

# Rabbit And Small Animal Rescue Newsletter

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# Meet Megan and Cameron, the Newest Faces of FoR

### By Beck B.

Friends of Rabbits has two new amazing and dedicated members. Megan is coordinating intakes, fostering, event volunteers and social media. She is a graduate from Salisbury College, where she majored in Psychology. Her experience includes volunteer work and event planning at the Poplar Spring Animal Sanctuary. In addition, she has worked in the cat and rabbit rooms at the Greenbelt Animal Shelter, where her duties also included outreach events. She lives in Greenbelt with her boyfriend, two rescue dogs, rescue cat, and is hoping add a Flemish Giant to the family! Her interests in animal rights and vegan outreach will be in good company at Friends of Rabbits. Megan is also a talented vegan chef and will be a contender in the great vegan mac & cheese competition in January. She can be reached via email at megan@friendsofrabbits.org and is at the Columbia house 1-6pm on weekdays.



Megan and Raine.

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Cameron and the amazing enormo-bunny, Jabba.

Cameron is the rabbit caretaker of the Columbia house. She is at the house nearly every day ensuring that the rescue rabbit habitats stay clean and tidy. She is in the process of getting her vet tech certification, and lives in Ellicott City with her family, two cats and two dogs. She also volunteers with other animal rescues and shelters in Maryland in her free time.

Together Megan and Cameron will be taking on the Herculean tasks of organizing the new intakes from shelters, scheduling and transporting rabbits to veterinary visits, managing medication schedules of quarantine rabbits, managing the Friends of Rabbits store in Columbia, participating in events, and creating e-mail campaigns...as well as feeding and caring for the alwaysimpressive warren of adoptable rabbits and bunny-sitting clients. Come say hi at our next adoption event! As you probably are aware, Friends of Rabbits has rescued 275 rabbits AND adopted out 250 rabbits this year! Keeping to a pace of adopting 3 rabbits every four days is a huge feat and takes a lot of dedicated and focused effort on the part of our volunteers. At this rate, we are on a course to increase adoptions by 32% and 135% compared to 2016 and 2015, respectively. We are grateful to our volunteers for their amazing investments of time and energy to take on this huge set responsibilities and doing fabulously at it! At this rate, 2017 will be one of our best adoption years yet, and we look forward to continued success in 2018.

news briefs

# **Updates - JJ and Emmie (Vida)**



JJ and Vida are doing well in their new forever homes. JJ (left) likes to spend time on the couch and is a robust eater. Emmie (aka Vida, right), waiting to have her teeth checked.

# A Very Bunny Birthday

### Carolyn L., Age 9

My mom took me to the Czech Embassy three years ago for Easter. No one was playing with this one cute bunny. I skipped the Easter Egg Hunt so I could sit in the pen with the white bunny and play with her. I asked my Mom if we could adopt her because she was there with Friends of Rabbits. My mom said she would think about it. A few months later, my mom said yes. She called Friends of Rabbits and the bunny was still available. We went to get supplies and then picked her up and brought her home. We changed her name from Braydon to Braydee. She was very afraid at first and we think it was because she was rescued from a laboratory. But now she is sweet and loving and not afraid. For my birthday this year, I asked my mom if we could donate money to Friends of Rabbits. We asked my friends to donate instead of bringing me gifts. We raised \$267.28. We had bunnies at my birthday and alpacas, a goat, ducks, a piglet, guinea pigs, and chicks. I am sending a photo of me with Snowball, my favorite animal from that day. We love Spa Day and can't wait to bring Braydee again! I love Friends of Rabbits because they rescue bunnies and I love bunnies!!!



Carolyn and Snowball, at the Czech Embassy Easter Celebration, where she fell in love with rabbits

# **Glamorous Bunnies Raise Funds for Rescue Rabbits**

### by Sarah C.

On November 5th, 2017 bunnies hammed it up in front of the camera for Bunny Glamour Shots at Bunny Central in Columbia, MD. For a donation to FoR, participants could choose from an abundant assortment of props and toys to enhance the photography sessions.

