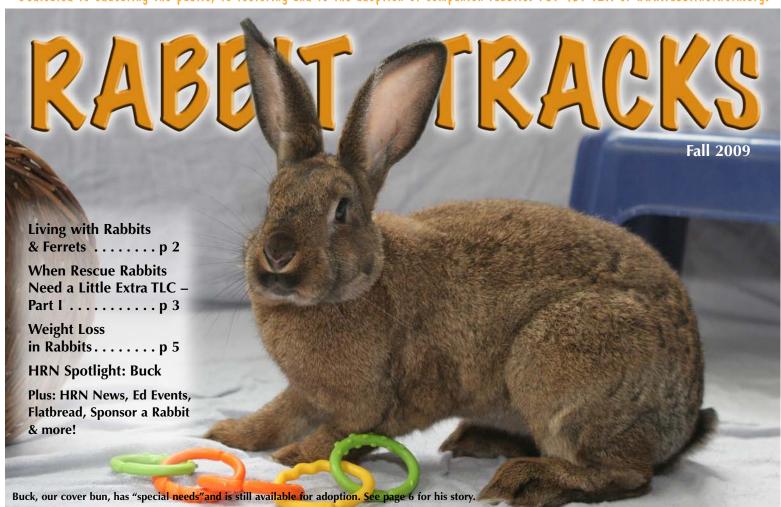


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Dedicated to educating the public, to fostering and to the adoption of companion rabbits. 781-431-1211 or www.rabbitnetwork.org.



Living with Rabbits & Ferrets

by Ashley Hentz

Ferrets are crafty, intelligent animals with a high prey drive. It is a common misconception that ferrets belong to the rodent family. They are actually part of the weasel family and are obligate carnivores. Ferrets are still used to hunt rabbits and rodents in some parts of the world. When you own ferrets and other small animals (rabbits, guinea pigs, small rodents, birds, reptiles, etc.), precautions must be taken to ensure their safety.

Ferrets are notorious for escaping their own cages and have been known to open the cages of other animals, oftentimes resulting in tragedy. It is extremely important to secure all cage doors with appropriate locks. It is also essential to supervise a ferret when he or she is given time out of the cage. Ideally, your rabbit or other small pet will be removed from the room. However, if this is not possible, then the ferret must be watched closely. Ferrets are very persistent and will even nip another animal through the cage. Unlike a cat or dog, ferrets are nearly (if not completely) impossible

to train out of their prey drive. They also seem able to access virtually any area, regardless of how well it is barricaded. Most ferrets can climb reasonably well; they often jump from furniture to clear an obstacle; they are persistent diggers; and their small, narrow bodies allow them to slip into unexpected areas.

Many ferrets can even work their way under doors with small gaps or into walls through small holes or vents.

While ferrets make great, loving pets for the right people, they are never to be fully trusted. They are mischievous animals who always keep their owners on guard. This can be an endearing trait to some, but dangerous if you have prey animals in the house. There is no one specific way to ferret-proof



These four little ferrets live in the same household as the two rabbits down below. However, their human makes sure that everyone is safe when the others are out playing.

a home because ferrets constantly test their boundaries and incessantly work to find ways into everything they are kept out of. Knowing this, an owner who chooses to keep both prey animals and predators in the same house must constantly work to ensure the animals are kept safe. Due to the ferret's playful nature, many owners believe he or she is merely playing with their pet rabbit when they are put together. This is actually an extremely stressful and dangerous situation for the rabbit, who naturally fears predatory animals. What looks like play from a ferret can quickly turn dangerous or even deadly. It is crucial that you never allow your ferret and rabbit to interact directly. If you are not able to supervise, the animals should be kept in separate rooms or securely locked in their own separate cages. With a cautious, responsible owner, these pets can be kept in the same home without a problem. The owner must realize the risks and recognize and resolve any potential dangers the ferret may pose to their small pet.



"Mom always makes sure we are safe when the ferrets are out."

When Rescue Rabbits Need a Little Extra TLC – Part I

by Shannon Cail

Being a foster parent takes a lot of care and dedication to rabbits who don't have homes and are awaiting a loving person to adopt them. Being a "TLC" foster parent, as I call it, takes a bit more time, dedication, knowledge and a very strong heart. Over the past few years, I've been privileged to care for and share my home with some of the "TLC bunnies" who have come into the care of the House Rabbit Network.

