

Summer 2026

A Tough Little Kitty



CLAW's Board was holding its monthly Zoom meeting in April when an urgent text was received. Three gasoline-covered kittens had been dropped off at Dogs and Cats Emergency & Specialty veterinarians. Could Bowie CLAW help? The answer was yes, without question.

VP Paul Nadler left the meeting and raced over to pick up the tiny kittens. In the meantime, Mickie Teston determined that foster Amy Collins was willing to take them immediately. The kittens had been bathed at Dogs and Cats but still smelled of gasoline. It turns out that they had been under a lawnmower with a leaking gas tank. They were soon named Diesel, Octane and Petrol and were

kept under close watch by Amy and later by Mickie.

Miraculously, as the days went by, it appeared that they had suffered no obvious ill-effects from the gasoline. However, during an examination, a vet determined that Petrol had an uncommon congenital defect called pectus excavatum in which the breast bone and rib cage are deformed, reducing the space for the heart and lungs. This needed to be corrected by surgery.

Although this is a relatively rare condition, CLAW last year had another kitten, Johnnie, with it. Sadly, she did not survive long after her



surgery. So, there was great anxiety as Petrol's surgery took place on June 8. Despite a lung collapse during the procedure, the little trooper pulled through. As of today, she continues to recover and is a perky little sweetie.

This was an example of CLAW's principle to never give up on a cat that has come into our care, regardless of the cost or the obstacles. We are a no-kill rescue, and we work to ensure that each animal in our care is given the opportunity to live out its best possible future. In Petrol's case, this came with a hefty price tag. The surgery, overnight stay at the vet because of the collapsed lung and other charges totaled over \$6,000. It is only through the financial support of our compassionate community that we can continue to abide by this guiding principle. Thank you!



Karen House introduces Bowie Mayor Michael Estève to Petrol at Kitty Hall on June 13.



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CLAW Connections

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Mission

Bowie CLAW (Citizens for Local Animal Welfare) is a completely volunteer-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Its purpose is to advocate for the interests and welfare of animals in the city of Bowie, Maryland, and the greater Bowie area. This includes but is not limited to the establishment of a system that insures the care and placement of Bowie's homeless animals and the return of lost pets to their owners.

Melissa Before and After



Many of the kittens that come into CLAW's care are experiencing one or more unpleasant conditions. From flea infestations to upper respiratory infections to internal parasites, we know how to help our new kitties to become healthy. Sometimes, though, an existing ailment creates unusual challenges for our volunteers.

On May 18, an ambulance crew rescued a tiny kitten from the middle of Route 197, Collington Road, near the Bowie sign, and she ended up with CLAW. She was named Melissa for one of her finders. Weighing 1.16 pounds and estimated to be five weeks old, she was infected with ringworm, which was identified during the kennel intake process. This came just a week after Greenlight, another newly-received kitten from another part of Bowie, was also diagnosed with ringworm.

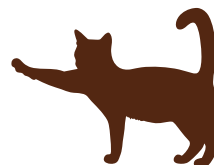
Caution must be exercised when dealing with a case of feline ringworm, which is highly contagious not only to other cats but also to humans as well. It is a fungal skin infection (no worms are involved) that results in crusty bald spots on cats and red, patchy rashes on humans. For weeks, CLAW's volunteers in the kennels had to take precautions when dealing with these two kittens by donning disposable PPE gowns and wearing gloves. Both kittens received appropriate medications and suffered through smelly lime sulfur baths.

The results are evident in the before and after photos of Melissa. She is now a healthy kitten who is growing at a steady pace. Soon she will be made available for adoption into her forever home. Many thanks to the volunteers who provided the loving care that has allowed this kitten to recover and thrive!





A Message from CLAW President Karen House



Bowie CLAW Looks to the Future

Bowie CLAW was founded in 2009 as a grassroots organization dedicated to the wellbeing of animals in the community. It has now grown and matured into a very effective group of volunteers that enables hundreds of animals each year to have their best possible futures. With that growth comes the need to adjust as an organization.

As a result of the May general election, the Board will remain unchanged with the following members: Michael Angulo, Jeanne D'Alonzo-Davis, Paul Nadler, Joe Puccio, Lauren Semeniuk, Mickie Teston and me. After the election, the Board appointed its officers. I will continue as the President, and the other officers will stay in place: Paul Nadler (Vice President), Jeanne D'Alonzo-Davis (Secretary) and Virginia Jones (Treasurer).

