



Wish Upon a Star

*A Collection of Heart-Warming
"Believe in Miracles" Stories*



Happy Holidays From RESQCATS



RESQCATS™

A non-profit sanctuary dedicated to the rescue, care and adoption of abandoned cats and kittens



Winter 2005

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President's Message

It's hard to believe that 2005 is already coming to an end. Where did it go? For **RESQCATS**, it passed quickly as we worked hard to place stray and abandoned cats and kittens into purrfect homes during an incredibly long kitten season. It seemed like one day just blended into the next with all the long hours.

To date, **RESQCATS** has found homes for 117 felines during the 2005 season and our total adoptions in just eight years have reached an astounding 955!

Thinking about all the kitties over the last eight years brings back some special memories for me. Every single kitty had their own story... "Summer" was the last little kitten rescued from an abandoned cabin along with her mom and four siblings... "Snow" and "Shadow" had a background of neglect

and abuse... "Sweet Caroline" was found in the middle of a sidewalk on a busy street when she was about two weeks old... and "Judah" was discovered in the bottom of a barrel with five siblings in a woman's barn.



Jeffyne with Tiger & Lily

Sometimes we don't know what these poor kitties' stories are before they arrive at **RESQCATS**, however their stay here often becomes quite a story itself. Over the years, I have written about a few of them and put the stories in the **RESQCATS** newsletter. After reading the stories, some of you have suggested, "Jeffyne, you should write a book about the kitties!"

Well, anyone who has been to **RESQCATS** and seen what is involved in caring for all the cats during kitten season (not to mention the resident cats) knows that I will never have time to write a book about these special creatures and all the miracles they bring.

But, I started thinking...it's the holidays...a time to reflect on the past, as well as make new memories with those we love. It is a season of sharing, hope, faith and miracles. So I decided to create a special "Collector's Edition" of the **RESQCATS** stories that share these feelings of hope, faith and miracles. I hope that remembering some of the stories from the past and reading a new one contributed by my dear friend, Sheryl Fierro, (who writes as Porter Evans), Miracles Can Come Full Circle, will inspire each of you to always "Believe in Miracles."

2005 has been an incredible year of natural disasters that has caused so much human suffering. The hurricanes in the southeast left people homeless, without personal property, and in many cases, the death of a loved one in which to deal. I cannot begin to imagine the heartbreak and devastation. It has been humbling to watch the news and see the outpouring of human kindness and compassion from the human race. People are helping people

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RESQCATS Spring 1999

“Ted’s” New Mom

It began with a phone call from the Emergency Clinic to RESQCATS saying, “We have a week old kitten here that was found under the bushes!” Within thirty minutes, I held a tiny gray kitten whose coarse, curly gray fur could best be described as a “Brillo pad”. His eyes were still closed and his ears were just beginning to unfold.

When kittens that young arrive at RESQCATS, I become the surrogate mother and caregiver. It involves bottle-feeding every two hours throughout the day and night with a formula designed to mimic the mother’s milk that is given. It is quite a commitment and schedule to maintain... but it is wonderfully rewarding as a human caregiver. Of course, the best formula for the kitten is to have a real mom and her milk.

When “Ted” arrived, RESQCATS was also housing a feral mother and her litter of three kittens that were about three weeks old. The wild mom would let me pick up and pet all her kittens and occasionally she would even allow me to caress her own silky fur. I hoped that I might eventually be able to pick her up as well. Her babies were “Piwacket,” a solid black bundle of fun, “Neesia,” a longhaired black and white love and “Snoopy,” a shy little black and white guy with six toes on each front paw.

The veterinarian suggested that I try putting the tiny week-old Ted in with the feral mother and her litter to see if he would be accepted. It was instant love for the mother cat and such a bond was struck that she never allowed me to come near her again.

Protecting and caring for her newest addition was her job now and she wanted me to know that!

Little Ted grew and grew over the next few weeks. In fact, he even surpassed his adopted brothers and sisters. His friendliness and playfulness was wonderful to watch and it seemed to encourage his shy siblings to feel at ease in their surroundings too.

He particularly liked his polydactyle (six-toed) brother, Snoopy, who was extremely shy. Ted encouraged him to romp. Snoopy seemed to forget his fears when Ted was around to instigate mischief. It was hard to imagine the two of them ever being separated... and they are not!

Ted and Snoopy now reside with Shauna, John and their children Josh, Cierra, and Jenna who have made “the boys” a part of the family.

Shauna says they are always into something and are “...far from the shy little boys they once were!” The pictures she sent recently shows they have remained inseparable.

And by the way, Ted’s funny “Brillo pad” fur is now a beautiful glistening gray that any cat would love.



A cat with kittens nearly always decides sooner or later to move them.

~SIDNEY DENHAM



RESQCATS Fall 1999

The Best Cat Ever

Susanna’s whole world stopped one night when she heard the cries of a hungry cat. Outside her bedroom window she discovered what must have been a beautiful white cat. But on this night he was far from beautiful. His skin and fur hung across his bony skeleton. His eyes were tired and his jowls were thick with scar tissue from his past street fights. Susanna’s concern for this poor stray undoubtedly saved his life.

When he arrived at RESQCATS, I could see that he had been a big beautiful cat at one time. His body frame was large but he now appeared very thin and in need of a lot of healing time. I wasn’t sure just how bruised his soul might be.

I settled him into his 4x4x8 floor to ceiling enclosure including a large open dog crate where he could rest on soft blankets. Or he could choose from a couple of baskets, one of which contained a hot water bottle to soothe his aching



Polar Bear

body. He also received as much food as he could want, plenty of fresh water, his own litter box, and, of course, lots of toys.

After he ate I picked him up, put him in my lap then began to stroke his tired body. He immediately snuggled in, looked up at me through one blue eye and one green eye and started to purr!

I thought about this lovable lap cat trying to survive in a coyote-inhabited area without shelter and food. How could he still be such a gentle spirit?

I named him “Polar Bear” after Cleveland Amory’s cat in his book *The Best Cat Ever*.

Amory’s Polar Bear was also a white cat, but I never figured out why he thought he had the best cat ever when I knew I had the best one.

Polar Bear spent 3 1/2 weeks at RESQCATS sleeping, eating and letting his body heal. During that time the search began for a special person that could offer Polar Bear a home and the warm lap he obviously preferred.

One day, a young woman responded to an ad for Polar Bear. She said she had been searching for a white cat for her retired father whose own white cat had recently passed away. After much discussion, it was agreed that Melodie and her father, Dick Haines, would visit Polar Bear. It was love at first sight!

Dick and Polar Bear left together that day with the understanding that Polar Bear needed some additional recovery time and veterinary care. “That’s okay with me,” Dick exclaimed, “That’s just part of the responsibility of having a pet.”

It didn’t take long for that once stray cat to adjust to his new home with its many toys, full food bowl and Dick’s warm lap.

Dick and Polar Bear keep in touch with RESQCATS quite often. And the funny thing is, now Dick tells me that “...my Polar Bear is the best cat ever!”

And now... the rest of the story...

For 2 1/2 years, Melodie and Paula, Dick's daughters, and also referred to as "Polar Bear's people," have kept in touch. Melodie and Paula shared with me that the adoption of Polar Bear brought their dad out of a depressed state due to the loss of his previous cat. They have thanked me by making toys for all the kittens, donating baskets, food, and so much more. Sometimes I even receive a card with Polar Bear's picture and a donation from Polar Bear for the **RESQCATS** kitties.

But one special day in October, 2001 I had a visitor at **RESQCATS**. Dick and Polar Bear came to visit. I will never forget the moment I picked up a big, well fed, beautiful white cat who looked up at me with that same one blue eye and one green eye and purred. It was one of the happiest moments I can ever remember and once again I could feel my eyes swell with tears... but this time they were happy ones.

"...cats invented self-esteem, there is not an insecure bone in their body."

~ERMA BOMBECK



RESQCATS Summer 2000

The Story of Blink

It had been a tough season already with the arrival of so many kitties from terrible conditions. The challenge of caring for the sick kittens, assisting malnourished mothers trying desperately to take care of their young and bottle-feeding those kittens that had no mom left little time for anything else.