Some bunnies nestled in giant tea cups. Others sat amongst colorful ornaments and festive menorahs. Bunnies Roman and Rotini seemed to enjoy the limelight, while others were sassy. One bunny, Fritz, even wore a cape brought by his fur mom. Even a sextuplet brought by volunteer and foster mom Sherry Rose was captured by our fantastic volunteer photographers and assistants.

President Susan Wong worked her grooming magic on the bunnies. Executive Director Alexandra Deckert and VP of Fundraising Mara Hurwitt managed behind the scenes to make sure the event ran smoothly.

The event raised enough money to spay and neuter up to 10 more rabbits this year.

Thank you to all the volunteers who made this and many other events successful!



Six rabbits to pose for the camera after being groomed (above). Bran and Margaret dressed up and posh (right).



Whether you can get your bunny to sit in the cup, or not, glamour shots is always a good time for a great cause.



# **Bunny Glamour (continued)**



Some more glamorous bunnies showing off in their Spring best.

## **Rabbit Rejuvenation, Refinement, and Relaxation**

### By Amy S.

What event can bring such bunny bliss? Bunny Spa Day! FoR held its semi-annual spa day fundraising event in September at the Animal Welfare League of Arlington. Volunteers worked hard during this event, as bunnies were groomed with a mani-pedi (nail trim) and fur-styling (brushing) to look their best and – more importantly – stay healthy. Following such beautification, the rabbits were treated to a bunny massage from a professional animal massage therapist to help the relax and de-stress. Not only was this event beneficial for the rabbits' well-being, it also brought in funds for FoR. Many thanks to the many volunteers who made this event possible!

### **Romaine Recall**

### By Beck B.

If your bunnies are like mine, they probably enjoy romaine lettuce a great deal. For us, it's often a large component in their evening salad as it's easy to grow and ubiquitous to buy. But be warned— has been a recall on romaine lettuce recently, due to contamination with Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* O157:H7, which is a strain of bacteria that causes bloody diarrhea and can be fatal in humans. Rabbits are even more sensitive to toxins than we are, so if you want good alternatives to romaine, try green leaf lettuce or cilantro. These greens are as nutritious and are easy to obtain for similar prices.



### volunteer spotlight

# Mom's Organic Markets' Donates Greens to FoR Rabbits

### By Robin S.

The staff at Mom's Organic Markets Produce Departments in Jessup, Rockville and College Park have been critical to in our mission of saving rabbits. They prepare leftover greens from trimmings to donate to our rescue rabbits. Below is a thank you letter to them from our board. Corporations this green and giving make the world a better place. Thanks, Mom's!



## adoption stories

# Clementine

### By Madeline M.

I sat in a sparsely-populated Arby's which had been slapped down between an under-construction truck stop and a highway overpass. It was the hottest day in recent memory. I had been driving for three hours and wouldn't arrive at campus for another four—and I smelled exactly like you'd imagine.

A man in camouflage coveralls and an aggressively orange hunting cap walked into the restaurant. He stopped when he saw me, and then did a double-take.

"How old is your dog?" he asked, gesturing to the terrified baby rabbit I was encouraging to take a drink of water from a ketchup cup.

My "dog" was four months old. I'd picked her up from Susan Slattery's Maryland home a day and a half earlier, and now we were on our way to Radford University for my junior year of college. We didn't know each other from Adam, as was evident by the sleep-deprived anxiety which characterized our current interaction—me, warily proffering the paper cup as she regarded it with twitchy suspicion. Beads of sweat traveled down both the drink and my forehead.

This had not been the plan.

When I made the decision to adopt a rabbit to train as a therapy animal for myself, I had chosen Maisie almost at once. She was as spunky as she was suspicious, and I spent the summer fostering her for Friends of Rabbits in anticipation of her spay surgery, gradually winning her over until she begrudgingly admitted that we were friends. We spent all our time together.