To ensure CLAW's continuing success, some changes are necessary. In addition to a new communications strategy (see

elsewhere in this issue), our By-Laws have been reviewed by the Board, and adjustments are needed. A resolution with the changes must first be passed by the Board and then ratified by a two-thirds vote of the Members at a general meeting. The document is to be distributed to Members in the coming months.

There have been months of discussion, plus focus groups, related to a revision of CLAW's logo. Taking into account the feedback gained, we will pursue an updated logo but without drastic changes. It will still be round, with a banner at the bottom, and will feature a cat and dog, with the cat being more prominent. Prototypes will be shared with the Members once they are ready.

We are also making some much needed back-end changes. For over a year, we have been using Petestablished shelter software and its preregistered microchips, which ensures that an

adopter's information is immediately entered into the microchip registry. By doing so, we have improved the probability that if a CLAW cat is lost and found, it will make it back to its owner.

In addition, we are working to update our website and Google Workspace. Two volunteers who are already working in other CLAW areas are assisting us with this effort. Thank you so much to Bethany DeRight and Jim Saville for helping get us on the road to making everything more user friendly.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not give a huge thank you to all of our volunteers for what they do for Bowie CLAW every day. Whether it be cleaning, giving meds, dealing with grumpy cats, trapping, transporting, fostering, donating funds and goods, inputting adoptions, etc. – it is not easy, but they get it done. Their efforts have resulted in us adopting out over 200 cats so far this year!

My CLAW Story

How to Say Goodbye: The Hardest Part of Fostering



Rachael Maass is a foster for CLAW who works at a small veterinary practice and is currently pursuing further education to become a certified feline behaviorist. At home, she has two dogs, two rabbits, and three of her own cats, in addition to fosters. Below she shares her perspective on a difficult aspect of fostering.

As I approach my fifth-year fostering, most of which has been spent with CLAW, I find immense satisfaction in having helped more than 100 felines ranging from orphaned newborns, pregnant or nursing mothers, and complex cases.

Many people considering becoming a foster hesitate to commit because they don't understand that the fostering mindset means knowing when to say goodbye. Honestly, the foundation of fostering is built on goodbyes. Each one teaches us something about compassion, resilience, and ourselves.

The hardest goodbye is through loss. Fosters experience it more often than most. We don't choose every case that comes our way, and despite best efforts, not everyone survives. I've held so many kittens and cats in their final moments, and every loss leaves its mark.

One of those recent cases was my former foster, Kismet. He came in as an elderly stray on death's doorstep, emaciated, starving and sick. Short term fostering paved the way to his adoption. My decision to take him in led to an additional 2½ years of life. Some might say that isn't long enough. For Kismet & his mom Vanessa, it meant everything.

Adoption brings a different kind of goodbye. People often ask, "How do you not keep them all?" It's simple: if we kept every foster, we couldn't help the next one. Every successful adoption creates space to save another life.

Not every farewell ends with adoption. Some cats return to life outdoors in colonies, as barn cats, move to sanctuaries, or transfer to fosters with specialized experience. Recognizing when re-placement can better meet a cat's needs isn't failure. It's putting the animal first.

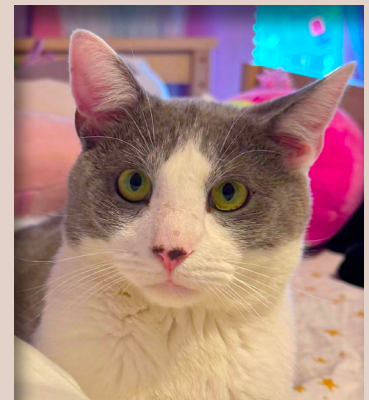
Fostering is temporary. We give them what they need, so they can move on. Love means letting go, knowing you made their world better simply by being part of it.

Meet Katmandu

Katmandu is a super sweet, laid-back gentleman with a calm, easygoing personality. He loves spending time with people, especially children, and enjoys all the attention and affection they have to give. If you're looking for a gentle, loving companion, Katmandu would make a wonderful addition to your family.

If you have room in your heart and home for **Katmandu**, please text **Mickie** for more information: **202-424-9229**

Visit our **Adoptable Kittens and Cats album** on Facebook to meet all the sweet faces waiting for forever homes.



Improving CLAW's Communications

A cross-section of CLAW's volunteers participated in two focus groups on April 15, sharing thoughts on the organization's strengths and areas to improve. A number of comments focused on specific aspects of communication, with some suggestions provided on how to address certain issues. Following up on this input, the Board has begun the development of a communications strategy that is to be finalized over the coming weeks and implemented going forward.

