

“Getting to Know your Local Rescues”

Sister Kitten Animal Rescue

by Ryan Jo Summers

Eric Phelps is an animal lover. For the last thirty years, his career has involved a wide range of animal rescue activities. In 2019, he started the Sister Kitten Animal Rescue (SKAR), based in Maggie Valley, NC.



Sister Kitten is active in nine WNC counties, most heavily in Buncombe and Henderson Counties. Its programs include rescuing and rehoming abandoned and neglected animals, TNR (Trap, Neuter and Return) of feral cats, and providing veterinary care for rescued animals. In addition, SKAR provides support, education and assistance to caregivers of community cats and promotes community animal welfare. Sister Kitten is a Petco Adoption Partner and has kittens available for adoption at the Petco store at 385 Brevard Road, Asheville. SKAR also maintains a highly active foster program.

In 2020, their first full year of operation, Sister Kitten logged many important accomplishments: hundreds of animals spayed/neutered, over 150 caregivers assisted throughout nine WNC



SKAR rescued mother and kittens.

counties, and over 35,000 meals provided to community cats. Most importantly, they saved dozens of kittens from lives on the street.

With an unlikely name, Sister Kitten Animal Rescue, some might wonder how it came to be. Years ago, Founder and Executive Director, Eric Phelps, had a foster kitten called Sister Kitten. This name was a nod to the song, “Sister Christian”, and that special kitten’s name went on to become the organization’s name as well.

SKAR works with county animal shelters when contacted, pulling animals in need of specific attention or at high risk of euthanasia. In addition, SKAR is also called upon to investigate situations where outdoor dogs might be living in substandard conditions and also deals with injured wildlife or even lost pets. Domestic

rabbits hopping along the interstate, squirrels clipped by cars, opossums stuck on fences, and lost dogs are just some of the unpredictable events that can occur in a day of the life of Sister Kitten workers. Animal rescue is never dull, as working with animals can be as unpredictable as it is rewarding!

A major focus for SKAR is managing community cat colonies and increasing the number of foster homes for adoptable kittens. This includes controlling future populations through TNR and removing kittens at the right age for fostering and ultimate adoption. Unfortunately,



Community cats have community meal.

there are no government funds for this program and it’s usually volunteer driven. More homes are needed to foster incoming kittens and more people who are willing to work with community cat colonies are needed too.

Compassionate and dedicated volunteers are the lifeblood of any rescue organization, and Sister Kitten is no different. It needs volunteers

who are devoted and dependable people who love animals and want to help. All such volunteers would be appreciated and welcomed to assist in whatever capacity they could.

Eric Phelps is highly experienced in weather-related rescues, having been active during Hurricane Katrina and other hurricane and flooding events. This year, he intends to equip Sister Kitten with the necessary gear and to join forces with other rescue teams.

Sister Kitten can be reached in a variety of ways and more information found online. Their Facebook page is facebook.com/sisterkitten. Their website is sisterkitten.org and they can be reached via email at info@sisterkitten.org. Individuals wishing to donate or support their efforts can do so at sisterkitten.org/how-to-help. And SKAR also participates in the Amazon Smile program at [Amazon.com](https://amazon.com).

Ryan Jo Summers is a local author and an animal advocate. She has worked in the professional pet care industry for more than thirty years in both business and non-profit sectors. Her home is a haven to a menagerie of rescued animals of various species. To find out more about Ryan’s writing and her pets, visit her website at ryanjosummers.com or her Facebook pages [Facebook.com/RyanJoSummersAuthor](https://facebook.com/RyanJoSummersAuthor) and facebook.com/ryanjosummers. “Getting to Know your Local Rescues” is an on-going series highlighting WNC animal rescue groups. Any organization interested in being featured in WNC PetGazette should contact Ryan Jo at ryanjosummers.com and use the ‘Contact’ tab. 