The trips made to the vet for additional medical care and extra attention and love from **RESQCATS** helped all of them go to their new homes healthy and happy. I saw light at the end of the tunnel!

It's funny how life seems to give you a little break before the next challenge arrives. He was a tiny three-week-old gray and white kitten with a brother, three sisters and a very tired malnourished mother. They were left under a house when the owner moved and found by a compassionate woman named Sonya who brought them to **RESQCATS**.

The mom and her kittens settled into a bed of soft blankets, with plenty of food, water and toys, with quiet music playing. It was a home like they had never known.

All the kittens' eyes were open with the exception of one belonging to the little gray and white one. It was crusted shut so I applied antibiotics. The condition is common in kittens so I was not overly concerned.

The next morning, I took one look at the eye that had opened, and the sight of it horrified me. It was cloudy, swollen and there was no sign of a pupil or retina at all. Dr. Brillhart validated my biggest fear...the infection was so bad that sight was gone from the eye and it had to be removed and sewn shut!

I decided at that moment to name him "Blink."

That week was spent going to and from the vet trying to find some relief for Blink. His his eye, swollen to four times normal size, was irritated and bleeding. The problem was that Blink needed to be 4-6 months old before his body could tolerate the anesthesia required for surgery to remove his eye. But we needed to find a way to help him.



It was decided that antibiotics could be injected into his eye to dry up the infection, shrink the eye, and give him some relief. He was a real little trooper and the procedure worked wonderfully.

Once the immediate medical concerns were resolved, reality set in for me. How can **RESQCATS** raise the funds for such a surgery? Well Blink stay at **RESQCATS** until he is old enough to have it? Who will adopt him at this point with one eye full of life and the other almost too painful to look at? And will anyone want him after the surgery when it is sewn shut?

Blink seemed totally unaware of what most people would consider a defect. He had a great personality and even though everyone that knew him loved him, finding someone to adopt him seemed like it would be impossible.

A chance visit from a friend of **RESQCATS** brought a miracle for Blink. Nadine was unaware of Blink's situation. She came to donate blankets, bedding and towels for the kitties and was about to leave when I noticed a card she had left. It contained the total amount of money to pay for Blink's surgery. Coincidence? I don't think so. I think Nadine is an angel.

A few weeks later a young man of 12 years old visited **RESQCATS** with his Mom in search of a new family member. Reid and his mother, Nancy, met all the kitties, then I left them alone to allow them some personal time with the cats. An hour later, I returned to find Reid playing with Blink. Of all the kittens, he had fallen in love with him. He told his mom, "You can pick whatever kitten you want to take home as long as I can have Blink."

Reid saw no flaws in Blink, only a little kitten who love to play, chase balls and climb all over him.

Blink left the next day along with a new playmate that Nancy had chosen and I hear that they are doing just purrfect together and with their new family.

I've had some time to reflect on all this. Blink's lessons in life were always clear to me...what matters the most is how you see yourself.

Reid's lesson is just as important, but took a little longer to see. There is innocence in childhood that sees no differences, passes no judgement, and loves unconditionally. We can all benefit from possessing those qualities. It is a humbling lesson and I hope it is one that we can all keep in our hearts.

In just a few months, Blink will have his surgery and we expect nothing short of another miracle for him.

"Dogs come when they are called, cats take a message and get back to you."

~WARREN ECKSTEIN



RESQCATS Winter 2000

An Answered Prayer for Flower

Last June I received a call from a friend who desperately needed the help of **RESQCATS**. She said, "My boyfriend's sister has just been diagnosed with stage four lung cancer and her prognosis is not good. She has an adopted six year old daughter who can stay with us temporarily until we can figure out what is best for her, but we do not know what to do with her cat!"

Within days, a beautiful 4-year-old cat arrived at **RESQCATS**. Her name was "Flower" and she had such a presence: the softest, purest white fur, big yellow-green eyes, and a quiet gentleness about her every move. Her beauty was breath taking, but her eyes reflected a confused and sad soul. She arrived with only a last

wish from her owner...to find Flower a wonderful new home.

The search for Flower's new home began immediately, but proved to be a long and challenging task.

June is the beginning of kitten season and **RESQCATS** housed as many as twenty kittens at one time all in search of homes as well. It just seems to be human nature for people to be drawn to cute tiny kittens. In fact, **59** kittens found homes during the following **4** months while Flower continued to wait for her soulmate to walk through the door and give her a much needed home.

As the days passed, she seemed to grow more and more melancholy and withdrawn. She began pulling out her own fur and I began to worry about her well being. Flower was allowed to visit with the other **RESQCATS** kittens and that seemed to stimulate and comfort her somewhat, but what she really wished for was her own human companion and home.

The **RESQCATS** volunteers stepped forward to help in Flower's desperate search. Joanna Haynes photographed the beautiful cat, a color Xerox flyer was designed to feature her, and Evelyn Kert and BJ Hawley set out on a mission to post the flyers all over town in hopes that someone would respond to "Flower's Last Wish." In addition, we said many prayers for her hoping that one of them might be answered.

Exactly four months to the day after Flower's arrival, I received a phone call from a man who had seen her picture in his vet's office. He was touched by her story and wanted to know more about her. I shared the story with him and told him she needed to be a strictly indoor cat due to her white ears and nose which were very susceptible to sunburn and skin cancer.

Then I asked the man about himself to determine whether he would be suitable for her. He told me that his name was Father James Ford and that he was a priest.

My voice suddenly disappeared while eyes filled with tears that quickly found their way down my face. After what must have seemed like an eternity, I was finally able to respond. "I have been praying for Flower, and I can't believe this possible answer to my prayers. And if for any reason you are not the one for her, I can't think of a better person than you to be praying for her."

Father Jim arranged a time to visit **RESQCATS** and Flower. He is a kind, gentle man who lights up a room when he enters it and radiates compassion. He has three other cats and four dogs whom he has rescued and they share the San Roque Parish with him.

He felt that he could give Flower the love she needed, thus allowing her soul to heal, and she happily went home with him a few days later.

Father Jim gave Flower a new name, "Domino," to begin her new life and tells me she is doing fine. Her new cat friend, "Molly," was a little upset at first, but things are much better now.

I have spoken so many times about the healing power of animals, but I think there are a few select people in this world who also possess this gift. Father Jim is such a person. He is a miracle worker on this earth to Domino, to those of us who work at **RESQCATS**, and I suspect to many other people as well. He is proof that we can all "**Believe in Miracles.**"

"Cats seem to go on the principle that it never does any harm to ask for what you want."

~JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH



RESQCATS Spring 2001

Luke, Nike, Otto, Feather and Falcon

In mid November I received a call from a concerned lady who had discovered a litter of kittens and their stray mom living inside an auto body shop.

The owner of the body shop discovered the kittens shortly after they were born and spent the next several weeks attempting to care for the Mama kitty and her five babies. He was a compassionate well-meaning man but had little experience when it came to caring for the kitties and was unable to recognize any problems that might threaten their health and well being.

Mama kitty was a very shy stray and responded only to him. He was the only caregiver she had ever known and was grateful to him. He agreed to keep her as his "shop kitty," but he was at a loss as to what the eventual fate would be for her kittens.

On November 15, Joanna, a **RESQCATS** volunteer, and I arrived at the auto body shop to pick up the kittens. My goal was to follow the **RESQCATS** medical protocol of taking them for a vet exam, leukemia test, vaccinations, worming medication, spay or neuter surgery, and then placing them in purrfect homes. The kittens were already nine weeks old and I felt assured that all five of them would be enjoying wonderful lives in new homes by Thanksgiving.

We found the cats living in a dark room that smelled of oil and car grease. They had never been out of the room nor seen the light of day but they did have food, water, and a place to sleep. Joanna and I placed them in a cat carrier and headed straight to the vet for their exam. As we approached the car and sunlight beamed through the opening of the carrier, I noticed that their fur looked a bit strange but it was difficult to see each of them as they huddled next to each other in the back of the carrier. I said to Joanna, "They probably need a good bath, some quality food and in a week they will look great."

