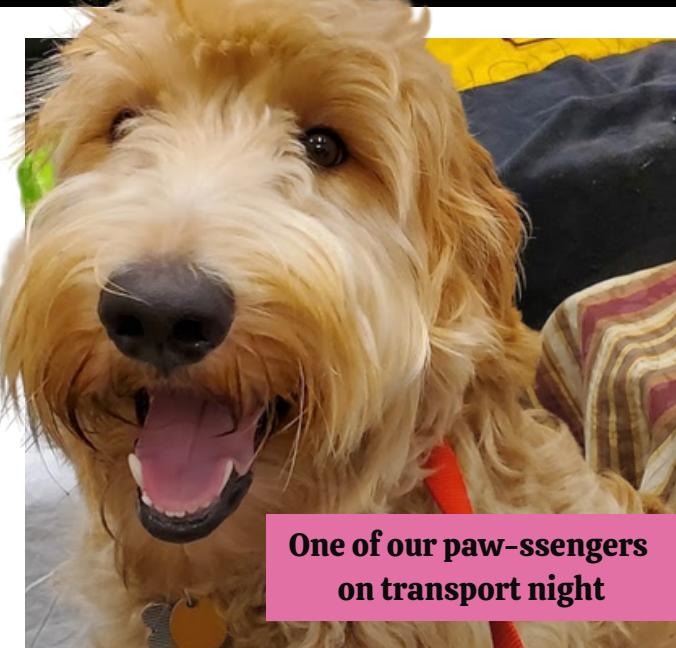
We're making progress every day on the high-volume, low-cost spay/neuter clinic we're building on Pine Blossom Rd. This is INCREDIBLE news for pet owners and caretakers! Soon, we'll be able to continue our mission of preventing unwanted births for cats and dogs, without having to drive to Panama City!



**Right side of the property after
initial land clearing**

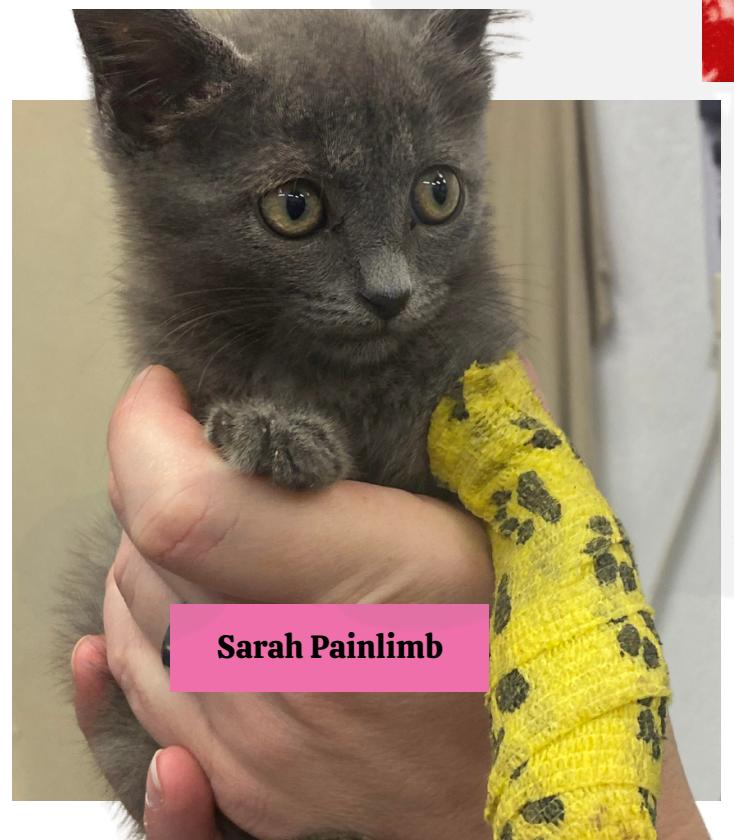


A glimpse into the future...



Last month, we had one transport with 56 cats total. This included owned, unowned, and rescue kitties.