FLOWER: I never intended to be a foster parent, let alone a TLC foster parent, but it all started with a little black and white mini-rex named Flower. We got a call from a veterinarian on the North Shore who was going to euthanize this emaciated, sweet little bun who was found as a stray if HRN didn't take her. I volunteered to go pick her up and keep her



Flower, the little rex that started it all!

until we had space in our foster home system. Well, Flower never did find a spot in our foster home system. Instead, she ended up staying with me. From the beginning, she stole a place in my heart. She had the qualities of a puppy dog, following me everywhere, allowing me to hold her, wanting to snuggle, giving bunny kisses and just wanting to be loved. I couldn't imagine why anyone would just dump her like they did. She was spayed about a week after I got her and was available for adoption right after. However, after a few weeks, I noticed one of her eyes was bulging slightly. Veterinary evaluation determined that she was having dental issues, which were more than likely affecting her eye. She ended up going in for surgery and a large abscess was discovered in her jaw and behind her eye. After surgery, she seemed to be recovering rather well, and we held out hope for this precious soul. TLC was in order for Flower, along with critical care feed-

ings, meds and keeping an eye on her surgery site. A week later, Flower went down hill. I immediately got her to the vet that Saturday morning and she remained in the oxygen tube for the day. Her breathing was labored, she stopped eating and I was just praying she would pull through. Later that night, she seemed to suddenly turn the corner! She was back home with me, eating, running around my kitchen and giving kisses. Once again, my spirits were raised that my little "Flower Child" was going to be okay.

On Sunday night, she seemed to be wavering again. Monday morning came and we were back at the vet's



Summer, the shy little bun whose first binky brought tears to my eyes.

office. Dr. Kruse took her out back to prepare her for X-rays to see what was going on.

Despite all of our best efforts and the best veterinary care, Flower passed away in Dr. Kruse's arms that Monday morning. After further testing, we believe she had cancer and her abscess was also a lot worse than we originally thought. This little rabbit had gone through so much in the short 2.5 months that I shared my home with her. She was by far the sweetest, most loving rabbit I had ever known in the last 10 years of having house rabbits. Even though life was not kind to her in the end, she clearly loved life and those around her while she was here.

SUMMER: The call came in on the first day of summer 2007. A little gray bunny had been spotted in a neighborhood in Reading. I went to check it out and sure enough, there she was! Happily munching on the garden greens, enjoying the warmth of the summer night air. The next day, with the help of several other HRN volunteers, she was caught, and to my house she came. In honor of the season, she acquired the name "Summer."

From the moment she arrived, Summer was very timid, yet extremely inquisitive about her new surroundings. Even though she was outside as a stray, she appeared to be in great health. The next week she was checked out and spayed. Once again, I agreed to foster her. During that time, I noticed "something" on Summer's face and made note of the amount of water she drank. I had to go out and literally buy a dog bowl for her. She was consuming 5+ cups of water a day and I thought to myself that something was not right! Medication to treat for possible E. cuniculi was prescribed as well as a surgery date to remove this "thing" from her face.

It turned out to be a Shope papilloma, which are skin tumors caused by a leporipoxvirus, which is often transmitted by insect bites. They can turn into squamous cell carcinoma if left untreated.

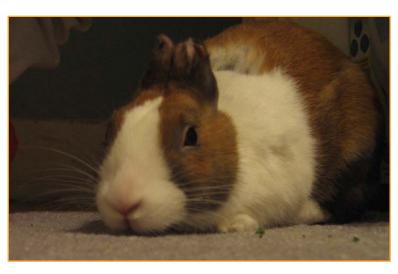
After surgery, she healed up beautifully. A month on medication helped her water intake, but didn't completely curb the extra consumption. Unfortunately, when rescuing strays we have

absolutely no background information on them. We can only assume their past and learn what we can about their current health via testing and experienced rabbit vets. With Summer, that's exactly what we did.

Over the next few months, this shy little soul eventually started to blossom and come out of her shell. She would shower me in bunny kisses and she became a lot braver while exploring her surroundings. The ultimate was seeing her do her first "binky." For those not familiar with binkies, it's

a happy bunny dance. Tears of joy fell from my eyes. She was finally experiencing what it was like to be a house bunny who was loved. After a few months in my care, Summer was well enough and had enough socialization to be transferred to another foster home. Eventually she was adopted as a friend for another rabbit. I happened to be there the day Summer was adopted and yes, I cried. When you care for buns like Summer, it's a blessing and such a happy moment when they are finally adopted, but they do take a tiny piece of your heart with them.