The trip to the vet proved me to be so wrong. The exam revealed an infestation of fleas and earmites that were so bad that the kittens' ears had to be flushed several times. They were given an injection of drugs to kill the mites and that needed to be repeated every two weeks until the mites were gone.

In addition the kittens' little bodies were covered with scabs and large chunks of their fur were missing. A look under a black light revealed the worst case of ringworm that the vet had ever encountered. Ringworm is a treatable fungus but it is difficult to cure and is highly contagious. Dr. Meschler turned to me and said, "Oh Jeffyne, you have a long road ahead of you to get this under control."

One little guy was just a big scab and so much of his fur was gone that it was difficult to even tell his color. Plus he had a deformed foot that allowed him to use only the outer half of it to walk. He limped slightly and I suspected he would have difficulty jumping even though it didn't appear to cause him pain.

I named him "Falcon." His three brothers became "Luke," "Nike," and "Otto." The tiniest kitten was a girl and I called her "Feather."

After the exam, blood was drawn from each kitten to test them for feline leukemia.

Meanwhile, I headed home to set up an isolation room for them. I gave each kitten a flea bath and dried them. That was followed by a sulfa lime dip to treat the ringworm. The dip is bright orange, smells like rotten eggs and makes the cat's fur (or whatever fur

they had) look dull with a strange cast of yellow. The dip was to be repeated every 5-7 days until no sign of the fungus could be detected under the black light. Oral medications are available to treat ringworm but they would have been unsafe to use on such young kittens with suppressed immune systems. The sulfa lime dip is non-toxic, and we were hoping it would cure them.

After 5 hours of bathing everyone, I settled them into an isolation room with quality food, fresh water, a warm soft bed, lots of toys and some quiet music. It was two weeks before they even began to feel like exploring or playing with the toys and each other.

That same afternoon, Dr. Meschler called to tell me that Luke had tested positive for feline leukemia. It was the first time that a **RESQCAT** kitty had tested positive for the disease. The standard protocol for leukemia positive kitties in shelters has been immediate euthanasia.

That would **never** be the policy at **RESQCATS** unless a cat was actually suffering from the disease and dying.

Leukemia positive means one of two things: 1) the cat is a carrier of the disease and may or may not actually come down with it, but can infect other cats through the exchange of bodily fluids, or 2) the kitty has been exposed to the disease and the body is in the process of building antibodies to fight it off in which case it could retest negative for leukemia.

Dr. Meschler advised that Luke be isolated from his siblings and retested in 30 days with the hope that he would fit into scenario number two. I felt awful about separating Luke from his siblings, which were the only comfort he had known in his life, but it had to be done.

The next 30 days were miserable. So many questions came to mind. What happens if he retests positive? How do I find someone who will adopt a leukemia positive knowing that the average lifespan is only about three years?

Luke was unhappy, too. He cried for days for his siblings and none of us could imagine how a little creature with so much energy and such a big voice could be sick. His isolation room was four solid walls so he would avoid any contact with other kitties and he had nothing to occupy himself unless one of us was with him. Then, one of the volunteers offered a large wire enclosure as a solution that could be set up outside so that Luke could see sunshine, watch birds and visit with us as we went about our daily chores. It was a great idea! So Luke spent days in his outdoor enclosure and nights in the warmth and quiet of his isolation room.

In the meantime, the ringworm dips continued every 5 days. Linda Higbee, a dedicated volunteer, appeared every day the kitties were to be dipped to help with the smelly job. I did the dipping and she did the blow-drying. We both washed and bleached anything the kittens had been in contact with to avoid spreading the fungus or re-infecting them. Linda turned a long day's project for me into a half day of fun, laughter, sharing stories and shedding tears of worry and compassion for these special creatures. When I expressed concern about the possibility of Linda contracting the ringworm herself (I **already** had it) she said, "Oh, that's okay. If it happens I will just put some anti-fungal cream on it and it will be fine. I really want to help." Within two weeks, she was sharing the

anti-fungal cream with me! It took 9-1/2 weeks, 16 dips and a tremendous amount of devotion to care for Luke, Nike, Otto, Feather, and Falcon. Linda deserves so much of the credit for their recovery, and her support of me during that time is a gift I will never forget.

All the volunteers said many prayers for the kittens but our biggest prayer was for Luke. When he was retested for leukemia after 30 days we felt a miracle had occurred when results were negative. The joy of reuniting Luke with his siblings was heartwarming—he was so happy and they all played for hours making up for lost time. Then all five, weary from activity, curled up together and slept through the night. I also slept through the night for the first time in a month.



Luke, Nike, Otto, Feather and Falcon

The "Auto Body Shop" kittens, as they came to be known, were finally ready to

go to new homes by the end of January. It had taken a long time to get them on the road to recovery. They did eventually have to take the oral medication to knock out the ringworm, but by that time their immune systems were strong enough and they were old enough to handle the drug. The Itraconazole medication was dosed specifically for each kitten based on his or her body weight.

These kitties brought some very special people to **RESQCATS**. All five were pre-adopted long before they were allowed to go to their new homes. Each time a progress report delayed their delivery date, the families exhibited understanding and patience despite their disappointment.

"Otto" went home with Marti Weedon and her family, which includes another kitty playmate. Irene and Natalie Ridgell couldn't separate "Luke" and "Nike." And Mike and Judy Mills fell in love with "Feather" and "Falcon." They didn't see Falcon's foot as a deformity at all...they refer to it as his "special" foot.

Each family was sensitive to my attachment to this litter when I burst into tears each time one of them left. They have all granted me visitation rights!

It would be impossible to not love an animal that you have nursed back to health. I have a slight scar on my hand from the ringworm that I caught from the kitties. I hope it never goes away for it is a reminder of how those kitties must have felt. It burned and itched and hurt like crazy, but it also represents three miracles to me...the miracle of Luke, the miracle of the healing of body and spirit, and the miracle of compassion that God gave to each of the families who gave homes to a litter of kittens I will never forget.



"One small cat changes coming home to an empty house to coming home."

~PAM BROWN, B.1928



RESQCATS Winter 2002

Lexi's Miracle

Story by Kathryn Henebry

We lost our beloved kitty, "Yater," at age 15-1/2 on August 8, 2001, due to a kidney failure. Yater was a precious part of the Henebry family and gave actual "hugs," wrapping his paws around our necks. Losing Yater left such a big hole in our hearts that our house didn't seem like a home any more. We considered adopting another cat, but weren't sure if we were ready. Anyone who has ever lost a pet knows that after having such a wonderful, loving relationship with a pet like we had with our beloved Yater it's hard to imagine how any other kitty can fill his paws.

That's when we found **RESQCATS**.

We adopted two kittens, "Lexi," a little girl, and "Max," our boy, from **RESQCATS**. Lexi, as it turns out, had to have three surgeries for an umbilical hernia. Her inner tissue around the hernia was as thin as tissue paper. It was touch and go for a few weeks. Lexi had a hard start in life—abandoned and malnourished due to her birth circumstances, she was very tiny (the runt of the litter) and thinner than she should have been. With love and care from **RESQCATS** she was well on her way to being healthy. It was after we adopted her that the vet found the problem with her inner-tissue. We were sad and afraid for Lexi and for ourselves, with all we had just been through in losing Yater. We weren't sure our hearts could stand another loss so soon and, needless to say, Lexi and Max had both captured our hearts.



Lexi & Max

The vets at St. Francis Veterinary Clinic, Dr. Fauro and Dr. Lawrence, performed with a valiant effort to save Lexi's life. The stitches from the first surgery completely dissolved on the inside of her tiny body within a few days (it usually takes months). A second surgery was needed a week later when her thin tissue herniated in another spot because the stitches had nothing to hold onto and once again, the stitches dissolved too soon. Her third surgery required a new approach that utilized a different type of sutures, as well as, a new technique for her stitches. It was an aggressive surgery and our last hope. We all knew that if Lexi could not heal this time the outcome could be quite grim. Lexi needed us and we needed her. She filled the holes in our hearts and made our family complete again. We prayed every day that she would be better and get stronger. Jeffyne, "Aunt" Jeffyne, as she is referred to in our family now, called us and prayed for Lexi and for us. That is when our miracle happened. The third surgery worked like a charm. Dr. Fauro said he had only seen one other case in 20 years of practice with the same type of condition.