Clementine and Madeline, BFFs.

She was the darling of my office, traveling with me to work every morning and insisting on sleeping beside me at night. When she unexpectedly passed away after her spay surgery—two days before I left for school—I was completely numb with shock. It was just one of those things—the surgery had gone perfectly, she had seemed fine, and she had passed away in her sleep a half hour later, just like that. My PTSD had been diminishing almost to the point of a non-issue with Maisie's help; now I was all alone again, with my emotional support animal paperwork filled out in her name, a dorm room waiting for us, and no rabbit.

I picked up Clementine from the same foster home a day later. The quick timing was tough, but I had no choice if I was going to bring a rabbit to school. She'd never been away from her mother before, and I was still reeling with grief. She cowered in her crate, and I cowered under my covers. Neither of us got much sleep that night.

Fast forward to the Arby's. I finished eating, Clementine finished flinging her water in my face, and we returned to the van. My dad took a shift driving, and so Clementine and I hunkered into the passenger's seat to endure the monotony of Route 81. After a while, I carefully took her out of the carrier and let her sit on my lap. I was apprehensive, because Maisie never would have allowed that while we were driving in the car, but Clementine seemed comforted by the contact. I know I was. We regarded each other with nervous optimism. For the first time, I was sure that we were going to be okay.

People inevitably find it odd that my therapy animal of choice is a rabbit. I couldn't imagine a better animal to train for this purpose. I've been around rabbits since I was 11 years old. Their peculiar blend of independence, affection, spunk, and unbridled, idiosyncratic zeal for life is what has made various individual rabbits some of the most important people I've ever known. I like pets that reward my genuine investment in their well-being and lives with a bond that is peculiar to the two of us. I like having to work in order to gain their love and trust, because once earned, it's there for life.



Clementine strutting her stuff on a walk.

In my opinion, it is this combination of putting in the work and receiving unconditional love in return that makes them perfect therapy animals. On the days when I'm haunted by the traumas of the past and can barely stand to get out of bed, that's simply not an option: Hurricane Clementine will throw around her noisiest toys until I get up to deliver her breakfast from the fridge. On the days when I feel happy and almost normal, she's right there with me: ready to run and play by my side and enjoy all that life has to offer.

Clementine, in particular, is everything I envisioned when I thought of myself having a therapy animal and so much more. She is the most affectionate rabbit I've ever met. When I'm trapped in a flashback, trembling and tenuously hanging on to reality, she licks my face until I fall asleep. She can tell when my friends are having bad days, too, and will hop into their laps and give them kisses until they smile. After a somewhat bumpy adjustment period, she now flourishes in the collegiate environment. She is now trained well enough that I

can trust her to roam free inside my (rabbit-proofed) dorm room, and she's the most popular girl on campus when I take her outside on her leash. Typing this article has been a challenge, because Clementine thinks that licking my hands, climbing onto my back, sitting on my keys and enthusiastically launching herself into my arms for cuddles while I sit on the rug is helpful to the artistic process.

I will never understand why rabbits are often overlooked as pets. At the end of the day, it's just a matter of putting the time in: get down on their level and include them in your life, and they will thank you by being the most loyal, loving friends you could want. In that sense, it's the same as with any other animal (or human, for that matter). I still have bad days, of course, but every day is better knowing that Clementine is waiting at the door for me to come home from class. As I told the camouflaged man in the Arby's: I love my weird dog.