SUNFLOWER: My next TLC foster bun was Sunflower, a teeny brown and white Dutch, with the personality



Sunflower overcame some big medical issues in foster care and now resides with her "husbun" Harold (former HRN alum as well).

of a lightning strike! She was brought into HRN's care by a good samaritan who found her outside in NH. Her back neck area was riddled with cuterebra maggots and her ears appeared to have been previously "cut." Exactly what happened to her ears, we'll never know for sure, but we can only guess based on their appearance. She was immediately treated with medication and after the maggots had been removed over the next few days, I acquired the little spitfire. I can deal with a lot

of medical issues, but pulling out live cuterebra maggots is NOT one of them!

Over the next few months, Sunflower healed, gained a little bit of weight and was finally healthy enough to be spayed and put up for adoption. Her high-energy antics, crazy acrobatics and outgoing personality easily trumped her previous medical issues and were sure to grab the attention of any potential adopter. Then one day a call came in. A young woman was interested in meeting Sunflower after reading her blog and seeing her pictures. An appointment was set up for the upcoming weekend. Catherine was not interested in seeing any bun other than Sunflower. She held her for a

> solid hour upon their meeting and I knew, then and there, Sunflower had found her forever home. As the tiny three-pound bun left in a carrier with her "new mom" the tears poured down my face. Tears of sadness, knowing that I was going to miss her. But also tears of joy, knowing that another little fuzzball was given the chance to experience life again. A life that was going to be so much better this time around.

Being a TLC foster home has its ups and downs, but I wouldn't trade it for anything. Many ask how I can do it, knowing that some of them will never see their own "forever home." I do it for my love of rabbits. I do it because there is something in my heart that says, "even if I can't save this one, I will still try my hardest and give him or her the best life possible until it's their turn to cross the Bridge." We owe it to them to at least try.

Weight Loss in Rabbits

by Suzanne Trayhan

Weight loss is not normal in a healthy rabbit and is something that should be investigated. The first thing you should do is get a scale and weigh your rabbit daily or weekly, as needed. Keep a log of the weight so it can be tracked. This will let you know if your

rabbit is really losing weight and at what speed. Next, you should bring your rabbit in for a complete physical, including bloodwork. There are several possible reasons for weight loss - some of them are listed below. Keep in mind that your rabbit may not have any of these conditions, or your rabbit could have one of these conditions and not have weight loss. All medical issues should be discussed with your veterinarian.

Teeth and Mouth -

Your rabbit's mouth should be checked with an otoscope by your veterinarian. If

your rabbit's incisors are out of alignment (malocclusion) or if they have molar spurs, it might be difficult or painful for your rabbit to eat. They might be balancing between hunger and pain, eating less than they normally do. If this is the cause of your rabbit's weight loss, rabbit dental work should clear up the situation and make it easier for your bunny to eat again. Your rabbit may need pain medication temporarily to help them eat until their mouth

heals. If you have noticed a change in your rabbit's eating pattern – no longer eating some foods they used to – that might also be a sign of dental problems.

Cancer – One of the symptoms of cancer is weight loss. Unfortunately, in rabbits cancer can sometimes be difficult to detect and even if detected.

Although difficult to tell in this picture, this bun came back into HRN's care severely dehydrated and malnourished with teeth problems. She had lost about 2 lbs., which for a normal 5-6 lb. rabbit is a lot.

difficult to cure. Still, you should get a full blood panel and a veterinary exam to try to find anything that might be there. If cancer is discovered, you can discuss prognosis and treatment options with your veterinarian.

Parasites – E. cuniculi, coccidia and other parasites can cause weight loss in rabbits, especially if you have a younger, older or immunocompromised bunny. Sometimes you will see other

symptoms such as a distended (hard, round) belly and they might seem thin in the back with a clearly visible spine. Bloodwork, titers, a fecal workup or other tests can be performed by your vet and then followed by the correct anti-parasite treatment.

Infection – A systemic infection, which

can require your rabbit to expend all their energy to simply stay healthy, often leads to weight loss. Typically the rabbit otherwise acts normally, but you should see an elevated white blood cell count in the bloodwork. Rabbits are notorious for hiding their illnesses, and in some cases, they can have an infection that doesn't show up in the bloodwork. This can be very difficult to diagnose. Treatment with antibiotics and a follow-up visit with the vet should clear this up, enabling your rabbit to return to a healthy weight.

