



For Immediate Release

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MADDIE'S FUND INVESTMENT EXPANDS NEONATAL KITTEN LIFESAVING EFFORTS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES.

A \$98,000 grant to National Kitten College brought free training, foster recruitment, community education, and lifesaving equipment directly to shelters and rescues nationwide.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — National Kitten College (NKC) commends Maddie's Fund for its continued commitment to investing in some of the most vulnerable animals entering shelters: neonatal and underage kittens. Through strategic investments in education, innovation, and lifesaving capacity, Maddie's Fund is helping ensure that shelters and communities have the knowledge, resources, and support needed to give these kittens a chance to survive and thrive.

In September 2025, Maddie's Fund awarded National Kitten College a **\$98,000 grant** to expand access to neonatal kitten education and resources across the United States. The grant provided **18 months to complete the initiative; National Kitten College completed the work in just 10 months**, reflecting both the urgent need for these resources and the tremendous demand from shelters and rescues seeking support.

Through the grant, National Kitten College visited **19 shelters and rescues across the country**, bringing training directly to communities at **no cost to participating organizations or attendees**. NKC trained shelter and rescue staff, volunteers, foster caregivers, and interested community members in lifesaving neonatal kitten care while helping organizations recruit new fosters, engage their communities, and increase awareness of the unique challenges facing neonatal kittens.

Neonatal kittens remain among the most vulnerable populations entering the animal welfare system. Yet with trained foster caregivers, appropriate medical and supportive care, and strong shelter programs, these kittens can have exceptionally positive outcomes. National Kitten College works to give organizations the tools to move from crisis response to proactive, sustainable kitten lifesaving programs.

Importantly, Maddie's Fund's investment extended beyond education. A portion of the grant was dedicated to providing shelters and rescues with **critical lifesaving equipment**, particularly for organizations where limited resources stood in the way of expanding their capacity to care for vulnerable kittens.

For Missoula County Animal Services in Montana, that support included an incubator and oxygen concentrator.

"We are so grateful to Maddie's Fund and National Kitten College. The incubator and oxygen concentrator have made a huge difference in our capacity to provide lifesaving care inside the shelter."

— **Holli Hargrove, Missoula County Animal Services**

The impact of the grant extended beyond individual shelters. By bringing together shelters, rescues, foster caregivers, advocates, and community leaders, National Kitten College used each visit as an opportunity to strengthen regional relationships and build networks that can continue supporting kitten lifesaving long after the training ends.

That collaborative impact was especially evident in Georgia.

"National Kitten College's visit had an immediate impact—not only giving our fosters greater confidence and enthusiasm to take on vulnerable kittens, but also strengthening communication and collaboration among animal welfare organizations across Georgia. By bringing shelters, rescues, advocates, and community leaders together, we are building a stronger network to save more kittens. We are incredibly grateful to Maddie's Fund and National Kitten College for investing in our community and making this lifesaving work possible."

— **Diviya Roney, Cat Programs & Client Services Director, Humane Society of Forsyth County**

The grant also helped National Kitten College strengthen a growing national network of shelters, rescues, veterinary professionals, foster caregivers, and community members working collaboratively to improve outcomes for kittens. By connecting organizations across communities and states, sharing emerging best practices, and increasing access to education and resources, NKC is helping build a **national infrastructure for kitten lifesaving where one has historically not existed**.

"This grant is an extraordinary example of what happens when a funder is willing to invest not only in individual animals, but in the systems needed to save them," said **Marnie Russ, Founder and Executive Director of National Kitten College**. "Maddie's Fund gave us 18 months to complete this work, and we finished in 10 because the need was there. Shelters and rescues

were ready for these resources, and communities were ready to help. Maddie's Fund gave us the ability to go directly into those communities, train their teams, recruit the public into lifesaving, and provide equipment where resources were a barrier. Most importantly, they invested in a population that has too often been considered too difficult or too resource-intensive to save."

Completing the initiative **eight months ahead of schedule** underscores both the scale of the need and the readiness of animal welfare organizations across the country to improve outcomes for neonatal kittens. The project demonstrated that when shelters are given access to practical training, community engagement strategies, equipment, and an ongoing network of support, meaningful change can happen quickly.

National Kitten College extends its gratitude to Maddie's Fund for recognizing that improving outcomes for neonatal kittens requires more than a single program or shelter. It requires **collaboration, education, data, veterinary advancement, community engagement, and sustained investment in the people doing this work.**

Together, Maddie's Fund, National Kitten College, and participating shelters and rescues are demonstrating that when communities are given the right tools and support, even the most vulnerable animals can be given a fighting chance.

About National Kitten College

National Kitten College is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the care and survival of neonatal and underage kittens in shelters and rescues. Through training, consultation, data collection, resource development, and a growing national network of partner organizations, NKC works to build sustainable kitten lifesaving programs and advance evidence-based practices in neonatal kitten care.