It was quite heart-warming to see these dedicated professionals at St. Francis go to such an extent for this little abandoned, rag-a-muffin kitten, no bigger than the palm of a hand, who had filled our hearts with joy. She's now gained a whopping TWO pounds in the month that we've "mauled" her with love and she's doing "GREAT!"

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Lexy is a reminder to us everyday of just how precious every single life is...human as well as the animals.

"Way down deep, we're all motivated by the same urges. Cats have the courage to live by them."

~JIM DAVIS



RESQCATS Summer 2004

MR. JINGLES

As many of you know the end of November or the beginning of December is usually when the last kittens of a long season find homes and I welcome a winter break. By that time I am physically exhausted and worn out from explaining that **RESQCATS** is an organization for stray and abandoned cats and kittens and regardless of everyone's desperate story, I cannot take in cats that they can no longer keep. By that time of year, I have also talked to hundreds of people in order to determine which ones qualify to adopt a RESQCAT. To get right to the point, I am ready for a break and vacation.

So when the phone rang on the afternoon of December 23, 2003 and the voice on the other end said, "Is this **RESQCATS**?" I thought to myself, the last kittens are gone, so this will be a short conversation and I can just put this person on the waiting list for kittens in the Spring. I only replied, "Yes, this is **RESQCATS**." Then the voice said, "Well, I have a story for you!" Before I knew it the words had slipped past my lips with a little chuckle, "Well, EVERYBODY does!"

The nice lady explained that a stray cat had been visiting a small company in Carpinteria and the employees had been letting him come in to sleep and eat out of the cold and rain while trying to locate a possible owner with flyers and posters, etc. They had no luck in finding the rightful owner, but the reason they were calling was because "Mr. Jingles," as they called him (that was the perfect name for him as it was Christmastime) looked like he had been hit by a car overnight and they were very worried. She didn't know what to do and asked if I could help. I told her that he needed to go immediately to my vet at La Cumbre Animal Hospital and we could see what was going on. The voice explained that a young man named, Adam, had taken a particular liking to Mr. Jingles and that he would escort him to the vet.

Now, I need to back up a little here. The usual vacation break I get to take in the winter months had been cancelled due to a serious back injury my husband, Mitch, had suffered. He was home flat on his back, and unable to move without excruciating pain. We were both anxiously awaiting notification of a surgery date for him. There was nothing I could do to help him feel even the slightest bit better. I was responsible for everything now. I took care of all of our animals (25 cats, 8 collies, and 15 tortoises) which is a big job that



Mr. Jingles after being brought in on Christmas Eve.

Mitch and I usually share. That part was fine....it was the grocery shopping and cooking that were foreign jobs to me. I couldn't find anything in the grocery store because I never shop in a grocery store and Mitch does all the cooking. My emotions were also tied up in Dallas due to my Dad's serious health problems and his upcoming surgery to take care of grapefruit-sized aneurysms. He was awaiting a surgery date also and was given only a 50% chance of surviving the surgery. I couldn't be there for all that was going on with Mitch. Life was a challenge right then and I felt helpless in being able to help any of the people I loved get better.

The vet, Dr. Claudia Salmone, called within an hour and her message was as follows, "Jeffyne, this cat is in terrible shape, he is FIV positive, I don't think anything is broken but I need to x-ray him, he is not neutered, he is bruised, scratched, sore and swollen, his teeth and gums are infected, he is probably around eight years old....but he is a really sweet cat." When I got the message, I went straight to her office and told Dr. Salmone that I do not believe in putting down FIV positive cats and that we would approach his care as if he were one of my very own cats. Mr. Jingles had a right to life and I knew if he had ended up at many other shelters, he would have been euthanized due to the fact that he was FIV positive and that his medical expenses to be high.

I could tell Mr. Jingles had been on the street and on his own a long time before he ended up at the company's doorstep in Carpinteria. He seemed so sweet and looked so comfortable on his soft heated bed at the vet's office...especially when he cradled his head in my hand when he was too sore for me to pick up.

At that moment, I had no idea what he would come to mean to me and how he would lift my spirits – give me something that I could heal and make better after feeling so inadequate with my family.

Mr. Jingles came to **RESQCATS** on Christmas Eve after his x-rays revealed no broken bones and he had been neutered. He had antibiotics for some wheezing and I was instructed to give him some time before we could tackle his dental surgery that would definitely improve his health. He got the entire isolation room with beds, blankets, pillows and a heating pad accompanied by food, water and Christmas music. My love for him was instant. He loved kisses right in the middle of his head and I don't know how many times I did that and said, "Merry Christmas, Mr. Jingles!"

In the meantime, I kept in touch with the young man who took such an interest in Mr. Jingles. His name was Adam Lee. He said, "I'll be happy to give Mr. Jingles a home if no one else wants him," I explained that he was a FIV positive cat and that meant he had to be indoors all the time and never around other cats to prevent spreading the virus. Adam said, "Fine." I said, "You know he is probably about 8 years old! (no one ever wants to take even the one year old moms I get....I couldn't believe he would take one that was eight!) Adam said, "That's fine." I told him that Mr. Jingles was in bad shape, that I needed to get him through the next couple of weeks and then he would require some major dental surgery and follow-up antibiotics so he could not think about taking him home for at least three weeks. Adam said, "That's fine, in fact that will coordinate perfectly with my vacation." Even when I explained to Adam that Mr. Jingles would probably be on antibiotics for several weeks and most likely require another chest x-ray at the end of his antibiotics, Adam was "fine." I couldn't believe what I was hearing! Who was this Adam? I would find out a couple of days later when he came to visit.

Adam showed up to visit Mr. Jingles with food and litter for him and flowers for me! He was a tall handsome man with a heart as good as gold. I knew Adam had been checking around at my vet asking about me. Who was this Jeffyne? How could she take care

of 25 of her own cats? What was **RESQCATS** like? Was Mr. Jingles in a good place to recover? I think he instantly approved of the little bit of heaven we have created for the cats here and felt reassured that Mr. Jingles was in a good place.

Adam spent a long time visiting with Mr. Jingles. It still seemed somewhat surreal that he had taken to this cat who obviously was not in his best form! But I have learned to accept the angels that come here in human form and Adam had such big angel wings that to this day I am not sure they are going to fit through heaven's gate.

As Adam and I went to the car to get some supplies he brought for Mr. Jingles, I noticed that he dropped a bag of litter and had some difficulty in picking it back up. He appeared to have limited use of his hand and arm. I saw a vague hint of some remaining scars on his neck and knew he must have suffered some sort of injury. He didn't need my help in picking the bag back up...he was strong and confident and had compensated somehow for his injury. I couldn't tell exactly how old he was and couldn't think of a war he may have been in so I asked him what had happened. Adam said he had had a stroke. I told him he seemed so young to have had a stroke! He looked at me with a big smile and said, "I am actually 40, but I had the stroke when I was 17! I was driving down the highway in San Francisco and someone drove by and shot me and caused me to have a stroke." Adam spent three months in the hospital recovering and the person that shot him was never found. I was shocked and felt tears swelling quickly in my eyes and I didn't know what to say. Adam and I have since talked about it and he felt it was "fine" when I asked if I could share his story.

You see, I think Adam knew how Mr. Jingles had suffered and that he also would need a lot of recovery time. He was willing to commit and risk loving and thus healing this poor old cat.

The day Adam took Mr. Jingles home was such a special day. Adam brought me two bunches of flowers that lasted well over two weeks and I sent him home with Mr. Jingles, a long list of instructions, and two months worth of antibiotics. I cried when they left, but they were happy tears because I know they share an unconditional love.

I have both of them to thank...Mr. Jingles for helping me through a difficult time and for giving me the power to help him heal and feel like I was making a difference when all else seemed hopeless... And Adam for being the inspiration that he is.