The county shelter and rescues are so full right now, but it doesn't have to be this way. If we all work together to spay and neuter our pets and community cats, we can prevent the unwanted births that lead to homeless kittens who need our help.



In the meantime, there aren't any low-cost spay/neuter options here in Santa Rosa County. That's why we have our bi-weekly transports to the low-cost spay/neuter clinic, Operation Spay Bay, located in Panama City.

Every other Monday, we load up the Paw Pad with dogs and cats, including outdoor cats caretakers have trapped for Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR). The next day, one of our fabulous volunteers drives those animals (sometimes up to 100 at a time!) over 100 miles to get fixed, then brings them back home for pick-up Tuesday evening.



Speaking of homeless kittens who need our help, the rescue and rehabilitation wing of our organization is in full swing as always. Kitten Season 2021 hasn't finished with us yet! We took in 17 new cats and 1 new rat last month. Check out our Facebook page to see all their names and photos.

Before we could make room for those new animals to join our family, we sent 22 of our cats and kittens on to new homes. Congratulations to all our amazing A HOPE kitties and their forever families! We wish you a lifetime of love and happiness!

To see all the animals we currently have available for adoption, check out www.ahope4src.com/meetme.



"Issues" is a sleepy kitten

Our July pantry supplied food to 12 families with a grand total of 10 dogs and 27 cats. We gave out 95 pounds of dry dog food and 131 pounds of dry cat food, plus 203 cans of wet food. That's a LOT of food! Thank you to everyone who donated food and other items like puppy pads, litter, and flea medication to make this possible.

If you would like to donate items to the Pet Food Pantry, you can drop them off any time at 5755 Washington St in Milton.



July Bowl Fillers Sponsor:
Schultz Law Group
2779 Gulf Breeze Parkway
Gulf Breeze, FL 32563
850-754-1600
www.schultzlawgrp.com

Low-cost spay/neuter and rescue/rehabilitation might be the services we talk most about, but they aren't the only programs we have that serve the pets of this community and their owners.

Our Pet Food Pantry, which takes place on the second Sunday of every month, provides pet food, litter, and other essentials to low-income families so they don't have to surrender their pets due to financial struggles. We want to keep you and your pets together just as much as you do! If you need assistance with pet food, find out how we can help here: www.ahope4src.com/petpantry.



We also had another successful month of Bowl Fillers, which we run in partnership with the West Florida Center for Council on Aging's Meals on Wheels program.

Thanks to our generous sponsor Schultz Law Group in Gulf Breeze, we provided 78 pounds of dog food and 30 pounds of cat food for local senior citizens and their companion animals. Each pet also received a toy and a treat.

We appreciate our monthly Bowl Fillers sponsors so much! Could you or your business sponsor one month? Contact our Outreach Coordinator at ahopeoutreach@gmail.com for more information.

WHO HELPED?



A handful of our awesome volunteers
at a training session in July

We've said it before and we'll say it again: We have the BEST volunteers around! We can't brag on them enough. For the month of July, we logged a total of 2,050 hours. Awesome work, everyone!

If you think all our volunteers do is cuddle cute kittens, you couldn't be more wrong. Think of all the dirty litter boxes that need to be cleaned and sanitized, all the tedious data entry, and all the 3 AM feeding sessions our tiniest kittens go through in a month. And that's just the tip of the iceberg! Our volunteers do it all, again and again.



Volunteer training in action

The hard work that goes into A HOPE may not be the most fun all the time, but it's ALWAYS rewarding. Every minute someone puts into this organization means more lives saved and more families made complete.

Do you think you have what it takes to join our team? Right now, we're looking to fill several positions that you can work right from your own home! Now is a great time to jump in and find out how your skills can make a difference for animals in this community. Learn more and apply at www.ahope4src.com/volunteer.



Congratulations to our July Volunteer of the Month:

Brea Chadwick



WHO'S LOOKING FOR FOREVER?

