

## **FURKIDS ANIMAL RESCUE AND SHELTERS HELPS FIND JUSTICE FOR TORTURED CATS**

**Cumming, GA, May 20, 2024-** Yesterday, Fulton County Judge Eric Dunaway sentenced Elvis Fistik to two years in prison for two counts of animal cruelty after multiple cats with arrow wounds to their heads were discovered by local residents in a Roswell neighborhood last year. Furkids Animal Rescue and Shelters has cared for four of the cats and has been working with the Roswell, Georgia police department and other law enforcement officials on the case. Furkids also was awarded \$2,160 in restitution from Mr. Fistik, which will go directly toward providing medical care and services for animals in critical need.

Furkids 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 rescued dogs. Each year, Furkids rescues more than 5,000 homeless and abandoned animals providing them with the best medical care and nurturing environment while working to find them a forever home.

Just before St. Patrick's Day in 2023, Furkids received a disturbing video from a veterinary clinic showing a cat that had been shot in the head with a bow and arrow. The veterinarians contacted Furkids to see if the animal rescue and shelter organization could help trap the injured cat and provide the medical care to save its life. Furkids agreed to stand by these innocent animals and do everything possible, including working with law enforcement officials, to save their lives and track down and hold accountable the person who hurt them.

Furkids treated four of the cats who were harmed by Fistik, who intended to harm the animals. Two of them are still in the Furkids program today, physically healed, learning to trust humans again and awaiting adoption into a forever home. One of the two still at Furkids is "Patrick", a tabby cat, who was in critical condition after being shot by a dart or arrow between his eyes. X-rays confirm just how close Patrick was to losing his life. "Patrick didn't suffer any permanent damage to his eyes or brain, and the fact that he is alive today is nothing short of a miracle," said Samantha Shelton Furkids founder and CEO.



*Furkids X-ray showing Patrick, the cat, with a dart or arrow piercing his skull  
Patrick the cat, in March, 2023, as Furkids rescued him, with a dart or arrow piercing his skull*

The Fulton County District Attorney's office led the animal cruelty case. Supervising Deputy District Attorney Jill Hollander and her team are the only unit in the state of Georgia overseeing animal cruelty cases. "Furkids is so grateful to Supervising Deputy District Attorney Hollander and her entire team for their efforts on Patrick's behalf and on the behalf of the cats who were killed by Mr. Fistik," said Samantha Shelton, Furkids founder and CEO. "We also are grateful for the work of Roswell Police Detective Fernandez, who worked tirelessly to uncover evidence and bring about justice for Patrick the cat and the cats who did not survive torture and death."

Animal cruelty is against the law. O.C.G.A. §16-12-4 states a person will be guilty of cruelty to animals when they cause physical pain, suffering, or death to any animal by any unjustifiable act or omission. A person convicted of the offense of aggravated cruelty to animals shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than five years, a fine not to exceed \$15,000.00, or both, provided that any person who is convicted of a second or subsequent violation of this subsection shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than five years, a fine not to exceed the amount provided by Code Section 17-10-8, or both "If you ever witness animal cruelty, you are legally obligated to report it," said Ms. Shelton. "We urge you to do something if you see something that hurts innocent animals. Our entire program, including the Community Cats program that cares for homeless cats living in the wild, is oriented to protecting and standing behind innocent animals."

Today, Patrick the cat, who was tortured and shot, lives in a free roaming cat room at Furkids where he has access to food, affection, and a screened in cat patio with plenty of natural sunlight and fresh air. He is well loved by volunteers and staff, and they look to the future with hope that his perfect home will come very soon.



*Patrick at Furkids Animal Rescue and Shelters is healed physically, and waiting to be adopted by a new loving family*