I visited both of them not too long after they left together and got to see Mr. Jingles' new home. He has more toys than I can count, several beds through he chooses to sleep with Adam, and the biggest condo I have seen with a beautiful view of the ocean. Mr. Jingles also has his very own website created by Adam and believe me, it is worth every minute of your time to look at it...

<http://www.adamjameslee.com/mrjingles/index.htm>

And Adam has become a volunteer at **RESQCATS**!

"Purring would seem to be, in her case, an automatic safety valve device for dealing with happiness overflow."

~MONICA EDWARDS



RESQCATS Fall 2004

An update on "Mr. Jingles"

First of all, I must thank so many of you for your wonderful response and comments on the "Mr. Jingles" story that was featured in the June 2004 newsletter. What a story and what a cat! The outpouring of compassion from all of you

warmed my heart.

I do have a confession to make. I made an exception to board a cat when I invited Mr. Jingles to stay at **RESQCATS** while his new dad, Adam, went on vacation for two weeks. Boarding cats is not something that I do, but Mr. Jingles has quite a piece of my heart.

Prior to Mr. Jingles vacation at **RESQCATS**, we set up the entire isolation room where he had stayed before with baskets full of soft blankets, toys, a condo and scratching post, music, a night light and anything we could think of to spoil him the way Adam does. When Mr. Jingles arrived for his visit, I was surprised to see a totally



Mr. Jingles, Healed & Relaxing

different cat than the one I saw at Christmas time! He was a strong, healthy 14-pounds plus handsome cat! That is about twice as big as he was when he arrived in such bad shape on Christmas Eve!

His fur had grown back as thick as a polar bear and it was so sleek and shiny. His eyes were clear and his immediate purr told us just how content he was in his new life off the streets and with Adam. He was as loving as ever...asking to be brushed and in fact, he let you know if you stopped brushing him too soon by whacking at you with his paw. I was glad to see he had that kind of energy! He still let me kiss him right in the middle of his head. Adam did the same thing when he left that day to go on vacation. It just made me smile.

As you may remember, Mr. Jingles' arrival at Christmas was a very difficult time in my life. My husband, Mitch, was suffering from a serious back injury (he is recovering slowly from back surgery and doing better now) and my dad was having major surgery and serious health problems back in Dallas. I was feeling totally helpless in that I could not do anything to help any of the people I loved get better. Mr. Jingles had given me the opportunity to realize I could make a difference in the world by helping him get better. He helped me to heal when so much seemed so hopeless and I owe him so much for that enlightenment.

I kept Mr. Jingles for two weeks while Adam was on his vacation. As I look back, it was no coincidence that he was here at that time. Mr. Jingles' vacation at **RESQCATS** was just a few weeks after my father died suddenly. I had also lost one of my beloved collies of old age, had another one not doing well with his arthritis and knew that a third one only had a short time left on this earth due to cancer. I felt overwrought with sadness and felt quite helpless once again. Mr. Jingles had work to do once again.

I spent many hours with him during his visit. I cried, I laughed, I reflected, and I kissed him many times on his head. All his lessons came back to me. Mr. Jingles reminded me that I did make a difference in the world for him and that the world is full of hope and miracles. He helped heal my heart once again.



"It was difficult to vexed by a creature that burst into a chorus of purring as soon as I spoke to him."

~PHILIP BROWN



RESQCATS Winter 2004

The Miracle of "Blessing"

"Ko" arrived on a Friday at **RESQCATS** early this summer after she and two of her siblings were captured as stray kittens by Catalyst for Cats. They were about seven weeks old. The siblings were beautiful Siamese mix kittens with blue eyes and were in perfect health. Ko was a pretty girl with tabby and white markings and had long silky fur.

She had been injured somehow and had a severe laceration on her back leg. I was instructed on how to clean her wound, the antibiotics to give her and to return to the vet to have the wound re-checked the following Monday.

Ko, who was very shy, looked at us with huge sad eyes and some uncertainty as we cleaned and medicated her wound. But she was very sweet and tolerated all the medical care. She spent a quiet weekend taking in all the new surroundings and attention.

Monday arrived and it was time for Ron Faoro, DVM at St. Francis Hospital to re-check Ko. The vet technician took her to the

back of the hospital to be examined, but it was Dr. Faoro that appeared in the lobby to talk to me. He sat down and said, "Jeffyne, this little kitty's bladder is the size of a tennis ball and we need to find out why!" I had noticed that she had been spending a lot of time in the litter box and knew now she must have been trying to go! He had expressed her bladder and her urine was full of blood. I could see the alarm on Dr. Faoro's face. He checked her into the hospital, putting her on antibiotics. I returned home with a heavy heart which is usually my alarm that bad news is on its way.



Blessing in her Elizabethan collar

The bad news came the following day. Dr. Faoro had taken x-rays and they confirmed that this tiny little creature had suffered a broken pelvis and fractured femur. What had happened to her!?!?! Whatever it was, enough time had passed that the bones had already healed. But they had not healed properly. Three orthopedic surgeons were consulted but all came to the same conclusion: since the bones had already fused there was nothing that could be done. Dr. Faoro said that if Ko could not urinate on her own,

she would be destined to a life of always having to have her bladder expressed and infections would shorten her life. Cats are not usually tolerant of that procedure and then, of course, you have to find someone who is willing to make that commitment.



Blessing and her buddy, Ferdinand

We had already fallen in love with Ko and euthanasia was not an option for me and Dr. Faoro could not see it either. He said, "What we need is a miracle!" I looked him straight in the eyes and said, "Well, I believe in miracles. I've had several of them at my house and at **RESQCATS!**"

Days went by and everyone at the hospital did everything they could for Ko. They carried her around with them and spent breaks with her. The longer she stayed at the hospital, the more everyone loved her and the less likely that Dr. Faoro could even approach the subject of euthanizing her. It was thought that she would become a hospital cat before that would ever happen.

Then one day, Ko urinated a little on her own and her recovery began. She continued to get better and better. After a two week stay at the hospital, she returned to **RESQCATS**. We felt blessed by the miracle that occurred so we changed her name to "Blessing."

I barely heard Dr. Faoro's words of concern about something else as I happily left the hospital with Blessing. Apparently, the way her pelvis had healed had displaced her colon. He said, "Let's hope that kitty never gets constipated or she can become impacted and be in big trouble." Putting her on a diet that included canned food put extra moisture into her bowels and that would help. Back at **RESQCATS**, she just thrived. She ate well used her litter box normally, and played with her toys, while capturing everyone's heart.

When it was time for Blessing to be spayed I felt it was best that Dr. Faoro perform the surgery. It went perfectly and she returned to me once again to recover and begin her search for a home. Everything was fine, that is, until the next morning when one of the volunteers discovered that she had pulled at her stitches so that half of her insides were exposed and even had cat litter on them! OH NO!

Blessing went back to the hospital and was put under anesthesia again to sew her back up. She was sent home with antibiotics and an Elizabethan collar so she couldn't get to her stitches. What I feared the most happened. After being under anesthesia two days in a row, Blessing got constipated. The pressure that her pelvis put on her colon narrowed the passage that allowed her bowels to pass...so if she was constipated it meant they didn't pass. We went back to the hospital again. She was given stool softeners in hopes that they would help. It looked as if we needed another miracle. Again as I prayed for another it was granted. Blessing returned to **RESQCATS** as a heroine of sorts. I felt relieved for her and glad that she was alive. My concern, however, was finding a home for her. She needed to stay on stool softeners everyday day of her life and they had to be given twice a day. I needed someone who could make that commitment plus monitor her so that if there was a problem she could immediately be taken to the hospital. I asked myself if such a person even existed and if they did, where could I find them.

She was standing in front of me all along and I just didn't know it. Her name is Kay Hewitt. Kay has volunteered for **RESQCATS** for several years and adopted "Isabel" and "Ferdinand" three years ago. She had been watching all of this from the outside and I had no idea how attached she had become to Blessing. She called me one day and said, "Jeffyne, I can do this. I can give Blessing her medicine twice a day and I have permission from my landlord in writing that I can have another cat!" Kay had earned my trust a long time ago when she adopted Isabel who was a kitten that had survived surgery from a severe hernia at just 12 weeks of age. Kay took Blessing home and the love she has given her is endless.

