



Published on *Covered in Cat Hair* (<https://coveredincathair.com>)

[Home](#) > The Best Worst Thing Ever. Fire at Animalkind.

The Best Worst Thing Ever. Fire at Animalkind.

Fri, 2012-08-24 09:23 — Robin Olson

Late in the evening of May 1, 2012, on the third floor apartment where a caretaker lived, a small fire broke out due to the hot embers of a cigarette coming into contact with bedding. The fire was extinguished before the fire department even arrived. The building didn't burn to the ground, but something equally terrible occurred. The building-wide sprinkle system was activated, releasing a torrent of water, not light rain showers, but a flood of water throughout the building.

On the second, first and basement levels lived the cats of [Animalkind](#) (1), a non-profit cat shelter located in Hudson, New York. Most of the cats were allowed to freely roam their adoption areas. Terrified from the onslaught of water, the cats climbed onto the horizontal vents from the brand new \$50,000 HVAC system that was installed to control the spread of disease. The cats huddled in the rafters, terrified; but what was worse was the fate awaiting the most fragile of the cats—the mamas and kittens. **They were in the basement and all the water from the floors above pooled there, inches deep. The families weren't free to escape, they were in cages, trapped in the water at risk of drowning.**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Still lovely, the exterior of Animalkind.

No one perished. No cats died. In that, it was a miracle, but the building was gutted. The once pink and yellow cheerful walls of Animalkind were soaked, ruined, crumbling to the floor. **The joy that had filled the building, all the years of hard work and loving care, vanished in a matter of hours. The building that once held 150 cats was destroyed.**

As early as 2am Katrin Hecker, the Director and Founder of Animalkind, her volunteers, staff and residents of Hudson, New York, gathered together and quickly began to capture as many cats as they could.



©2012 Animalkind. Used with permission. Moving the cats into their new location.

Thanks to the kindness and generosity of a local merchant, The Warren Inn, a nearby hotel, turned its' office space into a temporary shelter space. It was just a few steps away from Animalkind's headquarters. Cages were assembled and cats were tagged and given a place to recover their shock. Many cats needed to go into temporary foster homes and people throughout the area opened their doors. The townsfolk jumped into action along with everyone from

Animalkind. Though heartbreaking, the staff was buoyed by the support.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. The irony of the sign on the bottom of the window isn't lost on me.

In the following days, amazing things happened. Cats who'd been at AK for YEARS were getting adopted. Adoptions on the whole went way up. About 60 cats found homes right away. Folks started to show up from out of the blue to help any way they could. As the news spread, I heard about this terrible tragedy. **In an odd coincidence, I'd been only a few miles from the fire delivering Leo ^[2] to Animalkind's neighbor, Aslan's Sanctuary.**



©2012 Animalkind. Used with permission. The basement.

Like so many other people, the devastation bothered me deeply. I couldn't imagine how any rescue could recover from such a loss. I'm just one person. What could I do to help?



©2012 Animalkind. Used with permission. One of the shelter spaces, empty of cats, filled with water.

I got in touch with Animalkind and Bob Mechling, a Designer and key member of the shelter, got back to me right away. I asked him what they needed and told him I'd do what I could to help him get it. **I couldn't believe I was saying those words. I don't have two sticks to rub together, but in my heart I knew that after all these years of blogging and writing pet product reviews that somewhere I MUST know someone who could help me scrounge up a few donations.**



Freekibblekat.com ^[3] and Halo ^[4] **come to the rescue!**



World's Best Cat Litter-YOU ROCK!

I got to work. Within a few days and after many phone calls I got the logistics worked out. Right away, **Kelly Ausland of Freekibble.com and Freekatkibble.com** ^[3] **said he would be delighted to help with a donation of 350 bags of kibble from Halo. He wasn't doing this for a write-up on my blog or a pat on the back. He sincerely was concerned and wanted to help.**

Next up were my associates at **World's Best Cat Litter** ^[5], who also did not hesitate to help once I alerted them to the problem. I was very impressed by how quickly they jumped into action! Now the cats had a supply of food and litter coming in the door. I reached out to a few other companies, but sadly they were not able to offer any assistance.



If you'd like to help put a smile on the faces of shelter cats in your town, you can get a SPECIAL DISCOUNT of 10% off on any size case of Stretch and Scratch ^[6] scratchers, plus you get reduced shipping. Use CODE: CATS to get the discount! If you'd like to gift AnimalKind more scratchers (they LOVE THEM), please go HERE ^[1] to get their shipping information:

I also reached into my own fairly empty pockets and ordered two cases of Stretch and Scratch ^[6] cat scratchers. I knew that the cats would be stressed out in cages and having something to scratch could make a world of difference to their well being.



©2012 Animalkind. Used with permission. The Adoption Room circa 2004..



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Welcome to the Adoption Room 2012.

As Animalkind began the difficult work of assessing the damage and speaking with their insurance company, things got very busy for my little rescue. I didn't hear much from Katrin, but she was never far from my thoughts.

Recently, I made the 100 mile trip north to meet Katrin and Bob and see how things were going. What I saw broke my heart and compelled me to do more.

Animalkind still needs help. In some ways, things are worse now than ever. In part two I'll share what I learned during my visit and introduce you to some VERY special cats.