CLAW's communication efforts should be designed to support the mission and can generally be categorized by the audience:

- ◆ Internal (volunteers and fosters)
- ◆ External (CLAW members who are not volunteers/fosters, in addition to adopters, donors, community members at large, and elected officials)

Our audiences can also be segmented either by their interests or by their connection with the organization. There are now approximately eighty to ninety volunteers, including fosters, contributing to CLAW's work. There are about 140 formal members of the organization. CLAW's emailing list is at about one thousand addresses, and its Facebook pages have attracted over five thousand followers.

Major goals of the strategy will likely be the following.

- ◆ ***Further develop existing communication channels to ensure effectiveness and that each channel has a lead coordinator***

These existing channels include CLAW's website, emails to the distribution list, Facebook pages, Instagram, YouTube, Nextdoor, WhatsApp, Google calendars, Kennel News and the *CLAW Connections* newsletter.

- ◆ ***Establish a communications committee to ensure coordination***

- ◆ ***Develop new communication channels***

These possible new channels could include regularly-scheduled Zoom sessions for volunteers, training videos for volunteers/fosters and TikTok.

If you have thoughts on this subject that you would like to share, please send them to Joe Puccio, joepuccio@bowieclaw.org.

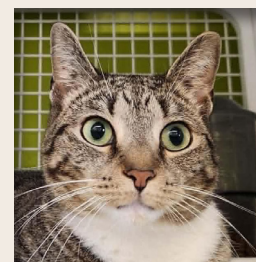
Meet Binx & Boo



Binx

Binx and **Boo** are 3-year-old sweethearts searching for loving forever homes and can be adopted together or separately.

Binx is a handsome, gentle boy who may be a little shy at first, but with patience and kindness, his sweet personality shines through. **Boo** is a happy, affectionate girl who loves pets, snuggles, and being part of the action. Whether you choose one or both, you'll be bringing home a lifetime of love and purrs.



Boo

If you have room in your heart and home for **Binx** and/or **Boo**, please text **Mickie** for more information: **202-424-9229**

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Fundraising Committee Is Established

To survive and thrive, Bowie CLAW needs both a large group of committed volunteers and a steady flow of funding. To help build that funding, the Board recently established a Fundraising Committee.

The committee's purpose is to coordinate with the Board in developing long-term fundraising goals, strategies and plans to increase the organization's financial resources. It is also responsible for managing approved fundraising activities, growing existing fundraising programs and establishing relationships with individuals, businesses and other organizations to make Bowie CLAW's fundraising program more effective.

The committee consists of active Bowie CLAW members and is led by Margaret Havinga. Other members include Ron Specht, Becky Morusiewicz, Linda Harbaugh, Jill Higgins, Rachael Maass and Marlene Boylan. Paul Nadler serves as the Board liaison.

So far, the committee has explored various fundraising ideas. At the June Kitty Hall event, kitten welcome baskets were offered in exchange for donations. The committee also launched a partnership with Patuxent Nursery's Christmas in July event, where customers donated needed items to Bowie CLAW in exchange for a generous discount coupon.

Upcoming actions may include expanding restaurant fundraising options, contacting local businesses for needed donations and creating a sponsorship program. The committee also envisions the future availability of branded merchandise for purchase.

Want to get involved? Become a Bowie CLAW member and join the Fundraising Committee. To share ideas or volunteer, email bowieclaw@gmail.com.

Mark Your Calendar!

Restaurant Fundraiser:

Wednesday, August 19

Frank and Luke's NY Pizza Kitchen

1153 Route 3 North #30
(Crofton Station)
Gambrills, MD 21054

Upcoming Adoption Events:

Saturday, August 1

Petco Bowie

Saturday, August 15

Petco Waugh Chapel

Saturday, August 22

PetSmart Bowie

Saturday, August 29

Petco Bowie

For latest calendar updates, follow *Bowie CLAW* on *Facebook*.

Peppa is a sweet, easygoing 11-year-old boy with a big personality and an even bigger voice—especially when it's mealtime! He loves to "chat" with his people, greeting you with happy meows when he wants attention. **Peppa** is gentle and affectionate, enjoys being petted, and is perfectly content sitting on your lap. That adorable pink nose isn't just cute—it's his signature feature!

If you have room in your heart and home for **Peppa**, please text **Mickie** for more information: **202-424-9229**

Visit our ***Adoptable Kittens and Cats album*** on Facebook to meet all the sweet faces waiting for forever homes.

Meet Peppa

