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**FURKIDS ANIMAL RESCUE AND SHELTERS HOLDS GRAND OPENING OF NEW CAT SHELTER THIS SATURDAY  
Fort and Michele Felker Cat Shelter Designed Specifically for Cats and People  
Like No Other Cat Shelter in Georgia**

**Organization Continues Phase II Capital Campaign to Complete Dog Shelter**

- [Furkids Animal Rescue and Shelters](#) will be holding a Grand Opening Celebration this Saturday, December 9, for its new free-standing cat shelter building at the Furkids sanctuary at 5235 Union Hill Road in Forsyth County.
- The Fort and Michele Felker Cat Shelter, the second new building to be constructed on the Furkids campus, is designed exclusively for the care and safe housing of cats, providing services that will help cats flourish and be socialized while providing a welcoming environment where potential adopters can meet adoptable cats.
- The Fort and Michele Felker Cat Shelter will be like no other cat shelter in Georgia, featuring large, cage-free rooms where cats can roam freely; catios/cat porches where cats can safely enjoy the outdoors; a cat café and other features for animals and people.

**Atlanta, Ga. December 4, 2023** – Furkids is holding a grand opening celebration for members of the public at its new free-standing cat shelter building at the Furkids sanctuary at 5235 Union Hill Road in Forsyth County. Furkids rescues homeless animals and provides them with the best medical care and a nurturing environment while working to find each one a forever home. The Grand Opening event is scheduled for Saturday, December 9, 11-3 pm, featuring an open house for visitors to tour the shelter and learn more about Furkids and opportunities to volunteer, adopt and support the animals. Kaedy Kiely and 97.1 the River will kick off their heartwarming “12 Strays of Christmas” radio segment live from Furkids. There will be refreshments and giveaways as part of the festivities.



The Fort and Michele Felker Cat Shelter complements the existing buildings on the Furkids campus sanctuary, which now includes:

- A large administrative building /medical facility;
- [The Giaquinto Event Center at Shiloh Gardens](#), a beautiful special events facility where people in the community can host weddings, meetings, parties, and even memorial services indoors or in the gardens with all revenues going to support Furkids programs;
- Multiple small buildings for animal care and housing;
- The leafy, picturesque, 9.11-acre property also encompasses two large ponds; numerous gardens, patios, waterfalls, fountains and woodland paths; and several acres of undeveloped forest. The property is adjacent to the Big Creek Greenway, a popular nature destination for walkers, runners, bikers and their dogs.

The 5,600 square foot Fort and Michele Felker Cat Shelter is like no other cat shelter in Georgia. The architectural design by BLUR Workshop aligns with the modern/rustic aesthetics of the existing buildings on the Furkids campus. The main feature of the cat shelter is the Furkids signature: large, bright, open rooms where rescued cats can relax and roam, cage-free. Each room is dedicated to different types of felines, such as adoptable kittens, adolescents, adult and senior cats, long term resident cats who have not been adopted, and those with feline leukemia and feline immunodeficiency virus. The shelter also will include a grand adoption room where cats and adopters can relax and interact freely and where community events can be held; a medical exam room; catios/cat porches where cats can safely experience the joy of being outdoors; a cat café; administrative offices and storage areas.

“Fort and Michele Felker have invested in their love for homeless cats by providing significant support for the cat shelter, and we are honored that this building will carry their names,” said Furkids founder and CEO Sam Shelton. “I am grateful to all of our generous supporters who have helped us reach this milestone. They have helped us realize the first part of our dream to create the first-of-its-kind, comprehensive destination animal sanctuary. Our primary mission is to save helpless animals, and we are equally committed to serving staff members, volunteers, donors and people in the community who will benefit from the services Furkids provides.”