We're so excited to spotlight a tiny kitten with a **HUGE** personality this month! This superstar is Free.

Free (along with his brother Dom) came to us at four weeks old weighing only half a pound. For reference, a healthy four-week-old kitten should weigh 15 oz - 1.2 lbs. But that didn't stop him from absolutely crushing it at his foster home! He soon learned to eat and use the litterbox on his own -- and he stole our hearts in the process.

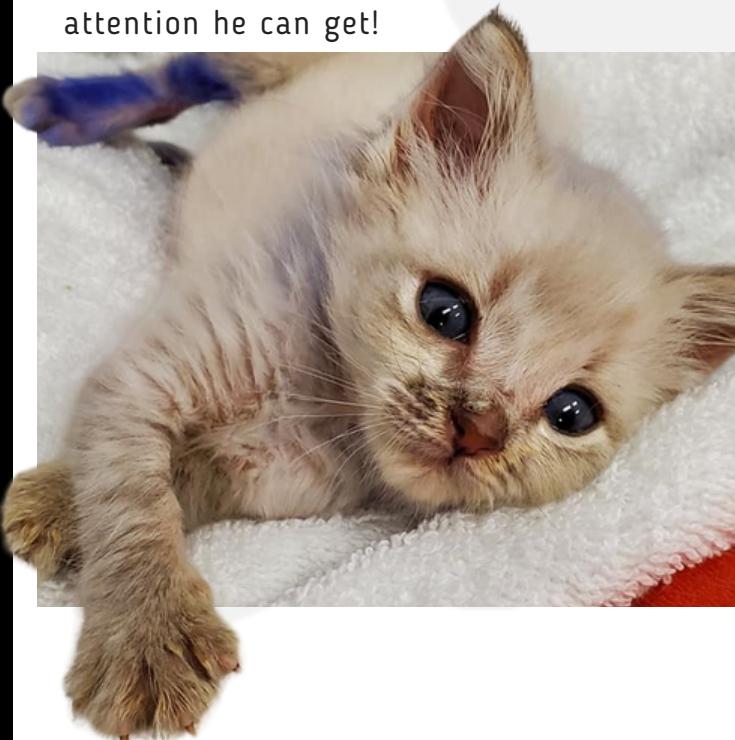
Free is growing bigger and healthier every day with the help of our amazing fosters.

He loves to play, and he's a sucker for a good belly rub. He's also a purr machine. His foster mom says he started purring non-stop on day one and hasn't stopped since.

Free is an adorable little ham. This boy knows he's special, and he wants all the attention he can get!



"Free" snuggling his brother **"Dom"**



Even though he's growing into a strong and healthy boy, Free still has some medical needs. We found out at a recent vet visit that he has elevated kidney counts, which will require more tests in the future. He is on a diet of Z/D food, Gastro Biome, and I/D for his special belly/growth needs.

This awesome boy isn't quite ready to go home yet, but he'll be ready for his forever family in no time! Could that be you?

In the meantime, you can donate to help with Free's vet bills and special food at www.ahope4src.com/hopesheroes.



WHAT DO WE NEED?

Greatest donation needs right now:

- Elitefield Playpens (62x62x24)
- Tidy Cats clumping and non-clumping litter
- Monetary donations

You can find these supplies and other items we need on our website at www.ahope4src.com/donate. You can send or drop off any donations at the Paw Pad at 5755 Washington St, Milton, FL 32570.

If you would like to donate cash, you can do so at www.ahope4src.com/hopesheroes.

We appreciate everything you give in order for us to continue our mission!

HOPE'S HEROES

A huge THANK YOU to our July donors:

Robin Gilmore
Ellie Ackley
Jebbye Lemons
Jon & Tricia Green
Donna Fite
Ms. Gay
Renee Decker
Holly & Jay Shands

Linda Caron
Lona Thrasher
Bridget Knight
Katie Johnson
Linda Maguire
Deborah Lewis
Mrs. Jenna
Ken Davis

Virginia Bowman
Kerry Anne Schultz
Deane Mungle
Maureen Brescia
Mary Causey
Cynthia Fulford
Paige Cary

Become a monthly donor at
www.ahope4src.com/hopesheroes



TAIL ME ABOUT IT!

