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## Miracle at Bridgeport Animal Control

Wed, 2013-07-31 10:29 — Robin Olson

*Rescuing cats doesn't only mean taking a cat off the street or out of a kill-shelter and giving it a home until you can find a forever home for it. There's a great deal of behind-the-scenes networking going on, too, that doesn't often get reported.*

For a rescue like mine, that's held together by a few very precious volunteers and even fewer foster homes, we can't take on many cats because we don't want to get into an overcrowded, unhealthy situation. We can't expand until we get more foster homes so for now, we tap out at about 20 cats or less.

**This year has been the most demanding, intense, scariest to date, with a seemingly record breaking number of calls and emails, asking for help for feral cats giving birth in all sorts of places, like basement level window wells, in a boat, under a shed. There are reports of injured kittens found, abandoned cats either cast outdoors or left behind in steaming-hot apartments or homes after the owner's moved away. The heartbreakers are the senior cats whose sole provider passes away or is moved into a nursing home—those cats are the toughest to adopt out and often need a great deal of vet care.**

**Add to that...adoptions are at an all time low. We've had Barney since he was BORN and he just turned a YEAR OLD. Other rescues, loaded up, report one or two adoptions every few weeks, when in past years they were always ready to take on more cats because enough were finding homes. When you do the math, between the rise in abandoned cats or owners who get evicted, the natural rise of the unspayed/neutered cat population and the economy and you have a disaster in the making that has ended up with the cats paying the price with their lives.**



*©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. His owner died. Family members promised they would come back for him, but they never did. Leaving him depressed and alone, wondering what he did wrong.*

**Last week, I got an urgent plea, saying that the Bridgeport [CT] Animal Control was overflowing with 75 cats. Though they NEVER want to euthanize any animal, now they were faced with putting down perfectly adoptable cats and kittens because there was no longer any space to house them. Stories like this are all too common across the country. This is our answer to overcrowded shelters—we KILL the animals to make room for more, so they can be killed next.**



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. "Can't Keep." Why?

Though I can't speak for every rescuer, I'd bet we're all very exhausted, particularly this year. **Our spirits are broken, too. We used to be able to call an associate at another rescue and beg a favor. After a few calls we'd usually be able to find someone to say they could help and take on a cat we couldn't help.** We'd offer bribes-we'd pay for vetting or we'd drive the cat to their door. We'd make jokes or promise to use our social networking chops to let everyone know that this one cat is at a great rescue to help that rescue get donations...whatever it took.

**Today we can make the calls, but often they go unanswered or if they are answered we're told; "I'm so sorry, but we just can't take another...did you try such and such rescue?"** We all strive to help each other out, but we're just lost about how we can keep doing this if people don't start adopting cats again.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. How can this cat take the stress of living in this cage? When I approached him, he came over and wanted me to pet his head. Leaving him behind broke my heart.

**What we all really needed was some good news to keep us going and today we got some. After a tireless effort by T.A.I.L.S <sup>[1]</sup> (who offered to pay for the spay/neuter and vaccinations of every cat adopted from Bridgeport), by myself, and MANY other rescues across Connecticut, by the local media, like Scot Haney of WFSB <sup>[2]</sup> and a crew from Channel 12 News <sup>[3]</sup>. The word got out-and it didn't fall on deaf ears.**

I made my usual calls asking for help and surprisingly enough a group here in town said they could take on a few kittens if I could go get them. **I was told to take five, but then I was faced with having to choose which lives to save.**

I've done a lot of rescues from Georgia, but I've never been to the state. **I've never gone to animal control and chosen a cat to rescue.** I've used photos as a guide, but there were plenty of times I didn't even have that much to go on. This was the first time I would go into a place where I knew if I didn't help, maybe no one would. **As I drove to Bridgeport my task weighed heavily on my heart, but I was also excited to be part of something good happening to these needy animals.**



*©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. Those are adult cats in those dark cages. They barely can stand. Imagine what it would do to their psychological state after being in there for a long period of time?*

I met with Melissa, who runs animal control along with her associate Jimmy. I loved Melissa right away. She was smart, cute with dark curly hair and funky glasses. She was expecting my arrival since I'd promised her help and was finally able to make good on my words. **She walked me over to a room that was having some construction done on it and told me to pardon the mess, but mess or no, I was immediately taken aback by what I saw.**