I think Kay Hewitt is an angel on this Earth and Blessing's third miracle!

I think Kay Hewitt is an angel on this Earth and Blessing's third miracle!

*"Have you missed me?" she whispered.
He was purring in that exaggerated way cats have
when they want to put humans at ease."*

~ANNE TYLER



RESQCATS Summer 2005

How Jeffyne Got Her "Bing" Back

Some of you may remember the story about "How Jeffyne Got Her Bing Back." It is not a story I have shared with everyone because it involved some undercover detective work and trespassing onto private property, which, I must admit, I am somewhat proud of now.

It began with the adoption of a little kitten we called "Bing." He was adopted to a vibrant, enthusiastic woman who appeared to have fallen in love with him. She had been interviewed and passed all the criteria required to be a guardian of a **RESQCATS** kitty. Bing went home with the young woman while his littermates, "Cherry" and "Tang" continued their search for their purrfect person.

As always, I called the woman a few days later to make sure that all was okay, knowing that Bing was a little shy and might need some time to adjust to his new home. I left a message and asked for a return call. A couple of days later I left another message. When there was still no reply I began to feel a knot in the pit of my stomach...the familiar one we all get when we just know that something is not right. Another day went by before I decided to call again.

The woman answered the phone and I proceeded to tell her that I was just following up to see how Bing was doing and to ask if she had any questions about anything pertaining to his adjustment in his new home. I shared that I was little concerned since she had not returned my call and that I hoped everything was okay.



Sierra & Nevada

The voice on the other end of the phone was very different in tone and attitude from the excited, happy woman I had met just the week before. It was like Jekyll and Hyde. She told me, "Bing got out the day after I brought him home. You SOLD me a sick kitty, his eye was watery, and now I am sick with a cold that I got from him." I was *shocked* by her attitude but I remained calm and polite. I shared with her that **RESQCATS** does not sell kitties...we adopt them. I reminded her that if any medical problems arise within the kitten's transition period **RESQCATS** takes care of those medical bills. I also told her that humans *do not* catch colds from cats. I asked how Bing had gotten out and if she had tried to find him. She said, "No. I thought about closing the upstairs window when I brought him home...but fell asleep and didn't get around to it."

I asked why she hadn't called to let me know and that I could have helped her get him back. I thought to myself...now it has been a week that Bing has been out there all alone, without food and the chances of finding him are next to none. The bottom line was that she didn't care. She told me I was harassing her and that I had no business selling her a sick kitten. It was of no use to continue the conversation.

In my panic, I called a couple of volunteers to share my grief and to try and figure out what to do. The next morning one of the

volunteers called to say that she had been by Bing's new home and actually saw him in an auto body shop parking lot next to the woman's property. That was all I needed to hear. I knew that the best way to recover Bing was to trap him in a humane trap baited with Star-Kist tuna in water like we trap the feral cats.

My volunteer and I were on a mission! When we arrived at the property we were surprised to see another kitten sitting in the woman's window sill wearing a name tag from another local rescue organization. The woman hadn't bothered to look for Bing! But she had gone out within a few days to another shelter and adopted another kitten!

The auto body shop was closed for three days during that Labor Day weekend....and I mean CLOSED – the gate padlocked and the seven-foot-tall chain link fence protected with metal spikes at the top to deter intruders! We felt compelled to get in to find Bing and since an easy point of entry was impossible, over the fence we went! We got the trap over the fence, baited it with cat treats and tuna then prayed for success.

My trip back over the fence wasn't successful, however! The volunteer made it fine but I felt my shorts get caught on the spikes at the top, then rip as the spike punctured my butt! OUCH!

I was a mess by the time I got home. I thought that I just might need a *couple of miracles* for this scenario....one being that my husband would be willing to bail me out of jail if I was caught and most importantly...that Bing would take the bait and go into the trap.

In my effort to narrow it down to needing only *one* miracle...Bing's return...I called the auto body shop and the owner's message machine at home to explain who I was, what I was doing, to apologize profusely for trespassing and to leave my phone number if he had any questions. I drove to the shop around 10:00 p.m. hoping to see Bing in the trap. I left in tears when I saw it was empty.

At 6:30 the next morning, another volunteer showed up at my door to let me know that she had seen Bing sitting *in* the trap, awaiting his return to **RESQCATS**. Having learned from experience, I loaded the ladder into the car so I could get over that fence without mishap and brought him home.

Bing had been without food for a week, frightened by the cars passing nearby on Hwy.101 and lucky he hadn't been hit by a train since the Amtrak was just across the street. It took less than 30 seconds and he knew he was safe. Bing ate a big breakfast and looked at me with grateful eyes as I put him in his bed. He purred throughout his nap the rest of the day.

Bing's littermate, "Cherry," found a home the week Bing was gone but "Tang" was still waiting for one. We re-united Bing and Tang the next day and they were inseparable. They played together, ate together and slept in the same basket. I knew then that I must find a home to take them both.

Special note: The shorts I shredded on the fence were framed by the volunteers and given back to me as a birthday present. They hang in our "**RESQCATS Hall of Fame**" entry into the cattery and the piece really is titled, "How Jeffyne Got Her Bing Back." It is there for everyone to see. You will, however, just have to take my word that I have a puncture scar on my behind!

And now, to borrow from Paul Harvey, "Here's the rest of the story:" It wasn't long before John and Emily McLaughlin visited **RESQCATS** in search of a kitten. I had some available that could go to a home as the only cat but when I shared the story of Bing and his newly found security blanket, Tang, it touched their gentle hearts. Bing and Tang went home with John and Emily to begin their new life. John and Emily gave them a new start and new names, "Sierra" and "Nevada." Bing who was a brown tabby became "Sierra" for the Sierra Mountains and Tang was named "Nevada" for his rich red-orange fur that reminded them of the sun. The kitties



Sierra & Nevada

blossomed in their new home. John and Emily have called occasionally to keep me updated....we've stayed in touch for well over a year. I love hearing from them and about their new home located just south of Santa Barbara in La Conchita.

Emily called in January with fear and overwhelming sadness in her voice. Emily, John, Sierra and Nevada were part of the tragedy in La Conchita when the mudslide claimed many homes and lives. Emily said that Sierra and Nevada knew before anyone else even sensed danger that something was wrong. They buried themselves in terror in the box springs under their owner's mattress. Everyone in La Conchita was given only minutes to evacuate and, as much as they tried, Sierra and Nevada would not come out. They clung to each other and to the box springs. John and Emily had to evacuate but decided to leave a back door open so that the kitties would have a way to escape before the house was destroyed. And that is just what they did...Sierra and Nevada got out! My heart just sank as Emily told me the story and by the end of the telephone conversation we were crying together.

John and Emily were fortunate in that their house was not affected...but Sierra and Nevada were gone. After the slide, they were not even allowed to return to the property. Animal control in Ventura County set traps and did a great job in trying to help people retrieve their animals. They set small traps baited with food and checked the traps everyday for a couple of weeks. John and Emily found a new place to live in Santa Barbara but made daily trips to La Conchita to check the traps long after Animal Control left the area. But they never gave up hope. They called to let me know that paw prints were seen around their house, had word that someone had seen one of their kitties, and they had even trapped someone else's little black kitty.

I tried to reassure Emily that Sierra (Bing) had been on his own before and that I felt Nevada would follow right along. As the weeks passed I knew that the chance of ever getting them back lessened by the day. I loaned them two large traps hoping that the more traps set, the better chance they had for a rescue.

Five weeks had passed when Nevada was found in one of the large traps and welcomed home. The vet reported he had lost four pounds but looked pretty good after all he had been through. That was one down and one to go!

I feared that Sierra might be trap shy after his first horrifying experience at the auto body shop and that he might be even more lost and insecure without Nevada. But three days later, there he was in the trap! He was thin, had a few ticks, and a bad cut on his head, but looked pretty good, too.

