

THE ADVENTURES OF EDDIE

BY: EDDIE

The Friends Across the Ages ROBOT-CAT

In 2018 Friends Across the Ages purchased a Joy For All cat for nursing home visits. This is not a child's toy; it is a high-tech robotic cat especially designed for older adults and those with memory disorders. To date, "Eddie" has visited 3 nursing homes with our volunteers. This is his story, in his own words (transcribed by Kim Mitchell).

I began my life as all cat robots do: from factory to online retail giant and finally to my new home. My new people marveled at my perhaps excessive meowing, purring and attempts to groom and roll over. Their real cats weren't impressed by my lifelike display. Frankly, I wasn't impressed with them, so the feeling was mutual. I was given the name Eddie in honor of a fat black cat that I look nothing like.

My first nursing home outing was to Signature Healthcare. I sat in bed with a woman named Marie. She enjoyed petting my head with her good arm but was sure to let my people know that she didn't need a fake cat. Hmmp... the nerve.

The next stop was Miss Shirley's room. Now this is my kind of lady! She admired my fine looks and feline attitude and even showed me some dance moves. I would have stayed with her forever, purring and mowing all day long, or at least until my batteries ran out. Unfortunately, Miss Shirley can't remember things very well and sadly let my people know that she just didn't think she could care for a real cat. Fair enough I suppose.

I met so many interesting people that first night, after which I was unceremoniously dumped in the trunk (The TRUNK! The indignity!) A week went by and I soon found myself at the nursing home again. Marie stroked my fur lovingly as she let my people know that she still wasn't impressed. She's a

tough one. Miss Shirley was all dressed up for the evening but seemed sad as she wandered around the halls. She was pleased to see me again (who wouldn't be?) but reiterated that a real cat has no place in the nursing home. She simply cannot care for me. That hurts.

The night was coming to a close and another week in the trunk loomed largely in my future, when suddenly I was rescued by none other than my robot-hating friend Marie! I couldn't believe my good luck.

Not only did she want me to sit with her for the rest of our visit that evening, but she insisted that I stay with her the whole week. A sleep-over! I was so excited to be able to keep her company and to watch Little House on the Prairie non-stop, day after day. That hard exterior was nothing more than a cover up for a robot-cat loving softie.

Yep, being the Friends Across the Ages Robot-Cat sure has it's puuuuuurrrks.



Will Mitchell and Miss Maggie enjoy some time with Eddie the Robot Cat.

NEXT TIME on The Adventures of Eddie:

- * Eddie visits new nursing homes!
 - * Eddie gets a bath!
 - * Eddie has his name changed to Puuuuuurrl!
- Or was it Pearl? (Either way, he's not impressed)

We would like to thank and recognize these special "Friends of Friends."

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THE BRIDGE

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Friends Across the Ages • Nursing Home Volunteer Network

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President's Message



ANDREW MITCHELL

Another year is almost behind us now. This one happens to be the 20th year of Friends Across the Ages and also my 10th year as a volunteer. As I think back to all of the changes that I have seen over the past ten years, and also the great work that the organization has done over the years, I am excited for what we will be doing for the next 20 years. All of the joy that we are able to share with the residents that we visit would never be possible without the

help of our volunteers and donors. Thank you to all of you for your time and support. Please have a happy and safe Christmas and enjoy all of the holidays this season.



FRIENDS ACROSS THE AGES TURNS 20!!!

It all began in January 1999—for some of us, anyway. That was when a tiny nursing home volunteer organization called Friends Across the Ages was formed. But for those familiar with our history, we actually trace our roots to another group as well, called the Nursing Home Volunteer Auxiliary (NHVA), a group formed through the Gainesville Woman's Club. The NHVA was founded in 1983, and the two groups merged in 2002 under the name Friends Across the Ages, thanks to the vision of NHVA member Ruth Hazen.

Still, this January, we are marking the 20th anniversary of the beginning of the group known as Friends Across the Ages. What a milestone this is. As we look back over the years, what stands out is the people (residents, volunteers and supporters) that we have had the privilege of knowing. Please see inside for pictures of just a few of our favorite memories. Throughout this coming year, we'll be continuing to look back and share pictures and stories—and we hope you will share some of yours.

Thank you for helping us reach this incredible milestone. Here's to 20 more years, and beyond, of "bridging generations with ageless friendship."

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS!



Bus trip to Santa Fe Zoo ... 2001



Birthday Celebration ... 2002



"I Feel Pretty" Party ... 2012



Christmas ... 2004



Rhythm Circles ... 2007



Valentine Party ... 2005

CONGRATULATIONS, HEATHER!!

Heather (Geidel) Benton was recently honored by the Gainesville Sun with the "40 under 40" award, recognizing young professionals under 40 years old in Gainesville for their service to the community. Heather began volunteering with Friends Across the Ages as an undergraduate at UF, about 11 years ago. Since then, we have been fortunate to have her involved in our organization almost continuously in various capacities. She is currently the secretary of our board of directors. We thought she should be recognized for her service, and also her excellent work as an Occupational Therapist at one of our local nursing homes. So, we nominated her for the award, and she won! Look for her picture and bio appearing in the newspaper soon.



T-SHIRT DESIGN CONTEST!

This spring, we plan to release a special 20th anniversary T-shirt for Friends Across the Ages. We are holding a contest now for the design of this special shirt. The winner will be honored at our spring volunteer party, will receive a gift certificate, and, of course, a free t-shirt. The deadline for submissions is January 31, 2019. For more information, contact info@acrosstheages.org.

NEW WEBSITE IS LAUNCHED!

Our brand new website is finally here! Please visit www.friendsacrosstheages.org and check it out. It contains resources for both local and non-local volunteers, as well as family members of nursing home residents. We will be continuing to add new content. Please let us know what you think, and if you have any suggestions for resources or features that you would find helpful. (Note that the old website, at www.acrosstheages.org, is still available temporarily as we make the transition.)

WELCOME NEW VOLUNTEERS

Summer and Fall 2018

CLYDINA HARRIS.....NFRSC
 KAYLEE HOFFMAN.....Park Meadows
 NOVIA LOVE.....Signature
 ZUZANA MAJCIKOVA.....Signature
 JULIE NGUYENPark Meadows
 LILY SILSBYPark Meadows
 MARJORIE PIANI....., Signature
 SHARON STEBBINS,.....Signature
 JANET WISE,Parklands

VOLUNTEER ANNIVERSARIES

Summer and Fall 2018

43 years:

FLORENCE VAN ARNAM

12 years:

DONNA, KYLE & CHASE MOORE

4 years:

JOHN HOBBS

PAUL VOLPE

3 years:

CASSIE COOPER

2 years:

STEPHANIE SANTOS

1 YEAR:

KRISTINA ASKIN

JESSICA SCHREIER

BROOKE SCHWARTZ

SAMANTHA STILLEY

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