*©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. I desperately wanted to take these guys, too.*

**The cinderblock walled room, was small, dark and filled with ungodly small stainless steel cages. Each held a cat that more often than not, barely fit inside it. The cats were stressed, some depressed, some reaching out a paw, asking for attention and hoping to be released from being confined. My heart sank. Of course, I wanted to take the black cat with the white locket on his chest, who was declawed, big, scared...so scared he was sitting in his filthy litter pan. I wanted to take the buff chubby kitty whose owner had died, leaving him on his own,**

even though family members promised to come back to get him-**none of them ever did.**



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. *Do I chose this litter? YES!*

**Then there were the kittens-either all black or black and white. They were together as a litter, each clinging to the other, wide-eyed, looking at me, trying to decide if I was going to harm them or help. There were eleven kittens and I could only take five.** One of the kittens, a sole longhaired black male, was sick, with green discharge from his eyes and his nose was runny. I asked to look at him and I checked his mouth for sores, the telltale sign of Calicivirus-which thankfully he did not have.

**I had to consider what the rescue would want, not me. They would want the youngest, friendliest kittens. I went back and forth, adding up which combinations I could take. I started off with the sick kitten, but realized he could affect the others so he had to go back into his cage...and trust me on this...it was not a good feeling. I had to push through my emotions and make a choice.**



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. *The little sick kitten I thought I had to leave behind (who is now at a Vet getting the care he needs)*

I called one of my friends who works with the rescue taking the cats and asked if I could, at least, take a sixth kitten since it would have been left behind when it was part of a litter. She said YES! I wanted to take three older long-haired black and white kittens, but the voice in my head said, no, take the younger ones. **I felt the ones I left behind would easily be adopted as they were very pretty and friendly. I had to hope for the best.**



*©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. This kitten was so friendly I couldn't believe he came out of such a high-stress environment.*

We packed up the kittens. **In the end I chose two litters: one of two kittens and one of four. I borrowed a second cat carrier so they wouldn't be together. I looked at the sick kitten and he reached out a paw, wanting to get out of the cage. I asked Melissa to promise to tell me how he was doing and when he got out, but I felt terrible leaving him behind.**



*©2013 Robin A.F. Olson.*

I drove the kittens to our new animal control where they would be quarantined for the day until the rescue could come pick them up.

**We got them settled into their new quarters, which were easily six times larger than where they had been held. The kittens looked confused until we put food down and then all I could hear was the sound of their tongues lapping greedily at the food. One growled, protecting his precious resource, so we got more plates out and added more food. The litter of four ate 3, 5-oz cans of food.**



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson.

**While I was at animal control, I mentioned the sick kitten and some of the others. I knew I did what I could, but the image of that little guy stuck with me as I drove home.**



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. *These kittens turned out to be cheerful, friendly and playful once they had a chance to get used to their new temporary home.*

A few hours later, I got a call. **Our dear animal control officer asked me why I didn't take the sick kitten, too. I told her I had no place for him to go and she told me to go get him and that she would care for him herself and get him placed! I called Melissa and told her I had to return her cat carrier and that I'd do it the next morning. She jokingly asked if I'd like to fill it back up with more cats and I replied, yes and that I was coming back for the sick kitten.**



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. *Twenty-four hours later, this little kitten is no longer depressed and fearful, but happy with a full tummy.*

**I helped get seven kittens into safety and felt like there was some good in this world after all.**

**Three cages were empty, which gave all the other cats a chance to live a little bit longer. But that was just the tip of the iceberg. What I couldn't have imagined was what I saw the next morning when I returned to Bridgeport Animal Control to pick up the sick kitten...**

**...a line of people waiting to adopt cats.**

I had to wait to get my sick kitten and I got lost trying to find the room he was in. I walked past empty cages, then would see just one cat by itself. Confused I couldn't figure out what was going on, until one of the caretakers came up to me. I asked him about the empty cages. **His eyes teared up and he said to me that in the nine years he'd worked at BPT Animal Control, this was the BEST DAY they'd ever had and that most of the cats were GONE. Gone? As in dead? He replied, no...gone as in rescued or adopted.**

**By the end of that day every single cat-even the saddest, oldest, scruffiest cats, were out of animal control. 75 cats were safe, ALIVE.**

If only this story was being repeated across this country at every animal control and shelter...what a wonderful world it would be. **Yet, I'm grateful I got to witness the breathtakingly beautiful power of what can happen when people come together to effect great change.**

75 cats got to see the sunshine again, breathe fresh air, eat good food and be loved. It doesn't get any better than this.