Sierra and Nevada are home now at their new house in Santa Barbara. John and Emily never gave up hope. They were determined to get their kitties back no matter how long it took. All along, I knew, they *believed in miracles!*

I know I believe in miracles... I'm just never sure when they will be granted. I am **so** glad that this was a time for miracles! I think Sierra had *already* used up some of his nine lives.

Welcome home Sierra & Nevada! And thank you Emily and John for letting me visit these two special kitties once they made it home!

*"It is a very inconvenient habit of kittens
(Alice once made the remark) that,
whatever you say to them, they always purr."*

~LEWIS CARROLL



RESQCATS Summer 2005

Believe in Miracles

(eight of them to be exact!)

I received a call in early May from a kind-hearted rescue person who had gotten a beautiful calico mommy out of a shelter in the Los Angeles area. The litter was scheduled for euthanasia at the shelter due to not having a lack of space. She thought that "Betsy McCall's" babies were around 5-6 weeks old. She indicated that the three little kittens were able to eat on their own and could be weaned soon. Therefore, she had given Betsy five additional newborn kittens from another shelter to nurse because their own mother had been hit and killed by a car. I said, "WOW! That is a lot of kittens for one mom!" But it sounded like Betsy's own litter could be weaned within a short period of time and it would be okay for her to continue nursing the other five.

Normally, **RESQCATS** would not take out-of-the-area kitties, but something told me I needed to make an exception for these kitties.

A few days later the group arrived and I was shocked. We couldn't tell which kittens were the original three that belonged to Betsy and which were the other five that were not hers. They were all very close in size. I estimated that Betsy's three were about 2-1/2 weeks old and the five newborns were about 10 days old...and that meant all of them were trying to nurse and none of them could eat on their own! Betsy weighed less than 6 pounds herself. The kittens and Betsy were dirty, smelly, had some kind of crud stuck under their nails, and all the boys (7 of the 8 kittens were boys) had enlarged scrotums.

I was grateful they came when they did. I knew we could help the mom and babies by supplemental bottle-feeding.

I was told that Betsy was sneezing and received some nose drops to give her. My stomach began to gnaw at me. Had the newborn litter of five been exposed to an upper respiratory virus for which they would have no antibodies to fight the infection? I knew that the person that took them in had good intentions...let the five babies nurse and grow up suckling from a mommy cat, (after all, bottle feeding five kittens around the clock for the next five weeks is a real job). I just wasn't sure that enough time had been taken to objectively evaluate the situation or make a judgment call on what would have been the healthiest thing to do rather than the easiest.

My gut feeling was right. Three of the five newborns became seriously ill with upper respiratory virus. Betsy's own kittens were able to avoid getting sick because they had received the antibodies from her to fight it off.

Within just a few days, one of the kittens became very sick. He was the tiniest of the litter and I don't think he ever had a chance. He drew his very last breath on the vet's table despite everything that was done to save him. I could only tell myself that his own mom, who had been killed by a car, needed him to be with her in Heaven. It broke my heart, but my worries were not over.

Two others were sick. "Honey" gradually fought off the virus with the support of antibiotics twice a day. But little "Sugar Bear"

looked as if he was headed down the same path as his brother that had died. He was the sickest little 5-1/2 ounce kitten I had ever seen. His little head was so stuffed up that he couldn't breathe which caused him to be uninterested in eating. His eye was so infected that I could barely open it to medicate it for fear of hurting him. The vet wasn't sure we could save his eye or him! His temperature kept dropping to 96-97 degrees. A normal temperature for a kitten can be as low as 99, but 101-102 is more like it!

Sugar Bear spent five days at La Cumbre Animal Hospital under the care of Beverly Holmes, DVM and her wonderful staff of technicians. He stayed in intensive care at the hospital for five days and came home with me every night. I was up every two hours to feed him, change his hot water bottles trying to keep his temperature up, medicate him, give him fluids, stimulate him to go to the bathroom...I ran my own little intensive care unit in our downstairs bathroom! His 5-1/2 ounce body fought its way all the way up to 9-1/2 ounces in about 10 days. The vet, the staff, and all the volunteers, not to mention me, were beyond happiness. By that time I was also beyond exhaustion.

Denny and Bonnie Epperson, Susan Leroy and Heather Thakarhucks took turns taking care of Sugar Bear on alternating nights so that I could catch up on some much needed sleep. I couldn't believe they would sign up for sleepless nights...but that is just how special they are.

After about two weeks, when Sugar Bear was reunited with his family it was a beautiful sight. Though he was much smaller than any of the other kittens, they all made concessions for him. He played a little slower, but we were all just glad to see him playing. Mommy and all her babies were starting to look better and appeared out of danger.

I mentioned to the vet that I was still concerned about the large scrotums on the male kittens. Upon examining one of them, the vet discovered a lot of fluid in his abdomen and feared a virus called FIP...it is 100% deadly. We had x-rays taken, an ultrasound was done, and fluid was extracted from one kitten's belly and sent into the lab for a pathologist and oncologist to review. The results: NOT FIP, but still inconclusive. The best guess was that it was an undiagnosed virus that hit the abdomens of all of them. It may still

be deadly since viruses cannot be treated. The only thing we could do was to support them with antibiotics. I left the vet's office that day with a warning that I could lose every single one of them to this unknown virus...all seven kittens and Betsy!

I do believe in miracles and I ask for them all the time...Sugar Bear had been one of them. Do I dare pray for eight! All at one time! Yes! And I asked everyone else to pray as well. I have a necklace that has two rings on it: one says "Believe" and the other says "Miracles." I hung it on the door of the isolation room where it hung along with my grandson, Hayden's, good luck charm. He helped me medicate the kitties for the next week. The good



Jeffyne with Betsy McCall & litter.

news was that none of them acted sick. They ate, played and slept as if nothing was wrong.

It took a couple of weeks of intense care and love before we knew they were out of danger. All their bellies went down and they started to look like normal kittens.

EIGHT MIRACLES! YES, EIGHT MIRACLES AND I WILL NEVER FORGET A SINGLE ONE.

Candace Burton gave Betsy a home along with her own kitten, "Winnie" and one of her foster kittens, "Teddy." Talk about an instant family! "Quimby" and his foster brother, "Buck" got to stay together and went home with Will McClintock and his wife, Amy. "Daisy" went home with Rodney and Isabel Medinilla and their family that includes two sons and "Pichy" who they adopted from **RESQCATS** about three years ago.

Sugar Bear...well...Sugar Bear stayed with me. He will probably have to undergo eye surgery when he is a little older. We were able to save his eye from the infection but some of the tissue around it did not grow properly and blocks his vision. I love him in a way I cannot explain.

His brother, Honey stayed, too. I knew Sugar Bear would need a buddy to play with since so many of my house kitties are grown and beyond playing or are shy and hide all the time. He was chosen because he suffers from a disease called mega-colon.

It is unrelated to anything else that went on with him and is probably inherited genetically although no vet has ever seen it in a kitten so young. It means that the muscles and/or nerve endings in his colon do not work and that he cannot push through his bowels because of it. He is on medication at least twice a day and will be for his lifetime. We want to avoid colon surgery if at all possible...it is dangerous and risky. I am still working on the right dosage of medication for Honey! He is doing great so far...maybe he is my ninth miracle!

"Cats make one of the most satisfying sounds in the world: they purr... A purring cat is a form of high praise, like a gold star on a test paper. It is reinforcement of something we would all like to believe about ourselves on-that we are nice."

~ROGER A. CARAS



RESQCATS Winter 2005

Miracles Can Come Full Circle

*The Story of Sophie, the Skittish Snowshoe Siamese
Story by Porter Evans*

It was the summer of 2001, and after a period of deep grieving for the three elderly cats we had lost the previous year, my husband and I felt ready to add a kitten to our remaining family of four. We called Jeffyne to let her know that we were open to adopt-



**Jeffyne snuggles with
Sugar Bear & Honey.**



Joey & Sophie

ing any cat she might suggest, and she told us to come on over. "I have one in particular in mind for you," she said, and explained that Timba, as she was then called, had already been adopted once and returned. The reason: She was painfully shy.

