

## ***Why Did I Become a Foster Parent? ...***

### ***or What Can Cats Give To Us?***

*Submitted by Martha McKlveen, Cat Depot Volunteer and Foster Mom*

My first "mission" was CC last winter. CC is a beautiful grey long-haired cat who came to Cat Depot not knowing the meaning of 'NO'. After several bites, CC took up residence in one of the socialization rooms with a sign warning of biting. After sharing the room with other cats, CC decided that it was best to be alone. I spent much time with CC on my lap, learning to read his every move, knowing when to continue and when to back off. No one can understand the comfort this cat gave me the afternoon that my father passed away. All I wanted to do was sit with CC. He knew that my lap was the place he should be that day. Leaving to go north for the summer was difficult knowing that CC would not have all of my attention for several months. Then the call from the Cat Depot adoption counselor came telling me that CC had found a home. That was the best call I had had for a long time.

Going for four months without the cats was too long, so I decided to fly down to Sarasota for the Adoptathon and a cat fix.

Shortly after my return to Sarasota this fall I began fostering. First was Mulligan, one of the country club kittens. Three kittens came to Cat Depot after living at the golf course. All you saw when looking in the cage were six big black eye and six airplane ears with three hissing mouths. Several brave care givers and volunteers spent endless hours handling these kittens, helping them become socialized and adoptable. One kitten made the transition easily and found a home. That left Mulligan and Yodee. Thinking Mulligan could be next, I brought her home and continued trying to hold her, and then one day she sat down beside me with her chin on my ankle. From there it was all forward progress with her finally jumping onto my lap. Although I would have kept her longer, I waited a couple of days too long to return her for adoption. I had really become attached. But that feeling of loss was quickly replaced with a sense of accomplishment and pride when she adopted her new parents.

My first experience with a young kitten was one that tested positive for feline leukemia. This darling little grey kitten, named Mouse, was so young he didn't know how to eat yet. He needed to be fed with a syringe by mouth until he learned to lick. Since I have cats of my own, Mouse stayed with my mother who thoroughly enjoyed watching him grow. When Mouse finally learned to eat on his own he went back to Cat Depot and took up residence in a staff office until it was time to be tested again. When the test was negative, Mouse came to my house and became best friends with Skooby, my 14 lb. tabby. They raced and wrestled until Mouse was big enough to be adopted which took one hour after returning to Cat Depot.

Since Mouse there have been several more cats and kittens in and out of my house from an older cat that needed a little respite to a kitten recovering from a broken leg to a cat who just needed a couple of days out of a cage. Probably the toughest so far is Fuzzy Wuzzy, a kitten that is having a hard time growing and refuses to be touched. A definitive diagnosis is elusive. She, too, seems to find a friend in Skooby but wants nothing to do with two-legged people. Finding something she will eat is just as difficult as touching her. Not willing to give up, I will continue to do what is asked to provide for her.

I know Fuzzy won't be my last because there is nothing like the feeling you get from helping a kitten or cat become adoptable. I just want to thank all of the cats and kittens for sharing their time with me and my cats.