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[Busted Out!](#) <sup>[8]</sup>

## **Comments**

Wed, 2013-07-31 11:00 — [Ace \(not verified\)](#) <sup>[9]</sup>

**This is GREAT!!!!** <sup>[10]</sup>

Yeessss! THAAANK YOU!!!!

Wed, 2013-07-31 11:08 — [Connie & The Crew \(not verified\)](#) <sup>[11]</sup>

**So, did you get the sick** <sup>[12]</sup>

So, did you get the sick one??

Wed, 2013-07-31 13:17 — [Robin Olson](#) <sup>[13]</sup>

**YES! I got him!** <sup>[14]</sup>

He's at the vet getting treated. Doing well last I heard.  
Wed, 2013-07-31 14:24 — [Kjelle Bus aka ... \(not verified\)](#) <sup>[15]</sup>

**YAY !!! For happy endings :)** <sup>[16]</sup>

YAY !!!

For happy endings :)

Wed, 2013-07-31 14:49 — [Barbara UK \(not verified\)](#)

**Wonderful Story** <sup>[17]</sup>

I'm sitting here with my own beloved little rescue cat nestled in my lap, she's resting a warm paw on my arm and I pray that

all those cats and kittens get to do the same somewhere soon with someone who will love them like I love my little cat.

You have a heart of gold and a will of steel. You did a fantastic job and it's great that the shout out produced such an unexpected rush of adopters.

At last something to put a big smile on your face after all the troubles you've battled through lately.

Barbara UK

Wed, 2013-07-31 15:58 — [Deb N Cats \(not verified\)](#) [18]

### **Something in my eye.** [19]

I told a break from mindless data entry to read you post. Darn it. I have something in my eye now. What a fantastic story.

Wed, 2013-07-31 20:02 — [Catnynouse \(not verified\)](#)

### **Great job!** [20]

That is wonderful when the community comes together and you can see the results of your hard work - HOORAY!!!

Thank you!

sandy

Wed, 2013-07-31 21:30 — [The Musings Of ... \(not verified\)](#) [21]

### **I love good news** [22]

Robin, you do such wonderful things. I could tell from the photos that those babies are overjoyed to be with you. The girls and I send the babies many hugs and kisses.

Wed, 2013-07-31 21:48 — [Doreen D \(not verified\)](#)

### **This is the best news, what a** [23]

This is the best news, what a relief!! Please post updates on the little sick one. Thank you, Doreen

Sat, 2013-08-03 14:56 — [jmuhj \(not verified\)](#)

### **RE: BRIDGEPORT ACC** [24]

Yes, sometimes miracles still DO happen. And for that, we are so grateful. I work every day for cats and kittens in need, and every day I cry. But every day, I also say prayer of thanks. Even in this abysmal economy and consumerist society, there are still a lot of caring, wonderful people who are stepping up to the plate to help. Of course we need far more, a far better economy, far more compassionate and caring priorities, and an end to the consumerist-self-gratification sickness that has poisoned this world. One day, one step, one cat at a time, yes?

Tue, 2013-09-24 09:25 — [Kathy \(not verified\)](#)

### **cats** [25]

I am glad that these cats got a home. I have been feeding three cats that someone left behind when they moved. I have been trying to get these cats into a rescue and have been unsuccessful. I get various reasons from they only take kittens, or adult cats that are being returned.

It is so sad that these very friendly cats are just forgotten and no rescue will take them. I have my hands full in my home with a sick elderly cat who is 17 and a 9 year cat, two birds and fish so I am maxed out on what I can manage financially.

I really wish that I could find somewhere for these cats to go, the two males are friendly, one of them is a bit more friendly than the other and the female is a bit shy but is coming around. Because they all hang out together it would be great if they could all go together some where safe where they will be loved.

