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From the Ashes. Fire at Animlkind.

Thu, 2012-08-30 08:03 — Robin Olson



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. What remains after the fire and flood at Animalkind on May 1, 2012..

[If you missed it you can read Part One [HERE](#) ^[1] and Part Two [HERE](#) ^[2]]

We continued on to the fourth floor. It suffered the least amount of damage. The sheet rock was still intact. There were cats living here, too. Some of them had been kittens who had tested positive for Feline Leukemia. A few of the kittens died and the others couldn't be near other cats until they had time to re-test negative. **The surviving kittens had to sacrifice those first few months when they would have been the most adoptable. It would mean if they weren't sick, they'd be adults who'd have a much tougher time getting adopted. It wasn't fair, but it was the best that could be done for them.**

There were many cats walking around the large sun-soaked space. It was too warm and the cats were lying stretched out on scant blankets that were scattered around the rooms. A few cats came over to me. Clearly they were sick. I didn't judge Katrin. I would have done the same thing. **She could have put them all down to save her the headache of trying to see them through this, but she didn't.**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Sweet kitty finds comfort in a simple box.

Katrin had a difficult time walking through the building that had come to mean so much to her. This place was her life and her life was in shambles at her feet. I told her to imagine the day when she walked up the stairs and she could smell freshly painted walls; to imagine the cats running freely around the rooms, enjoying their release from captivity. My mother often said; "This too shall pass." I knew it was true for [Animalkind](#) ^[3], the problem was —**WHEN**. When would it pass?

The insurance company has been slow to provide the funds to get the re-building started. The agent had a heart attack. There were other delays. Each day revealed another frustration for Katrin and her staff.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Lovely architectural bones, but not so comfortable for the kitties.

We returned to Animalkind's temporary headquarters at the Warren Inn. **The phone rang. Katrin was called over to speak to the person making the call. At last there was some good news-the power in the building was hooked up!** All they needed was a final inspection, which could happen very soon. Katrin spoke to the caller at a rapid pace and as soon as she hung up the phone, she lifted the receiver and made more calls. **She was on the phone as a volunteer brought in an injured snowshoe kitten AK had agreed to rescue from the notorious Animal Care & Control in NYC (notorious for euthanizing zillions of cats and dogs every day). The kitten was stunning, but supposedly suffered from a broken hip. She sat in the cardboard carrier and meowed. A cat carrier was also brought into the room with two young kittens, also from ACC&C. Just because their building was gone, didn't mean Katrin was going to stop rescuing cats.**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Quarantine kitty.

I overheard Katrin speaking with a volunteer to ask them to go buy as many fans as she could. She also wanted screens for those windows-ASAP. She was going to make certain the cats in quarantine were more comfortable now that they had their power restored.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Sick ward patient enjoying one of the few comfortable places in the building.

With all the activity of volunteers and calls, I decided I should head back home. **A foster mom entered the room with her kitten, Tatanka (which means Buffalo in Indian). Tatanka's eyes were like orange saucers as he looked around the room. He couldn't have been more than 7 or 8 weeks old. Something happened to him, but so far their Vet couldn't determine whether it was a neurological problem like Cerebellar Hypoplasia ^[4] or an injury. Initially, the kitten couldn't walk at all, but with his foster mom's care he was starting to use his back legs and could stand up for short bursts.**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Tatanka with his *Stretch & Scratch* ^[5].

She jangled a toy in front of him and he looked at it oddly. There was something not working right in his mind, you could tell by his expression. **I found myself wanting to take him home with me. His cuteness factor was set really high and the fact that he was a bit wobbly and needed extra help made him even more adorable.**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Sweet ginger boy.

I'd brought with me the donation of Stretch and Scratch scratchers, which Katrin LOVED. **She and I hung them in most of the cages and right away the kittens started to use them. Some of the adults were too scared to try them out, no doubt stressed from their months of captivity (they DO give each cat a break outside of their cage as often as**

possible).



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Tuxedo kitty in the sick ward.

It was time to head out. I said my farewells and wished good luck to Tatanka. **As I walked to my car, I felt heavier. The struggles and the suffering of these good people and sweet cats effected me deeply. It's one thing to read a story about a disaster, but it's another thing to stand up and get involved even if you're not confident you can do anything to make it better.**

The one thing I am confident about is that even though I have my own struggles, failures and fears that I only truly feel happy when I help someone else.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Oz is a super sweet kitty looking for his forever home.

Katrin called me a few days ago to give me another update , but before she told me the latest news, she had to tell me something else. She said that what I've done, getting donations for them, coming up to do a story about Animalkind, meant a lot to her.