Kidney Disease -

Rabbits with advanced kidney disease often lose weight. Unfortunately,

there isn't much you can do for kidney disease except to provide supportive care. Work with your veterinarian on long-term care issues and offer unlimited pellets and plenty of lettuce greens to eat.

Old Age – Really old rabbits sometimes have trouble keeping weight on. They are just slowing down in general. Provide them with unlimited food and discuss geriatric care with your veterinarian.

Diet – Did you recently change your rabbit's diet? Change the brand of pellets or switch from alfalfa to timothy hay? Increase salads? Decrease or change treats? Simple diet changes can cause weight loss. If your rabbit was a healthy weight, and no other medical issues are discovered, you may want to increase the amount of pellets you're feeding your rabbit.

Treating your rabbit's weight loss ultimately depends on the original cause, with the goal of helping your rabbit get back to their original weight. For example, you would treat an infection with antibiotics or have dental work done for molar spurs. For dietrelated weight loss, you should encourage your rabbit to eat more food. You can also introduce foods

with higher calories, such as small quantities of nuts, or if your rabbit doesn't have any urinary or kidney issues, you can switch to alfalfa hay. Keeping your rabbit at the right weight is important for their long-term health.

Buck: A Bunny in Need of a Special Home

Hi, my name is Buck. I was found in April of this year s a stray along with a bunch of oth

found in April of this year as a stray along with a bunch of other bunnies. The kind people at HRN rescued me and the others and soon I was in a nice environment receiving regular meals and love. I was finally adopted in June as a potential friend for another bunny. I was so excited at the possibility of having a friend! An unfortunate accident occurred and I ended up breaking my back.

After being looked at by the vet, I came back into the care of HRN and got the TLC that I needed to possibly help heal my back.

Amazingly, I am doing rather well now. I can't quite hop, but I can get around. My foster mom did get me a cart, as my front thumpers are very strong, and she thought I'd do well with one. Well... I showed her! I'm very independent and would prefer not to use the cart. Granted, I pull myself around with my front legs, but I'd rather it that way. Can't blame her for trying! She was only trying to help me. I can also sit and hold myself up and even move around a good amount. I have

a great appetite and love to be pet. My only problem is umm... keeping myself clean. I could use a little bit of help in that area and it's kind of embarrassing. Oy!

Otherwise, I'm a young, vibrant bun with lots of love to offer that one special human. I won't let you down, I promise. Those who meet me say that I'm very sweet and I think I am too. I just want a chance at either a long-term TLC foster home or a "sanctuary home,"

and to be loved like all the other bunnies that get adopted. Is that you?

You can view my video here and see that I really can move around even with my disability:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v =8vaCE8NwNIc

If you're interested in possibly adopting me or to get more information on me, please call the Hotline at 781.431.1211 or email info@rabbitnetwork.org.



Buck, a strong-willed, loving rabbit who needs either long-term placement or a "sanctuary home." The photo on the cover of the newsletter is before his accident.

HRN News

2009 Volunteer Awards

At our annual Summer Bunny Bash, awards are given to volunteers to recognize the exceptional work that they do for us. This year's awards:

• Rookie of the Year:

Beth Santo for all her work with the Shaw's program, education events, calendar and chasing stray buns.

• Hotline Volunteer Award:

Mary Lempert for enthusiastically handling the calls on the Hotline.

• Educator of the Year:

Diane Mayer for being education coordinator and personally doing many education events.

• Volunteer of the Year:

Jillian Harlow for fostering, helping with the calendar, helping with fundraising (Giggles, Flatbread), doing education events and helping capture strays.

2010 Calendars are Here!

Help support HRN and get an awesome calendar at the same time. It's a win-win!

Watch our rabbits all year long with your own copy of the 2010 HRN calendar! Professional printing with



saddleback stitching and gloss stock. You will love to have pictures of HRN bunnies hanging on your wall all year long! Pick one up in person at an HRN event or order online. (Shipping cost:

\$3 first calendar, each additional add another dollar.) http://rabbitnet-work.org/newshop.shtml

Another Petfinder Shelter Challenge

Vote for HRN! Help us win Money again this year! Vote Every Day!

Enter "House Rabbit Network" for the organization and "MA" for the state, and vote for us!

The Animal Rescue Site is awarding \$100,000 in grants to eligible Petfinder.com member rescue organi-

zations. The grand prize is a \$20,000 grant and there are many more



prizes ranging from \$1,000 for weekly winners up to \$5,000 for the runner-up. There will be a winner in every state as well as other grants!