If anyone has any ideas on what can be done to help these cats I sure would appreciate the help. I live in south florida.

Wed, 2013-09-25 00:06 — [sarah \(not verified\)](#) [26]

### **cats** [27]

hi - im in calif but i could flow you some cash to help you keep these kitties. you sound PERFECT for them!!! contact me through kitty charm school mill valley ca - our email is on the website.

Tue, 2013-09-24 10:22 — [myra44 \(not verified\)](#)



## **Bridgeport Rescue** [28]

My three black and white girls are from a wonderful no-kill shelter in Lunenburg MA. They rejoice with me to hear of this miracle and the goodness of the humans who got together to save precious lives. The pictures with this story touch me so! The black and white kinship with my girls makes this even more touching.

Tue, 2013-09-24 10:47 — Gus's roommate (not verified)

## **I got my first-ever pet, a 9** [29]

I got my first-ever pet, a 9 year old orange tabby from a shelter, six months ago. It's been an up-and-down journey, as he has rough manners and has nipped and even bit me many times while trying to communicate and play. I came close to giving him up a few times; it can be tough learning to be a cat owner.

But when he's in "snuggle mode," the warmth and love are just indescribable. The look in his eyes when he gazes at me, the kisses and affection, make it all worth it. And reading this story just drives home for me again that taking him made a difference. Sometimes I think it didn't, because he was at a no-kill shelter where they really liked him and would have let him live out his life, so I felt like I didn't really help him in a meaningful way. But now I see that I took him out of a stressful shelter environment, and I freed up a space for another cat.

Thank you for reminding me that adoption matters, even if every day isn't as perfect as you thought it would be. Gus and I get to know each other better as the months go by, and he's my baby.

Tue, 2013-09-24 11:03 — [ForEverMeow \(not verified\)](#) [30]

## **Deja Vu** [31]

We have a small cat rescue on the west coast, and I couldn't believe it...I could have written that article word for word, unfortunately apart from the happy ending. Your post matches our lives to a tee, word for word. We'd need at least 2 miracles like that a month, every month, to stop cats from getting killed in the shelter here.

Tue, 2013-09-24 11:51 — [Nikki H. \(not verified\)](#) [32]

## **this is great...** [33]

I know how bad this cat population issue is, and has been. Its getting worse everyday. This story, a far reach from the norm, is beautiful to read. It has brought tears to my eyes, and make me remember WHY I have my three cats. No one wanted them either. Until ME. They are spoiled and have a WHOLE room to themselves. I wish people would understand that they are so easy to have. Easy to love and care for. They dont ask for much form us, but we expect too much from them.

Thank you for posting this story.

Nikki

Tue, 2013-09-24 18:09 — [paula bayes \(not verified\)](#) [34]

## **coveredincathair** [35]

I just read your article as an avid cat lover all 55 yrs of my life I know the joy of a rescue I hace nothing but rescues my love of my heart mookie passed at 20 yrs she was a rescue so broken was I my boy friend said lets go for a drive he took me tp the shelter at first I was hesitant but 2 min in I had my black boy mojo later came ming then chewy and meeka all rescue he sez it took for to heal my heart no really they showed me how much love they could give

Wed, 2013-09-25 02:13 — Michelle (not verified)

## **Amazing!!!!** [36]

Thank you for ending my night with tears of joy, rather than tears of sorrow!

Wed, 2013-09-25 02:37 — [Colin Wright \(not verified\)](#) [37]

## **Sweet.** [38]

I'm incredibly happy to read things like this. One of the main problems is that many people, even including people recuing cats, don't understand that in some situations cats can live perfectly happy lives outdoors if someone is taking care of them. There are too many situations where people believe that it's better to kill a cat than TNR it (the word "euthanize" is not defined as killing a healthy cat, only a sick one, and is not appropriate in the situations I'm describing).

If more people were willing to manage feral colonies and TNR all the cats with vaccinations, even adding "housecats" occasionally to the colony when they can't find a home, many less cats would be killed in shelters.