Update on Clementine, (or Clem, Clem-butt, destructo-bunny, or sweet pea for short): she and I are bffs, and although the circumstances of our coming together couldn't have been more heartbreaking, she is honestly the best therapy bunny I could have ever asked for. She is incredibly affectionate and friendly-- she can tell when my friends are having a bad day and she'll hop into their laps and lick their faces. She loves to run around my dorm and play with her toys-- whenever I clean her room, I'll find "toys" that she stole from me in her toybox-- receipts, a washcloth, etc. Some of her favorite things: causing mischief, destroying any papers within her reach, getting cuddles, waiting at the door for me to come home from class, playing with the tunnel I made her, getting attention, stealing garbage, eating strawberries, and running around like a maniac at 3am for no reason. She is the best thing that has ever happened to me.

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### health corner

# Scat Chat: "Poopy Butt" in Pet Rabbits

#### By Maxine K.

The smell is unmistakable as I approach my bunny's pen. I know immediately what it is. My bunny has "poopy butt," and I'm going to have to clean her up again.

#### What is Poopy Butt?

"Poopy butt is, just as it sounds, a condition where a bunny has fecal matter stuck to his behind" (www.myhouserabbit.com). Poopy butt is not the same as diarrhea. In fact, true diarrhea is rare in pet rabbits. The fecal mess you are seeing is most likely

undigested cecotropes.

In order to understand poopy butt, it helps to know a little about the rabbit digestive system. Rabbits are eating and pooping all the time, except for when they are sleeping. They are natural fermenters. Their food is digested by bacteria in their intestines. Adding anything new or different to this delicate fermentation system can cause an upset until their body adapts to processing it. Sugars and starches, which are not a natural part of a rabbit's diet, can cause this problem.

"Every good bunny parent spends a lot of time examining and appraising their rabbit's poop. It is part of doing it right. To the uninitiated, it may appear as if we are all a bit crazy for being into our bunny scat, but it is only because we truly love our buns and we care." (http://thebunnyguy.com)

Rabbits eat all of their food twice. The first time through mouths, then it comes out as cecotropes (or cecal pellets). Though it may seem gross to us, eating cecotropes is a healthy activity for rabbits that helps keep their digestive tracts in balance. In this way, rabbits also glean an optimum amount of nutrients from their

food. If your rabbit is healthy, you should rarely see these, if ever. If you do find cecotropes in his box, this is a sign that he may be getting too many treats or too much nutrition. Therefore, finding cecal pellets from your rabbit on a regular basis should be a red flag warning for you.

#### What Causes Poopy Butt?

• **Poor Diet** - A poor diet can cause soft stools from not having enough fiber. It can also lead to runny or soft cecotropes which will mat into your rabbit's fur before they can ingest them. The core of your rabbit's diet should be fibrous foods like hay and greens. Timothy hay is very high in fiber, which is an essential element in keeping your bunny's digestive tract healthy. Timothy hay also keeps rabbits' teeth worn down to prevent dental problems. Your bunny must have access to unlimited fresh timothy hay (or alfalfa hay if he is less than 7 months old). You should also avoid feeding your bunny too many starchy foods like breads, fruits, or other treats.

Sudden changes to a rabbit's diet can also cause their poop to get soft. New greens and pellets should be introduced gradually to allow your bunny's digestive system time to adapt to the new diet.



Copious hay in the diet is the best way to ensure your rabbit gets enough fiber and avoids digestive issues.

• **Small Cage** – Rabbits that live in small spaces often end up sitting or sleeping in their litter boxes for comfort. This can lead to soiled paws and poop getting stuck to their fur. A larger pen or a room where the bun can be free range should improve the situation. Make sure your bunny has a comfortable spot to sleep on such as a towel or fleece blanket as well as a litter box and a play area. If he has enough space and still likes to sleep in the litter box, try experimenting with different pet beds and blankets until you find one that meets with your bun's approval.

• Obesity and Mobility Issues - Lack of consistent exercise can contribute to obesity. Older rabbits, obese rabbits, or those with arthritis may have a difficult time reaching their bottoms, preventing them from consuming the cecotropes. If your rabbit is overweight, reduce or eliminate pellets from his diet and provide unlimited timothy hay and fresh greens. For rabbits with arthritis, your rabbit-savvy veterinarian may be able to prescribe an anti-inflammatory drug to help ease the condition.

