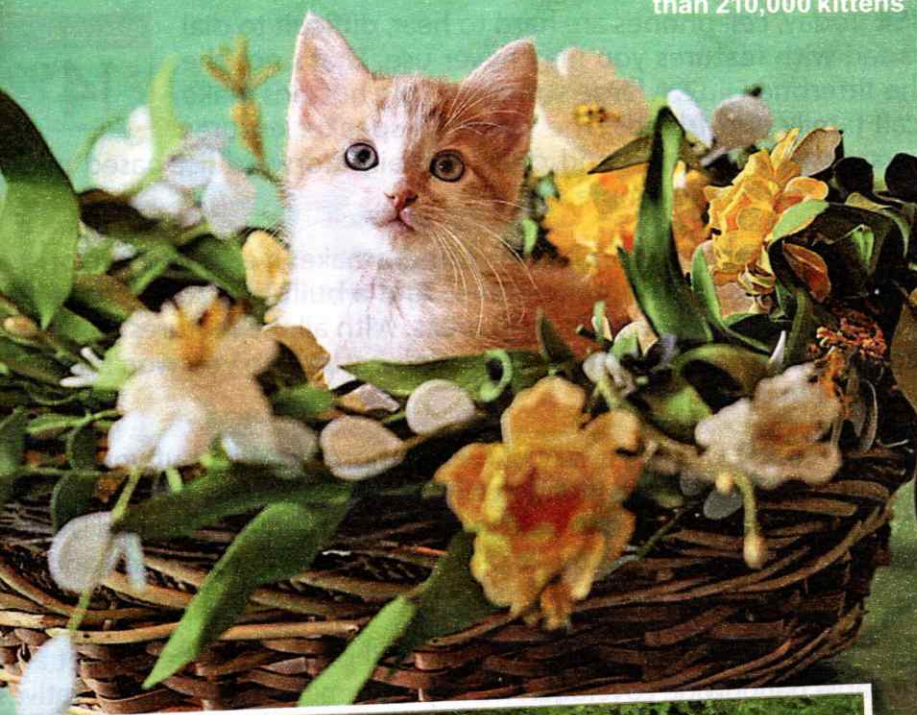


# Her love and can- thousands of kittens!

In 2020 alone, the National Kitten Coalition saved more than 210,000 kittens



"Kittens take a lot of time and specialized care, but it's a labor of love," says Coalition founder Susan Spaulding

Heartbroken when she learned very young kittens were being euthanized at animal shelters because they need special care, Susan Spaulding began fostering the sweet little furballs. Her love spread, and today, she and a coalition of animal lovers have rescued hundreds of thousands of tiny kitties

Susan Spaulding couldn't believe her ears. A man had just come into the San Antonio thrift store where she was volunteering in 1994 and asked to drop off a box of 13 just-weeks-old kittens. An employee apologized, telling him they didn't take animals, and directed him to the local shelter.

As he left, Susan asked her friend when she thought the kittens would be ready for adoption because she and her husband were thinking about getting a cat.

"Oh they won't last the night," her co-worker replied, explaining kittens that young were too much work. "They will probably be euthanized."

*That's not fair*, Susan thought and raced after the man. "I'll take the kittens!" she told him.

*But how do I care for them?* Susan wondered and called a veterinarian, but he told her, "You can't help them. They're too young. They're going to die."

*No, that's not going to happen*, Susan thought.

Following her heart and the minimal instructions the vet offered, she bottle-fed the kittens every few hours and did her best to keep them warm—and to her joy, they all survived and went on to loving homes.

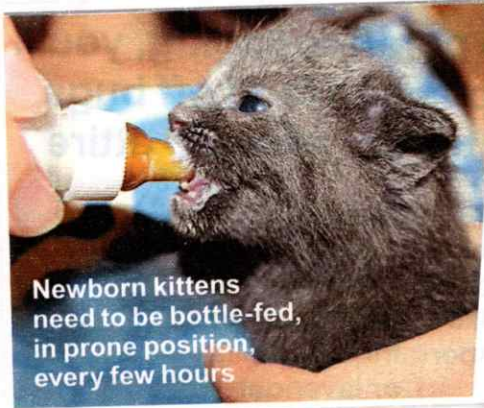
Susan was happy and proud of what she thought would be a one-time kitty rescue mission. But word got around, and soon people started calling her, saying, "I hear you help newborn kittens."

That's when the "Kitten Mom" was born.