The Petfinder.com rescue organizations with the most votes will win. You can click to help animals at www.theanimalrescuesite.com, and then vote for your favorite participating Petfinder.com shelter. Clicking and voting are free, with no registration required. You can vote once every day during the Challenge, which ends on December 20, 2009. Visit: http://www.theanimalrescuesite.com/clickToGive/shelterchallenge.faces?siteId=3. Its free and only takes a moment of your time. Thank you!

Upcoming Ed Events

We hold education events at various locations in Eastern Massachusetts. All dates and locations are on our web site at *www.rabbitnetwork.org*. Please stop by to visit, and we be happy to answer any questions you may have

about rabbits and their care. Information about adoption, along with a listing of rabbits currently up for adoption, will also be available. We do not adopt out on-site.

Animal Spirit is now offering 10% off small animal supplies while HRN is there during education days. We are there every other month (odd numbered months) on the last Saturday of the month from 12-3 PM. Please watch the website for upcoming Animal Spirit Events.

- Oct. 12, The Blue Bunny, 577 High St., Dedham MA, 10:30 AM-1:00 PM
- Oct. 17 PEThingz, Littleton, MA 12-3 PM
- Oct. 31-Nov. 1, Boston Vegetarian Food Festival Reggie Lewis Athletic Center, Boston MA 10-6 PM Saturday/10-4 PM Sunday
- Nov. 28 Animal Spirit, Cambridge, MA, 12-3 PM

Past Events

On September 13th, HRN had a booth at Pet Rock in Worcester, MA. We had a great day! We met a lot of house rabbit people, including some HRN adopters and answered tons of questions and hopefully convinced a hutch person to at least bring her rabbits in for the winter. We met a few possible adopters and handed out lots of literature. A few books and calendars were sold and we made \$100 for the rabbits (a pretty impressive amount considering the number of ways you can spend your money there). The weather cooperated and we had a lot of fun. Thank you to Diane, Beth, and Jillian!

Tufts Open House in Grafton, MA was also held on September 13th, despite the torrential downpours. We spoke to many current rabbit owners (always a lot there), prospective adopters and vet students. We recruited Dr. Warner (exotics vet at VCA Wakefield) briefly



HRN Volunteers manning the table at Tufts Open House on September 13, 2009.

to encourage one prospective exotics vet! Lots of literature was passed out and people had a lot of great questions to ask us. Thanks to Kathy, Katie, Alan, Bruce, and Ahsan for helping!

Memorials

Every time I lose a rabbit he takes a piece of my heart with him. And every new rabbit who comes into my life, gifts me with a piece of his heart. If I live long enough, all the components of my heart will be rabbit, and I will become as generous and loving as they are.

~Author Unknown

Wally

Wally came to us last
April as a special needs
foster (who had a head
tilt), formerly named
Niblet. Once I saw him
I knew I wouldn't be able
to let him go. We adopted
him shortly after and he
formed a strong bond with
our dutch rabbit, Toot.
Wally won us over on day
one with his charming
personality and good
nature. I have owned
and fostered several

other rabbits, but never one as sweet and innocent as Wally. He never let his differences affect his happiness. In the first few days he was crookedly racing around the room, getting a few inches of air as he performed binkies for us. After conquering his fear of hardwood floors, he would proudly sit on the bottom step of a pet staircase just to show everyone he could do it. Whenever we'd call his name he'd stand up on his hind legs and waver back and forth, trying

to pinpoint our location before scampering over to us. We were devastated when Wally got sick. I knew he was a fighter and I thought he'd recover. Wally passed after a nine day battle with his illness. At 2 years 7 months, Wally's life was much too short, and we miss him terribly. It is amazing what an impact one little rabbit can make on your life. We will never forget Wally.

~Ashley



Love Is...

Getting out of bed early in the morning to lay next to Daisy and letting her wash my face right after she just ate her cecal pellets.

Getting ready to leave for work and checking on the bunnies only to find one pulling on your socks outside of the xpen.

Spending an extra hour attaching nic cubes to the top of the xpens and being late for work.

Pulling into work only to realize that said bunny didn't hop over the xpen but hopped over the cage, drive a half hour back to the house to find them all sleeping and adding a second shelf of nic cubes to the cage and now being extremely late to work.

Sharing dandelion greens with our furry friends.

Letting them teach me about love.

~Anonymous

Sponsor A Rabbit!