• **Dental Issues** – If your bunny does not consume enough hay, he could develop painful molar spurs. Sometimes rabbits' teeth wear down unevenly, resulting in sharp edges that poke into their cheeks. The pain and stress caused by the molar spurs will upset their digestive health. To treat this, a rabbit-savvy vet will need to file the sharp edges down.

### What Should You Do if Your Rabbit Has Poopy Butt?

Dried cecotropes stuck to the rear end are not only smelly and uncomfortable; they can result in skin scalding or lifethreatening fly strike.

Bathing a rabbit is usually NOT recommended as it can cause your pet a lot of unnecessary stress. That said, if your

bun has poopy butt that cannot be removed with just a warm wet cloth, you may have to resort to a butt bath. Make sure you hold your bun securely in your arms. Support the back and clean the soiled area (usually the genitals/butt) only under slow-running lukewarm water. Get as little of the rabbit wet as necessary to clean the area. Once the rabbit is clean, wrap him in a towel and keep the room at a warm temperature until your rabbit is dry. The goal should be to make this as stress-free as possible.

Cleaning your rabbit is essential to eliminate discomfort and prevent disease, but that is only treating a symptom of the problem; it doesn't address the root cause. If your bunny has recurring poopy butt, you should see a rabbit-savvy veterinarian to help diagnose the problem. The bunny should undergo a thorough wellness check, especially if his diet and weight are normal and healthy.

"Resolving runny stool in a rabbit is not always a simple matter. It may require dietary changes, good housekeeping, and sometimes extensive diagnostic work and treatment by your veterinarian. But it will all be worth it for a long life filled with happy, nose-wiggling love and a nice, clean bum." (http://rabbit.org/the-mystery-of-rabbit-poop/)

A healthy rabbit consuming a cecotrope directly from the anus.



# Bunny Personals "Double is Best"

### By Adlyn P.

I have learned that having two rabbits instead of one is not just better and more fun, but it as discrete benefits, too. Having a bonded pair has many benefits for both humans and the bunnies. Many rabbit owners learn this after gaining some experience with rabbits. For this reason, they often go back to rescues to pick out a companion for their rabbit. These are some of the reasons why it is best to adopt in pairs, or get a companion rabbit.

### <u>Time</u>

Getting a pair of rabbits is ideal for those of us who are busy with full-time jobs and kids and don't have many hours to spend with a bunny rabbit. For those of you who are afraid that your bunny is lonely and is not getting enough attention" a companion will solve this problem. With a companion, you will know that your rabbit is not getting depressed spending hours alone at home when you are at work.

### Friendliness/Socialization

Getting a companion can make your rabbit more friendly and social. Cuddling and mutual grooming with another rabbit will make them more friendly overall, and you will benefit from it. A companion can make your rabbit more playful, easygoing, and easier to handle. Rabbits are social creatures and aren't really meant to live in isolation. They will be happier in a home with another rabbit. Sometimes all they need is a buddy to get them to open up.

### Cleaning

Amazingly, it doesn't really take more work to clean up after two rabbits compared to one. Whether there is one rabbit or two or three you are still cleaning only one pen. It's only double the work if you keep them in separate enclosures.

### <u>Health</u>

Rabbits also keep each other physically healthy. When rabbits become ill, they may not groom themselves as well as they need to. A companion rabbit will make sure that they are properly groomed and clean when they don't feel well. Grooming is essential to their cleanliness and health, and this is not something that can be replaced by human care. Only another rabbit can groom a bunny with the thoroughness and frequency that they need. The best example of this is disability. A companion rabbit is extremely important for disabled and chronically ill rabbits. For example, a rabbit with paralyzed legs will not be able to reach parts of his or her body when grooming. A companion rabbit will take care of this and groom the paralyzed rabbit, making sure they stay clean.