Wed, 2013-09-25 03:25 — Catnynouse (not verified)

## **WONDERFUL!** <sup>[39]</sup>

I used to work in a cat rescue shelter - and I know first-hand the heartbreak of coming in to work every day, having to see cats turned away because there was no space or them, to see them share cages if they could; to see the stress, the pain, the confusion, the depression... but I also know the indescribable joy of seeing one of these kitties go HOME. It makes all the work and the tears worth it. I have seen cats stay in the shelter for over a year - but a real HOME is worth the wait. This is a truly wonderful story and I can't express how happy it makes me to know that ALL of these cats have been given new and loving homes :,) From the bottom of my heart - thankyou to everyone who took on a rescue kitty. Thankyou.

Thu, 2013-09-26 00:34 — Catnonymouse (not verified)

## **Each and everyone of you** <sup>[40]</sup>

Each and everyone of you restore my faith in humanity when every day it seems to get lower and lower. Thank you for everything you do.

Fri, 2013-09-27 15:53 — Nick J (not verified)

## **Happy but not an ending** <sup>[41]</sup>

This is a happy ending except that it isn't the end. What's going to happen when the next group of abandoned cats and feral kittens comes in. The problem is that we're desperately trying to bail out the boat without plugging the massive hole in the bottom. All of our efforts to save these precious lives are being offset by people who don't get their cats spayed/neutered.

Wed, 2014-08-27 21:12 — Jean Walter (not verified)

## **It's time we restore faith in** <sup>[42]</sup>

It's time we restore faith in humanity! If everyone will just take a stand in making the world a beautiful and a safe place not just for humans but also for animals too. It is possible. The miracle is within us waiting to be found! Thanks for sharing! May this bring encouragement to everyone! :)

<http://superdogcity.com> <sup>[43]</sup>

Wed, 2014-12-24 13:23 — Catnonymouse (not verified)

## **I would like to adopt a kitten** <sup>[44]</sup>

Is there a number and address to this place?

Tue, 2019-06-04 09:41 — Eileen Lawler (not verified)

## **A beautiful adult cat** <sup>[45]</sup>

I work with a disabled man who lives in the Sound House Condos on Atlantic St, in Bpt. For at least 4 years now a single, feral cat has been a regular visitor to the condo. He was fed by one of the owners named Tom. We could hear Tom calling "kitty" to dinner every evening and kitty always came to him. Sadly, Tom passed away about a year and a half ago. There are a couple of women, including myself, who took over feeding him when we see him, and we would love to adopt him. He knows us and comes very close to us but we can't touch him yet. Last night he was waiting for me for the 1st time in weeks. He came to see me and I fed him but as usual, although I still can't get too close. We know he's dependant on us because Tom fed him for so many years. We named him T.C which is short for Tom Cat in honor of Tom. TC's right eye looks like it has a little infection, but other than that he's in decent health although he didn't look as healthy as he did last year at this time. I wonder if he's neutered since he never has fighting injuries. I doubt he's a female but I haven't been able to view his backside to be sure. That said, we are in agreement that he's most likely a male. We worry how long he can survive and how he'll fare through another winter. He's been through 3 of them since I've been working there. I'd trap him myself but I'd be unable to monitor the trap working part time evening hours and because I don't live there. I know that Bonnie, another feeder and potential adopter, is afraid of getting into trouble with the condo association so she'd be hesitant to try to trap him. If he can be trapped by an outside organization I know I'd take him without hesitation. Can you help or lead us in the right direction so we can get this handsome guy off the street and into a loving home?

Wed, 2019-06-12 20:49 — [Robin Olson](#) <sup>[13]</sup>

## **Contact me** <sup>[46]</sup>

You can contact me via my rescue [www.kittenassociates.org](http://www.kittenassociates.org) <sup>[47]</sup> and I'll see if I can get you some help.

CICH @ [Google+](#)  
Robin @ [Google+](#)

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### **Links**

[1] <https://www.facebook.com/pages/TAIIS-The-Alliance-In-Limiting-Strays-TAIIIS/112042418808442>

[2] <http://www.wfsb.com/>

[3] <http://connecticut.news12.com/news/cats-at-risk-of-euthanasia-at-bridgeport-animal-control-find-new-homes-1.5797241#autoplay=true>  
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[15] <http://kjellebus.blogspot.com>  
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