

Why Adopt a Rescue Kitty?

Adapted from an article on <http://www.almosthomerescue.org>

People have discouraged me to buy a used car, because I would just be buying "somebody else's problems." Unfortunately, that's how some people view rescue kitties - as cats that weren't wanted because they had problems and didn't make good pets. In the vast majority of cases, that's just not true! Most cats who come into rescue were not given up because they were "bad cats" or had behavioral problems. Unfortunately, many people buy cats without thinking about the time, effort, and expense involved in keeping a cat. These kitties end up in shelters, or along the side of the road, or, if they're lucky, in rescue. In fact, the most common reasons a cat ends up with a rescue organization include the following:

- The owners don't have time for the cat.
- The owners find that they can't afford either basic vet care or the expense involved in treating an illness or injury.
- The owner dies or goes into a nursing home.
- The owners divorce and neither party can keep the cat.
- A young couple has a child and no longer has time for the cat, or the cat no longer fits into their "lifestyle."
- The owner is moving to an apartment building that doesn't allow cats.

We also get kitties from kill shelters, where they have ended up because they were lost, and from kitten mills, where uncaring owners have used the cats as breeding machines and don't need them any more. Some cats who have been prisoners of kitten mills turn out to be the most loving and affectionate cats we see; it's as if they *know* they have left their miserable pasts behind forever.

This is not to say that all of our rescue cats come to you with perfect manners and are perfectly socialized and housebroken. Cats who have been neglected and abandoned need socialization and love to become good feline citizens. But so do the kittens people buy! And a rescue cat usually needs much less training than a little kitten. Maine Coon Adoptions kitties always spend time in a foster home, with an experienced cat owner, before they are placed in an adoptive home. During that time, they are evaluated (in terms of their personalities-how well they deal with other cats, dogs, with children, and so on), trained (housebroken, socialized) if necessary, and loved.

Another myth is that rescue cats are, by definition, inferior to cats bought from a breeder or a pet store. Cats who are rescued came originally from show breeders, pet stores, and hobby breeders - they run the gamut when it comes to origin. They are a cross-section of the cat population, and, as such, are no more or less likely to have genetic problems than any other cat.

Reasons to Choose a Rescue Cat

Those of us who volunteer in rescue all have at least one rescue cat, and we know what terrific pets they can be! Here are some reasons to consider a rescue cat, rather than buying a kitten, if you are ready to add a cat to your family.

You're not starting from scratch. When you buy a kitten, you're essentially bringing a baby into your home...an untrained, unsocialized little critter who may think the crate you bought for him is a jail, the litter box you put out for him as a sandbox, that your fish in the fishtank are much tastier than kitty food, and your best carpet is an excellent substitute for grass when nature calls! Because rescue cats spend time in foster homes before they are adopted, they come to you with social skills and manners!

The bond is strong. Cats who have not gotten off to the best possible start in life - who have been neglected or even abused - tend to be very loyal and affectionate. Remember that domestic cats are social animals, and they take their treatment by their families very much to heart. A cat that has been neglected or abandoned once is usually eager to become part of a loving family, where she feels safe and secure, and is likely to act accordingly.

Fewer vet fees. Rescue cats have had physical examinations, have been spayed or neutered, have been tested for FIV and FELV, and are up to date on shots. When you buy a kitten, you pay for the cat AND for kitten shots, spaying or neutering, and any other basic medical expenses.

What you see is what you get. When you buy a kitten, you can never really be sure what type of *cat* they'll grow up to be. All kittens are cute and playful, but their adult personalities aren't visible until they're about two years old. So you don't know whether you're getting a cat who wants to play all the time (ALL the time!) or a couch potato. When you rescue a cat, you learn from the foster family what the cat's personality is like and whether it fits with what you want in a cat companion. You also know, in advance, about any problem areas you will have to address.

It teaches your children good values. Face it - we live in a materialistic society, where many kids are taught that everything can be bought, that they should get their parents to buy them everything, and that anything worth having costs a lot of money. Adopting a rescue cat for your family presents a wonderful opportunity to teach your children basic values of compassion, caring and community, but also about the value of second chances.

Why Aren't Rescue Cats Free?

We are asked this question frequently. Some people think that, since they are willing to take a homeless cat off our hands, we should give them the cat without an adoption fee. But vet care for our rescue cats costs money, which our volunteers must recover, at least in part, in order to go on rescuing other kitties in need. Each cat must have a physical examination, receive any required vaccinations, be tested for FIV/FELV, and be spayed or neutered. The rescuer pays for these procedures out of her or his own pocket. For the most part, our adoption fees reflect the medical expenses incurred for the average rescued cat.

Please keep this fact in mind: The adoption fee for a Maine Coon Adoptions rescue cat is somewhere between \$100 and \$175. The going rate for a kitten at a pet store or breeder is between \$400 and \$1200. And you still have to pay for vaccinations and spaying or neutering on top of that. Rescue cats are a bargain!