Companion rabbits keep each other clean and healthy.

Hershey and Shadow.

Born into FoR care after their momma was rescued, these two are easy to handle, very good eaters, and already using their litter box.

# Let Love In: Adoptable Pairs



Sadie and Cleo. An easy-going and chill pair.



Taj and Jacob. Best buddies 4 ever.



Riddique and Augustus Red. Big bunny, bigger love.



# Friends of Rabbits Columbia Supply Store Open Daily



If you need information or assistance, please contact info@friendsofrabbits.org

# We carry all your bunny needs!

Standlee Timothy Hay and Orchard Grasshalf and full bales



Binky Bunny Willow Toys & Tents



Rabbit Grooming supplies, FoR merch ...and more!

Address: 10706 Vista Rd, Columbia, MD

We can accept purchases made with credit/debit cards, personal checks, and cash. Payments can be made through PayPal to <u>donations@friendsofrabbits.org</u>. (If you choose to pay with PayPal, please list which item(s) you purchased in the description.)

### Oxbow food, treats & hay





# Friends of Rabbits Pet sitting Services

### Daily Rates:

\$20.00 per rabbit
\$ 5.00 for each extra rabbit in the same space
\$15.00 for each rabbit in a separate space

Weekly Rates: \$100.00 for a single rabbit \$135.00 for a pair



# Your bunny buds will be in good hands with FoR!

**Extra fees apply for:** special feeding, administration of medications, trips to the vet, or other special needs. In-home bunny sitting is subject to extra fees and subject to sitter availability.

Discounts are available for long-term rabbit sitting, caged housing, military deployment, and low income community members.

Please email **<u>info@friendsofrabbits.org</u>** to schedule your rabbits' stay with us, or to get a quote (if you email us individually and we're out of town, we may not get your request in a timely manner).

# upcoming events

# Adoption Day at Columbia HQ

**Every Second Sunday - email** info@friendsofrabbits.org for more info and to schedule 'bunny speed dates.' Upcoming dates: 2/11, 3/11, 4/8, 5/13, 6/10, 7/8

# Adoption events at per supplies plus.

**Every Saturday** 11AM – 12 PM – New Rabbit of the Week and a short Q & A hosted by by Susan W. susan@friendsofrabbits.org **Every Thursday** from 6 to 7 PM with a Q & A about rabbits, hosted by: Karissa Pensa

**Every Third Sunday** from 2 PM – 4 PM, with a Q & A about rabbits, hosted by: John White

<u>11054 Lee Highway Fairfax, VA</u> call Pet Supplies Plus to confirm (703) 359-2659

# For the most up-to-date event schedule, follow Friends of Rabbits on social media:

- Instagram (friendsofrabbits),
- Twitter (@Friends\_Rabbits)
- Facebook
- or visit <u>www.friendsofrabbits.org</u>.



# Adoption events at petco

**Every 3rd Saturday** 12-3pm Adoption event at Petco <u>9230 Old Keene Mill Road, Burke, VA</u>

# Adoption Events at **#bark!**\*

### Saturdays 12-3pm, please see schedule online for more info

1/28: Rockville (This one, and only this one, is a Sunday)2/17: Olney3/17: Silver Spring3/24: Clarksville4/14: Kentlands5/26: Clarksville

# **Bunny Yoga!**

3/11: Veterinary Holistic Center in N. Springfield, VA

# Great Sage Benefit Day

3/25: Eat delicious gourmet vegan food while benefitting FoR. 5809 Clarksville Square Drive Clarksville, MD



# **Grooming Services**

Friends of Rabbits in Columbia now offers grooming services by appointment: Please email **info@friendsofrabbits.org** for more details and/or to schedule an appointment today!

Editors: Tina von K., Beck B. - Managing Editor: Beck B. - Questions? Email editor@friendsofrabbits.org

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