

June is Adopt a Shelter Cat Month!

Furever Friends Cat Rescue is a non-profit organization based in Altona. We operate with volunteers, donations, and support from our community. Our mission is to rescue the lost, abandoned, and homeless cats in our community. We are dedicated to the care and wellbeing of our local feral cat population and to help educate the public on the need to spay/neuter pets, the prevention of animal cruelty, and the importance of responsible pet ownership.

We are grateful for this opportunity to use this column in a number of ways: featuring cats that are available for adoption, sharing stories of cats that have already passed through our rescue (happy ones and sad ones, because those happen too), announcing fundraising events, and providing educational content.

Spring is kitten season, and shelters and rescues are filling up fast with cats that need furever homes. If you are considering adding a furry friend to your family, here are some great reasons to adopt from a shelter or rescue:

1. You will save the lives of 2 cats by adopting a cat from a shelter or rescue.

According to data collected by Humane Canada, shelters and rescues took in more than 78,000 cats last year and of these, about 11,000 were euthanized. Adopting a cat not only helps one of these many animals looking for a home, but also opens a space for shelters and rescue groups to take in another cat.

2. It makes good financial sense to adopt a cat.

For a relatively low fee, you'll take home a cat that is already spayed or neutered, up-to-date on vaccines, tattooed, treated for worms and other parasites. Many shelters and rescues will also include extras in the adoption fee such as a cat collar, food and toys.

3. The personality of an adopted cat is known.

Cats in many shelters and foster homes interact with their caretakers and volunteers every day, and these people really get to know their personalities. Particularly with adult cats, you can find a companion with the type of temperament you're looking for. You could find a playful, active cat or a calmer feline who prefers cuddling and a quieter environment.

4. It's good for your mental health to adopt a cat.

According to Research Gate, owning a cat, or any pet you adopt from a shelter, has been shown to have positive effects on humans' ability to cope with stress, anxiety, depression and loneliness. Taking a cat home from a shelter can improve your sense of happiness and general well-being.

5. Adopting a cat is great for your heart!

A recent study found that owning a cat may lead to a reduced risk of death from cardiovascular disease and stroke. This is an im-

portant finding considering that the Heart and Stroke Foundation says one Canadian dies every 5 minutes from heart conditions, stroke or vascular cognitive impairment.

6. Cats improve children's resistance to asthma.

According to Clinical & Experimental Allergy, research has found that early exposure to a cat in the home can actually reduce infants' sensitization to the allergens cats produce. As a result, kids have a reduced chance of developing allergic diseases.

7. There's a wide variety of cats to adopt.

You can find any type of cat you want at a shelter, from kittens to seniors, short-haired to long-haired, all sizes and colours. In fact, if you're looking for a specific breed, such as a Siamese, you can contact cat-specific rescue groups to find your new friend.

8. A cat can make your other pets happy.

If you have another cat, or a cat-friendly dog, bringing another cat home from a shelter can help reduce feelings of loneliness during the day when you're out. Of course, you will want to ask the shelter to help you "cat test" your dog, and if you have a cat, expect a period of adjustment before the new and current cat feel comfortable together.

9. Cats are perfect for apartment dwellers.

If you live in an apartment, condo or other small space, a cat can be an excellent companion because cats don't require lots of room or daily walks like a dog. Cats are generally low maintenance and if you provide them with toys (like cat trees and window rests for enrichment), they make wonderful roommates.

10. Cats are excellent senior companions.

Cats, particularly older, calmer cats, can provide loving companionship to older adults. They're easy to care for, and you can find one at a shelter that matches your lifestyle with some helpful advice from the shelter staff or rescue volunteers.

These are just 10 reasons, there are many more! To find your purr-fect fit, consider the cats at the following reputable shelters and rescues: Furever Friends Cat Rescue, Pembina Valley Humane Society, Manitoba Mutts Dog Rescue, Miss J. La's Fur Babies Cat Cafe, Winnipeg Humane Society, Rescue Siamese, Winnipeg Pet Rescue, Tails of Freedom Rescue, and Manitoba Great Pyrenees Rescue.

Source: Blake, M. (2017, July 12). 10 Great Reasons to Adopt a Cat from a Shelter. PetHealth Network

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Please consider adopting a furry friend. You will help save two lives.

Pixit, available for adoption