

**KITTEN:** Abandonment is a significant problem

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And, she noted, “My husband, Chris, had been very worried about me.”

But Frye didn’t stay home. She drove to Bend to bring the little female kitten to the emergency hospital where a veterinarian examined her.

“She was very thin, but in pretty good shape after they cleaned all the mud off her,” said Frye. “She seemed to have been weaned and was maybe six weeks old more or less.”

“I figured we’d keep her for the weekend and then try to re-home her, since we already have three dogs and one cat.

“But once she was home we decided to keep her and incorporate her into our family. Chris and I have taught our two older kids about how to be a responsible pet-owner, and so they have had pets growing up.”

The Frye’s 4-year-old daughter, Nayeli, really warmed up to the kitten and decided to call her Michelangelo, after her favorite character from the *Ninja Turtles*. Nayeli is now learning how to be a responsible pet-parent by caring for her kitten and cleaning out the litter box.

“She’s a really sweet kitty and loves to be held like a baby,” Frye said. “She’s happy, well-adjusted and fitting into the family.”



Nayeli and Chris Frye with Michaelangelo.

PHOTO BY JODI SCHNEIDER MCNAMEE

But Frye will never forget how she came to find Michelangelo, abandoned in a box on a snowy night, probably kept alive by the warmth of the other small bodies.

Abandoning or dumping a cat or kittens is a significant issue in Central Oregon. Abandoned pet cats become confused, frightened, and likely will die of starvation. It doesn’t have to happen. If you find a stray cat or kittens, or have a cat that you can no longer care for, there are many options available for you to find that cat a home.

If you find a stray cat or kitten, the first thing you need to do is determine that no one is looking for this pet. Ask around. Check with friends, family and coworkers, post on social media, contact the newspaper. Those same venues also work for finding a cat or kitten a new home.

Cat Rescue Adoption & Foster Team (CRAFT) has a Facebook page, and they will post a picture of your cat on their page. Go to [www.facebook.com/CraftCats](http://www.facebook.com/CraftCats).

“We ask people to try and keep the cat themselves as long as possible and that CRAFT can post a photo on our website to help find it a home,” said CRAFT volunteer Janice Sershen. “We are a no-kill rescue group, and if they want to surrender the cat to us, I may have a waiting list of cats to help depending on urgency, sick, or injured.”

Call your local animal shelter for guidance. When Oregon Humane Society receives young kittens, they first go into foster care. Once they are old enough, they go back to the shelter to be spayed/neutered and then placed for adoption.

**Population control key to helping cats**

By Jodi Schneider McNamee  
Correspondent

An estimated 70 million feral cats — cats that have never had close contact with humans — are roaming the parks, parking lots, backyards and back roads of the United States. That includes Sisters Country. And people are abandoning kittens and cats to die or go feral in high numbers.

Last spring BrightSide Animal Center saw a dramatic increase in the amount of kittens showing up at the shelter.

This past December, Cat Rescue Adoption & Foster Team (CRAFT) received 150 calls about abandoned/stray cats.

“We’ve had calls from as far away as Salem, and Chiliquin. The need is far greater than originally planned when CRAFT was being formed almost 10 years ago,” said CRAFT volunteer Janice Sershen.

CRAFT, BrightSide Animal Center, and Bend Spay & Neuter Project are relying on the caring people in the community to help control the stray and feral cat population. Trapping and neutering stray and feral cats is one of the kindest things that you can do to improve their lives and end the cycle of wild kittens being born.

Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) is the humane and effective approach for stray and feral cats. Now in practice for decades in the U.S. after being proven in Europe, scientific studies show that Trap-Neuter-Return improves the lives of feral cats, improves their relationships with the people who live near them, and decreases the size of colonies over time.

Trap-Neuter-Return is successfully practiced in hundreds of communities. It is exactly what it sounds like: Cats are humanely trapped and taken to a veterinarian to be neutered and vaccinated. After recovery, the cats are returned to their home; their colony outdoors. Kittens and cats that are friendly and socialized to people can be adopted into homes. TNR stops the breeding cycle of cats and therefore improves their lives while preventing reproduction.

Bend Spay & Neuter Project also offers live traps for rent to assist in the trapping of feral/stray cats in your neighborhood. They can be reached at 541-617-1010.

Furry Friends Foundation, located in Sisters, has a trap for loan. Further, they will sponsor the spay or neuter of any Sisters feral cats. For more information call 541-549-9941.

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