Kerry asks: "I found a stray kitten outside my house. I don't want to leave it to fend for itself, but I can't adopt it myself. What can I do?"

The first thing you should do when you find a kitten (or multiple kittens) alone is check if the kitten is dirty, crying, or sick. If they are dirty, crying, or sick, then they may need immediate intervention. A kitten born in the wild will naturally be quiet out of instinct to keep predators from finding them. So if they are crying, they have been alone too long and something may be wrong.

Take an obviously sick, injured, or crying kitten to a vet or animal hospital as soon as possible to find out what care they need right now in order to survive. Even if you do not have the funds to pay for their care, surrendering them to a vet office is much kinder than allowing them to suffer.

If the kitten appears healthy and isn't in any immediate danger, it is highly likely the mother cat is caring for them. These kittens are typically quiet, fluffy, and clean. Leave them alone and remember where the family was so you can trap the mom and babies in 5 weeks. If you want confirmation, you can wait 10 to 24 hours to see if the mother cat returns by placing a circle of flour around the kitten. You may never see the mom because she will run away when strangers (you) approach. The flour circle gives you confirmation that she has returned for feeding because the circle will be broken and you may even see flour pawprints. Do not stand near the area. Rather, go inside the house or leave and come back later. Cats are sensitive to smells and will know you are there. This could leave the kitten in danger of her not returning.

Mama "Backpack" and her babies

**Do you have questions?
We want to answer them!
Send any inquiries to
ahopenews@gmail.com, and
maybe we'll answer yours in
next month's Tail Me About It!**

After the kitten's health, the next thing you need to pay attention to is the kitten's age. Your options from here will vary depending on how old the kitten is. We have a chart with pictures to help you age a kitten at www.ahope4src.com/kittenage.

For kittens that are newborns or only a few weeks old, who need the intervention, reach out to your local shelter and offer to be a foster for the next few weeks. Local shelters will provide you with the supplies you need in order to care for the kitten until 8 weeks old. If you do not have the time or capacity to care for the kitten, then contact local rescue organizations and vet offices about placing the kitten in their care immediately. As a last resort, surrender the kitten to the local shelter.

If the kitten appears to be at least 2 months old, consider fostering it for a while until you can find a forever home. It's a great idea to get the kitten altered (spayed or neutered) and up-to-date on all age-appropriate vaccines before trying to find it a new home. Kittens can be altered as soon as they're 2 months old and get their rabies vaccine at 3 months. We recommend getting them fixed and vaccinated at the same time, so 3 months old is ideal. You can find information about our low-cost spay/neuter transports at www.ahope4src.com/vetaccess.

Post the kitten's photo and bio on local rehoming websites and Facebook pages as soon as the kitten reaches 6 weeks old. This gives you time between now and 3 months to find them a great home. Once the kitten is fixed and vaccinated, they can go to their forever home! We have a free rehoming site, which you will find at www.ahope4src.com/rehome. Make sure you post clear (and cute) photos. If there's more than one kitten, make an individual post for each one.

Taking the kitten (or kittens) to the local shelter should be an absolute last resort. If you find yourself in a situation where you have no other option but the shelter, we encourage you to ask for the kitten's ID number and follow up daily to help make sure they get into a great home. You can also offer to be a foster parent through the shelter while the animal gets the care it needs. Find more information about Santa Rosa County Animal Services on their website at www.santarosa.fl.gov/387/Animal-Services.

Please HAVE A PLAN before removing any animal from any situation. Call around and see if you can WORK WITH an organization for the best outcome for the kitten. Leaving a kitten to suffer alone inside a cage is NOT a better option than leaving them where you found them. Their instinct to survive is better than ours to save them when the only reason we think they need saving is because "they're cute". Let's save the ones who truly need us and respect the ones who don't.