The House Rabbit Network has many rabbits that require extra expenses. If you cannot foster, but would like to help, sponsoring a rabbit might be right for you! If you can assist with the veterinary and medical bills of our rabbits, you will directly assist in our mission to improve their quality of life. In some cases we are looking to raise a sum of money to pay their bills. Other rabbits require ongoing care with monthly costs. We realize that most people cannot afford a full sponsorship, so you can elect to partially sponsor a bunny. The dollar amounts listed are our financial goals to which you may contribute all or part. All donations are tax-deductible.

Sponsors will have their names appear on our web site. Of course you can also choose to remain anonymous if you prefer. We recently PayPal enabled our sponsorship program. Please go here to view all of our "sponsor rabbits": http://www.rab-

bitnetwork.org/sponsor.shtml



Coco is a sweet girl with not so great teeth. She needed to have her incisors removed. Coco has been adopted and lives with her boyfriend. Her medical bills were \$115.



Niblet had a small abscess on his back that needed to be removed. He was adopted and even had a girlfriend. Unfortunately, he just recently passed (see his memorial on the previous page). His medical bills were \$115.



Buttercup came in lethargic and with neurological problems. We tried to nurse her back to health, and even had a home for her, but sadly she didn't make it. Can you help cover her medical bills of \$279?



Chandler was found as a stray with really messed up incisors! They needed to be removed so she could eat properly. She is now happy, healthy and in a new home. Her medical bills were \$253.

2009 Flatbread a Success!

House Rabbit Network's 4th annual Flatbread fundraiser, held on Tuesday, September 29, was a tremendous success. Friends and family turned out for our biggest event of the year and we managed to raise \$3,719 for the rabbits in HRN care. Thank you to all who attended to support House Rabbit Network and the rabbits!

We would like to send a huge thank you to the following sponsors. Without your generous donations, we wouldn't have had such a wonderful night. Thank you!

Mr. & Mrs. Barlow • Vicki Bilafer • Dorinda Billings • Boston Red Sox • Boston Treats • Busy Bunny • Celebrities for Charities • Helena Chaikin •

Gabriel Cheong, Esq. of Infinity Law Group • Davis Farmland • Designs by Kim • Michael Drumstas • Earth and Sage Medical Spa • Ecotarium • Especially For Pets • Essex River Cruises and Charters • Civita Fahey • Barbara Foye • Giles Liquors • Green Mountain Coffee • Lesa Hall • Maysoon Hamdiyyah • House of Seven Gables • Ira Toyota, Danvers • Laser Craze • Leith Petwerks • Lindt • Littleton Animal Hospital • Justin Lyons • Melissa Lyons & Tanya Barlow • Dianna Maneksha • Lori Martinez • Middleton Golf Course • Matthew Miller • Pat Miller • Mohegan Sun • Nashoba Valley Ski Area • New England Aquarium • Peabody Essex Museum • PEThingz • Jean Player • Revitalive Cafe • Peter H. Reynolds • Rubicat Design and Photography • Starbucks • Story Land • Sweet Meadow Farm • Trader Joe's • Triple Crescent Herbals • Uno Chicago Grill • VCA Wakefield Animal Hospital • Water Wizz • Candace Wilson • Yankee Whale Watching and Deep Sea Fishing • Carol Youngclaus



Join HRN...or...Please Renew Your Membership

House Rabbit Network is now in its 10th year – and we continue to grow.

Through our network of dedicated volunteers and members, we are making amazing strides to improve the welfare of house rabbits everywhere.

Your support can only further our goals, so become a member and get involved.

Visit our web site to find out how to help: www.rabbitnetwork.org.

If you are not already a member, please join HRN!

Your membership dollars will go toward rescue and rehabilitation, community outreach and education, and veterinary expenses.

Help make a difference in a rabbit's life. They're counting on you!

Contact House Rabbit Network at *info@rabbitnetwork.org* or (781) 431-1211.





House Rabbit Network Membership and Ordering Form

Your membership donation is tax-deductible and will be used for medical costs (spays/neuters, vet bills) and education expenses. All members will receive a copy of our newsletter, *Rabbit Tracks*, when it is published. Currently, we are publishing three issues per year.

Memberships run from April 1 to March 31 (donations received January–March will be credited for the following year). To join, fill out this page and mail it with your check (payable to *House Rabbit Network*) to:

House Rabbit Network P.O. Box 2602 Woburn, MA 01888-1102

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