CICH Content Categories:

[Adopted](#) ^[7]

[Announcements](#) ^[8]

[Cat Food](#) ^[9]

[Cat Litter](#) ^[10]

[Grain Free](#) ^[11]

[News](#) ^[12]

[Cat Rescue](#) ^[13]

[One I Hold in High Regard](#) ^[14]

[Who Knew?](#) ^[15]

[You Rock!](#) ^[16]

[Non-Profit](#) ^[17]

[Not On My Watch](#) ^[18]

Comments

Sat, 2012-08-25 10:27 — [best cat food \(not verified\)](#) ^[19]

[best cat food](#) ^[20]

Wowreally nice and great informative post.Thanks for share brilliant blog.....:-)

Tue, 2012-08-28 22:32 — Drusilla Kehl (not verified)

[Great article](#) ^[21]

Thanks for the great post and looking forward to part 2. I live 2 blocks away from the old AK and know Katrin and a number of the great people who work there. It was wonderful to see the outpouring of support after this tragedy, and it's good to keep their situation fresh in peoples' minds as the shelter's needs still continue. I currently have a mom with her 3 kittens adopted from AK after the old blind lady cat I got from them finally passed.

Tue, 2012-08-28 23:16 — Amber (not verified)

[AK is AMAZING](#) ^[22]

When my cat was hit by a car last year, I was devastated. My fiance was laid off, and we were short on money, so we couldn't bring him to a vet. I called EVERYWHERE trying to find a pet clinic that would help my Damion. I was directed to call Animal Kind when I was denied help from others in my area. Animal Kind listened to my problem, and told me they would call me right back, that they needed to call the vet, because there wasn't one there at the time. When I got that call back, I was told to bring him in ASAP. I drove the two hour, crying the entire time. I walked in, tears streaming down my face, and the staff was AMAZING. They assured me that my Damion would get the help he needed, and I felt ok leaving him in their care. I received many phone calls from the staff, informing me on his condition over the next couple of days. Unfortunately he didn't make it, but I know in my heart, that if there had been a way for him to survive the staff at Animal Kind would have done everything to have it that way. The staff at Animal Kind is AMAZING, their hearts are in it completely!

Sat, 2012-09-01 16:10 — [Katze \(not verified\)](#) ^[23]

[Thank you ROBIN!](#) ^[24]

Thank you for the great article- everything is right on and we deeply appreciate your and everyone's support!!!

Mon, 2012-09-03 00:52 — [Jane & Georgett... \(not verified\)](#) ^[25]

[We Love Katrin and Animalkind!](#) ^[26]

Katrin Hecker and Animalkind are the best! They helped us so much with our barn kitty Cutie when we lived in New York. God bless them for everything they are doing for cats. ♥♥♥

Mon, 2012-09-03 00:53 — [Jane & Georgett... \(not verified\)](#) ^[25]

[We Love Katrin and Animalkind!](#) ^[27]

Katrin Hecker and Animalkind are the best! They helped us so much with our barn kitty Cutie when we lived in New York. God bless them for everything they are doing for cats. ♥♥♥

Fri, 2012-09-28 15:41 — jmuhj (not verified)

[RE: ANIMALKIND](#) ^[28]

As a crossposter/tagger/rescue contactor on social media for incarcerated and otherwise home-needing cats, mainly those in the NYACC, I know of and very much admire the work of AnimalKind. THANK YOU for spotlighting their plight and advocating for them! Hoping and praying they will soon be back up and running, better than ever, serving the cats and kittens of New

Source URL (modified on 2012-08-24 09:52): <https://coveredincathair.com/content/best-worst-thing-ever-fire-animalkind?page=8>

Links

- [1] <http://www.all-creatures.org/ak/>
- [2] <http://coveredincathair.com/content/saving-leo>
- [3] <http://www.freekibblekat.com/>
- [4] <http://www.halopets.com/>
- [5] <http://www.worldsbestcatlitter.com/>
- [6] <http://stretchandscratch.com/>
- [7] <https://coveredincathair.com/taxonomy/term/30>
- [8] <https://coveredincathair.com/taxonomy/term/33>
- [9] <https://coveredincathair.com/taxonomy/term/41>
- [10] <https://coveredincathair.com/taxonomy/term/42>
- [11] <https://coveredincathair.com/taxonomy/term/60>
- [12] <https://coveredincathair.com/taxonomy/term/70>
- [13] <https://coveredincathair.com/taxonomy/term/100>
- [14] <https://coveredincathair.com/taxonomy/term/102>
- [15] <https://coveredincathair.com/taxonomy/term/110>
- [16] <https://coveredincathair.com/category/cich-content-categories/you-rock>
- [17] <https://coveredincathair.com/category/cich-content-categories/non-profit>
- [18] <https://coveredincathair.com/category/cich-content-categories/not-my-watch>
- [19] <http://www.brotherscomplete.com>
- [20] <https://coveredincathair.com/comment/5094#comment-5094>
- [21] <https://coveredincathair.com/comment/5100#comment-5100>
- [22] <https://coveredincathair.com/comment/5101#comment-5101>
- [23] <http://www.animalkind.info>
- [24] <https://coveredincathair.com/comment/5110#comment-5110>
- [25] <http://ourcats1961.webs.com>
- [26] <https://coveredincathair.com/comment/5112#comment-5112>
- [27] <https://coveredincathair.com/comment/5113#comment-5113>
- [28] <https://coveredincathair.com/comment/5317#comment-5317>