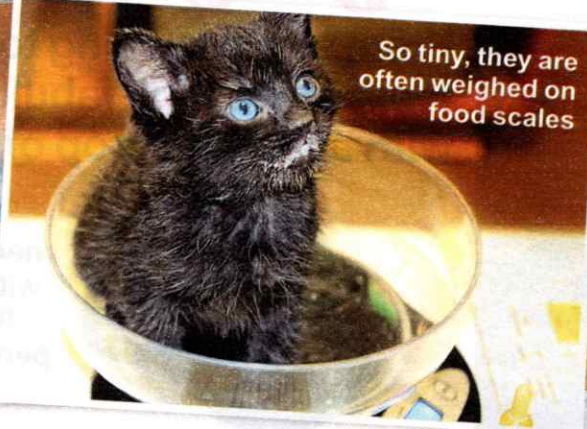
## Heartfelt mission

Susan began taking in kittens, just a few here and there. She contacted vets and veterinary schools to learn proper care on everything from how newborn kittens need to be fed to how to help them empty their tiny bladders. Despite the time and labor-intensive care, Susan couldn't turn any kitten away. Just a few

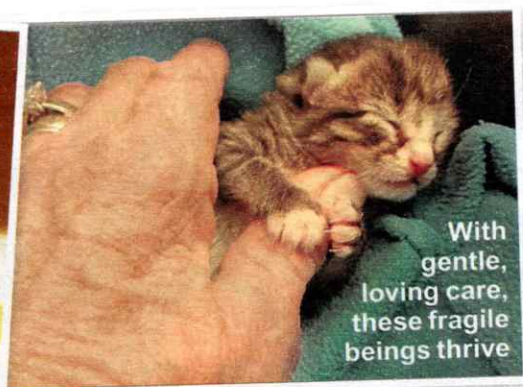
# do attitude have saved



Newborn kittens need to be bottle-fed, in prone position, every few hours



So tiny, they are often weighed on food scales



With gentle, loving care, these fragile beings thrive

years later, when she and her husband, Norm, moved to Centreville, Virginia, she was fostering as many as 300 kittens a year. And while she was getting help from volunteers, Susan realized she needed to branch out from her basement. So she and her fellow animal lover friend, Rosemarie Crawford, decided to start a "kitten coalition." They'd teach free classes for people interested in fostering kittens.

There was so much interest—the day of the first class, the line was out the door. So in 2008, Susan and Rosemarie turned their effort into a nonprofit, now called the National Kitten Coalition, NKC (KittenCoalition.org), dedicated to

*"It's amazing what's possible when people get together and follow their hearts"*

increasing survival rates of kittens through education. NKC provides online resources, webinars, conferences and workshops.

Not long after Laura Baughman attended a training session, a pregnant cat was brought into the animal shelter where she volunteered. Normally, she'd have been too nervous to take on the responsibility, but now, equipped with the know-how, Laura signed on to foster the mama-to-be, named Tuxie. With Laura's care, Tuxie gave birth to eight kittens—who all survived and went on to forever homes.

*The power of knowledge, combined with lots of love, saves lives,* Susan marveled.

## The ripple effect of love

With every passing year, interest in the NKC grew. In 2020 alone, the program helped save more than 210,000 kittens!

Today, Susan, now 72 and living in Hickory, North Carolina, also fosters special-needs kittens for the nonprofit NC Paws Cat Rescue, saving even more lives.

"To think I was told kittens couldn't be saved. But like my husband said to me back then, 'You don't let anyone tell you that you can't do something.' And I hope no one else does either," Susan says. "It's truly amazing what's possible when you follow your heart, and collaborate with other people who share your passion."

—Jen Reeder



## 3 easy ways to help at-risk infant animals!

Newborn shelter animals require 24/7 care and are more susceptible to sickness and injuries after being separated from their parents. Here, ways you can help!

### 1 Be a kitten masseuse!

Massage therapy has been shown to increase energy and heighten kittens' immune function, say experts at Heal Animal Massage Therapy. Visit YouTube.com and search "kitten massage" to learn techniques that heal, then volunteer at a local shelter to try out your skills!

### 2 Offer puppies comfort!

Most shelters are in need of items specifically for newborn puppies—like soft foods, droppers for medications, potty pads and toys. Stop by a dollar store and pick up a few things to donate to a shelter near you. Want to help at no cost? Donate old heating pads, towels or blankets you no longer use.

### 3 Shop for baby birds!

Go to WildBirdFund.org, click "How to help" and then "Amazon Smile & Wish List." Then click the Wish List and shop for items like rubber gloves, nuts and soap. Or shop through Smile.Amazon.com and for each purchase, Amazon Smile will donate .5% of the price to the Wild Bird Fund.

Share your own inspiring story with us, and we'll pay you \$200 if we publish it! Read or heard someone else's story you think belongs in Woman's World? Send it to us! If you're the first to share it and we publish it, we'll pay you \$50! Email the story with your name and phone number to: WWFeatures@WomansWorldMag.com. Or mail to: Scoop, Woman's World, 270 Sylvan Ave., Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632.

We pay \$200!