This stoic, lioness choked up as she spoke. I suddenly understood why what I did effected her so deeply. I understood what she was going through on so many levels—everyone wants something from her when she's at the lowest point in her life and here was a stranger showing up to help, without asking for anything in return and not making her life more difficult, but better.

She told me she regretted that I didn't live closer so we could get to know each other better and I felt the same way, too.

It reminds me that we need to look out for each other, whether we're strangers or best friends. That one person with only a few bucks to her name can make a difference in someone else's life that maybe helps them get through another day. Each and every one of us has that power and frankly, that duty. Without even considering "what about me" I got a great gift. It's so much more meaningful when it comes without feeling like it's even needed.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Tatanka sits up on his own!

© 2010 Mark Westscott Studios [6]. *Animalkind before the tragic loss of their shelter.*

Update: After all these months, MAYBE just MAYBE construction is going to begin in two weeks. They have an expert coming in to review the spaces in their building and help them set it up so that it will be the best environment for the cats AND the safest from a health standpoint so they can keep their cat population from spreading illnesses.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. One of the many kittens at Animalkind.

THEY'RE LOOKING FOR HELP RIGHT NOW FOR THOSE OF YOU WITH THE FOLLOWING SKILLS. (*Animalkind is located in HUDSON, NEW YORK-about 2 hours north of New York City*)

- an Architect who can help with designing the new spaces
- Solo Construction workers OR someone who owns a construction company to help them rebuild
- Stone Masons who can help with their garden
- Carpenters who can help them build out their new rooms

Of course, like any rescue, they need financial donations or donations of goods. You can visit their [Network for Good donation page](#) to donate OR you can contact AnimalKind at 518-822-8643 or email: katrin@animalkind.info to arrange for a donation of goods or services.

Donate ^[7]

Don't forget: If you'd like to gift AnimalKind more scratchers (they LOVE THEM), please go [HERE](#) ^[3] to get their shipping information. You can get a **SPECIAL DISCOUNT of 10% off on any size case of [Stretch and Scratch](#) ^[8] scratchers, plus you get reduced shipping. Use **CODE: CATS** to get the discount!**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Tatanka casts his cute-spell on us.

The final update is that Tatanka is ready to be adopted! I'm not clear on the status of his current medical condition, but I believe he'll still need some Vet visits and possibly physical therapy to be well. If you're interested in adopting Tatanka or finding out more about him contact AnimalKind at the same numbers above or fill out an [adoption application](#) ^[9].

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Comments

Fri, 2012-08-31 07:14 — mk (not verified)

Thank you for this blog ^[22]

Thank you for this blog write-up. My heart breaks for these kitties and for Katrin. But I admire her for standing by these kitties and doing everything she can to help them.

Fri, 2012-08-31 14:44 — cattails (not verified)

Project Pawsitive ^[23]

I don't know if the Project Pawsitive organization could help at all - it does "Extreme home makeover - animal shelter edition" type things. <http://projectpawsitive.com/> ^[24] I wonder if they would be able to help at AnimalKind?

Fri, 2012-09-28 16:02 — jmuwj (not verified)

More kudos to you, Robin, and ^[25]

More kudos to you, Robin, and to Katrin and her volunteers. Words can't express, so I won't try except to say that I know that many of the cats I've worked to get safe haven for have found themselves in the loving care of AnimalKind. May they be many times blessed and come back stronger than ever. This labor of love and caring is truly the most rewarding work that anyone can do. "

The one thing I am confident about is that even though I have my own struggles, failures and fears that I only truly feel happy when I help someone else."

You said it and I agree. btw, my mom also said, "This, too, shall pass," frequently. Sounds like we both had amazing parents.

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- [2] <http://www.coveredincathair.com/content/heart-lioness-fire-animalkind-part-two>
- [3] <http://www.all-creatures.org/ak/>
- [4] [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cerebellar_hypoplasia_\(non-human\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cerebellar_hypoplasia_(non-human))
- [5] <http://www.stretchhandscratch.com>
- [6] <https://coveredincathair.com/www.markwescottstudios.com>
- [7] <https://www.networkforgood.org/donation/MakeDonation.aspx?ORGID2=141820248&PcaltemId=13613&vlrStratCode=Tgmo7y6DM8CYOzegayFfcvcS5jc%2boTyXXSESV2FdZuQydiONJ%2fcrj0ChPXev5VCK>
- [8] <http://stretchhandscratch.com/>
- [9] <http://www.all-creatures.org/ak/adopt-form-print.html>
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