Furkids has a goal of \$6.9 million for Phase II of the Destination Furkids capital campaign, which includes funds to build both the cat shelter and a new dog shelter at the sanctuary. The stand alone dog shelter will replace the existing dog shelter now located at 1520 Union Hill Road, three miles away from Furkids' main campus. Ultimately, Furkids plans to create a comprehensive destination animal sanctuary to include both cat and dog shelters, a free-standing veterinary clinic where Furkids vets and professional staff can treat cats and dogs, the Giaquinto Event Center at Shiloh Gardens, and a memorial garden.

Beyond adoptions at the cat shelter, Furkids also manages cat adoption centers at several metro Atlanta Petco and PetSmart stores; in-home foster services provided by generous volunteers and staff; its TransFUR program that transports Georgia's homeless animals to no-kill shelters in northern states where they are highly adoptable; monthly low cost vaccine and microchip community clinics; and a multi-purpose satellite location on Holcomb Bridge Road, the Peachtree Corners Adoption Center, which offers adoptions of kittens and young adult cats, serves as a clinic, and is where foster caregivers can pick up supplies and meet with staff members and other Furkids volunteers.

Beyond adoptions at the cat shelter, Furkids also manages cat adoption centers at several metro Atlanta Petco and PetSmart stores. Furkids provides in-home foster services through generous volunteers and staff. Furkids operates its TransFUR program, which transports Georgia's homeless animals to no-kill shelters in northern states where they are highly adoptable. Furkids conducts monthly low-cost vaccine and microchip community clinics and operates a multi-purpose satellite location on Holcomb Bridge Road known as the Peachtree Corners Adoption Center. This center offers adoptions for kittens and young adult cats, serves as a clinic, and acts as a pick-up point for foster caregivers to collect supplies and meet with staff and other Furkids volunteers. Furkids also has a similar remote location in East Cobb to assist local communities. In addition to these initiatives, Furkids also has an extensive community cat program, and five thrift stores to sustain the many Furkids programs.

In 2018, Furkids bought its 9.11-acre parcel, originally developed and operated as Wakoola Water Gardens. The property was dilapidated and overgrown after having been abandoned for some years before Furkids bought it. With the help of donors and volunteers, Furkids repaired and renovated existing structures and restored the gardens and waters to craft a functional, attractive combination of natural and structural beauty that helps homeless animals, supports Furkids programs and, with the special events facility, provides a community resource which is also an in-house source of fundraising.

"This lush, expansive property exceeds our greatest expectations. Furkids was only able to buy and renovate the property with the support of hundreds of donors and volunteers, including corporations, dedicated individuals, and volunteer groups from churches, schools and scouts. Their donations of money, material, resources, labor and sweat equity are beyond measure, having helped us repurpose a beautiful piece of property into a one-of-a-kind sanctuary in the Southeast for homeless animals," said Ms. Shelton. "The Fort and Michele Cat Shelter is the next step in our progress. We could not be more grateful for the support our donors, volunteers and staff have provided."

More information is available at [www.furkids.org](http://www.furkids.org).

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## **ABOUT FURKIDS**

Furkids, headquartered in Atlanta, GA, is a 501c3 nonprofit charitable organization that operates the largest cage-free, no-kill shelter in the Southeast for rescued cats and Sadie's Place, a no-kill shelter for dogs. Furkids also operates one of the only facilities in the Southeast dedicated to the care of FIV positive cats. The Furkids

mission is to rescue homeless animals, provide them with the best medical care and nurturing environment while working to find them a forever home. Furkids heals the whole animal, physically and emotionally, restoring its health and its spirit. Furkids has rescued and altered more than 70,000 animals since its founding in 2002. Approximately 900 animals are in the Furkids program today, in the Furkids shelters, 8 PetSmart and Petco adoption centers, and more than 400 foster homes in the Atlanta area. Furkids is the only animal rescue organization in metro Atlanta that allows children of all ages to volunteer. Furkids volunteer programs are designed to restore the health and spirits of injured and homeless animals while providing healing opportunities for volunteers who are strengthened by the bond of love and care between humans and animals. For more information about our volunteer opportunities and programs, visit [www.furkids.org](http://www.furkids.org).