When my husband and I arrived at the shelter the next day, we would have been honored to take home any of the cats or kittens we met. I wish I could say that we felt an immediate bond with Timba, but the truth is, we loved everybody we saw. However, since Jeffyne had some serious concerns about Timba's adoptability, we said, sure, this one's fine. Shyness didn't seem like an insurmountable problem to us. How shy could she be?

Well, incredibly shy, as it turned out. Sophie, as we had named her, was overwhelmed by the bedroom in which we first placed her, so we put her in the guest bathroom instead. She was terrified of even that much space, and we ended up creating a mini-nursery inside a cardboard box that we then placed within the bathtub. We thought we were making progress toward acclimating her there, but one day she suddenly tore past us, bolted out of the bathroom, and landed in a foreign country (the den), where she panicked and began trying to dig her way into the side of the den sofa.

My husband simply said, "I think she's showing us where she wants to be," and headed for his toolbox. That very afternoon he created a cubbyhole within the sofa for her, and Sophie popped inside and gratefully began purring. From that point on, the sofa was her bassinet—Sophie of the Sofa, we called her—and we tried to socialize her as best we could. Petting her meant stretching your entire arm into the sofa until finally her silky head came forward to meet your fingertips. Naturally, trust so hard-won is all the softer! But we worried about her, of course. How were we ever going to give her some semblance of a normal life?

Luckily, our alpha cat, Joey, decided to rescue us, and Sophie. A handsome mackerel tabby, he simply commandeered her one day and wouldn't take no for an answer. He reached into her sanctuary and gave her a good stem-to-stern grooming, whether she liked it or not. He communed with her by napping outside her little entrance, so the two of them could purr in unison.

And soon it became clear that she was growing to love and trust him. One day, gathering up all her courage, she leaned out to chew on his ears; later, she even jumped on his back for a ride down the hall. With the help of Joey's unique combination of tough and tender love, Sophie was finally, miraculously, prepared to take part in the life of the household.

More than four years have now passed, and Sophie has grown into a beautiful blue-eyed girl. She has remained an extremely high-strung cat - she hides for hours if the doorbell rings, and we have many good friends who have never seen her. But she adores her patient big brother Joey, and following his example, she is

calm and even playful with her other older siblings.

Those same years have brought our wonderful alpha cat to the threshold of old age. Joey walks more slowly now, and he seems to feel the cold. He struggles with heart and kidney problems, bouts of asthma, and arthritis in his hindquarters. In the face of these challenges, he is tended faithfully by his sweet sister Sophie, who coaxes him to eat, and, as if sensing his pain, curls up against his back to warm and comfort him.

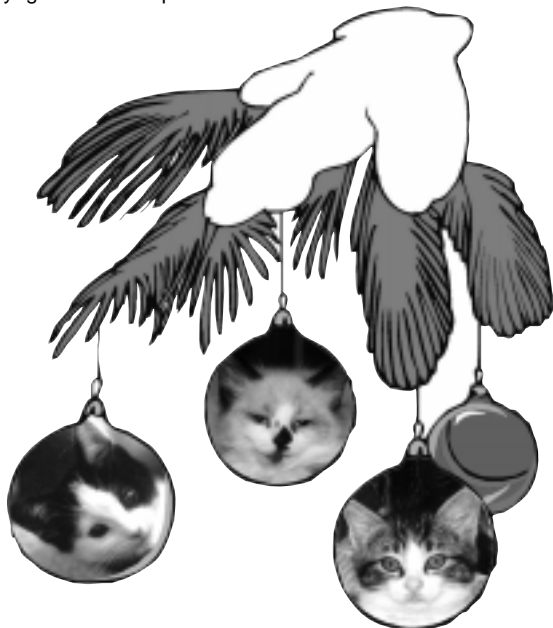
With full hearts, we watch them dozing together in the winter twilight, and we realize what a tremendous gift Joey and Sophie have been for one another.

He was her first, best love.

She is his last, best love.

And without a doubt, they are each other's finest miracle.

Adapted from Sophie's story in *The Well-Lettered Cat* by Porter Evans
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President's Letter

continued from page 2

by offering relief, housing, clothes, and emotional support in finding lost loved ones. Animal organizations from all over the country have worked tirelessly to find the guardians of lost pets during the disasters and have been faced with the enormous job of where to send the stray and abandoned animals that have no place to go.

It is a big world out there with some huge challenges. But all the stories on the news remind me that we can be there for others... to share, to hope and to have faith when we are needed. We can make a difference in this world. One kind gesture from one heart can create a miracle for many others.

I hope you will find it in your hearts to make that one kind gesture that will make a difference for so many. Your tax deductible donation to **RESQCATS** will give a stray or abandoned kitty a chance for life...and there is nothing more precious than life. In return, I can assure you that that little kitty will change the life of the person who adopts it and miracles will continue.

Have a wonderful holiday season... knowing you have made a difference.

Sincerely,

Jeffyne Telson
President, **RESQCATS**, Inc



Open Your Heart and Create Your Own RESQCATS Miracle!

RESQCATS

A non-profit sanctuary dedicated to the rescue, care and adoption of abandoned cats and kittens

My Tax deductible donation is enclosed:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------|---------------------|-------|
| Angel in Heaven | \$1000 | Caring Spirit | \$100 |
| Miracle Worker | \$500 | Supporter | \$50 |
| Magic Maker | \$250 | Helper | \$25 |

Please designate my donation to the Polar Bear Fund to help kitties with special medical needs.

Make your check payable to:

RESQCATS
P.O. Box 3852
Santa Barbara, CA 93130
(805) 563-9424

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

"Letters to RESQCATS" – Photo Contest Winners



RESQCATS "Most Regal" – JUDAH
Judah's guardian is Nicole Muhthaler .



RESQCATS "Cutest" – MOCHI
Mochi's guardian is Sonia Nasta.



RESQCATS "Most Relaxed" – TEDDY
Teddy's guardians: Ann McGorty & Ruth Stevenson.



RESQCATS "Most Beautiful" – BELLA
Bella's guardians: Laurie Pfeiffer & Nathan Craig.



RESQCATS "Sweetest" – RUDY
Rudy's guardian is Sharon McGinnis.



RESQCATS "Most Handsome" – GATSBY
Gatsby's guardian is Joanna Haynes.

RESQCATS is having a **Photo Contest** for each of our Newsletters.

To be eligible, just mail or **email** us your cutest, funniest, or whatever kitty pictures along with your letters. (If you send photos through the mail, be sure to write your name and your kitty's name on the back. On emailed photos, include your last name & the kitty's name on the image title.) There is no limit to the number of entries you can submit.

Our volunteers and staff will choose winners from the photos we receive. Winners receive a RESQCAT T-shirt or a surprise gift and will be featured in the Photo Contest space.

There will be a variety of categories in each newsletter. So have your digital cameras ready for the action. We look forward to the fun of choosing winners!

(Please note: We prefer to receive digital photos sent via email.)

Wish List!

- * Cat teaser toys
- * Scoopable Cat Litter
- * Nutromax **canned** kitten food—turkey or chicken flavor
- * CDs to play in the cattery—nature sounds, soft music, piano, harp and New Age
- * Incense for the cattery—it relaxes the kitties
- * Laundry detergent—safe for septic tanks
- * Bleach for sanitizing
- * Petco gift care to be used for supplies
- * Simple Solution for cat odors and stains—gallon size at Petco
- * Cat condos
- * Baskets for beds
- * New cardboard carriers for kittens to go home in
- * Baby blankets

If you would like to donate any of these items, please contact us at 563-9424 or e-mail RESQCATS@aol.com.

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Keith & Christine Flannery

FLANNERY
Designs & Graphics

805 . 966 . 2445
art@montecitomag.com



Deliana, Mitch & Sandy

Love The Jingles

Happy Holidays!!!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM RESQCATS

Santa Barbara, CA 93130

PO Box 3852

RESQCATS™

