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Foster Cat Journal: Baby Food & Baby Steps

Thu, 2011-02-24 16:15 — Robin Olson

It's been two full days since Cara last got sick. She's eating chicken baby food, drinking water, using her litter pan perfectly. I give her probiotics in case her tummy needs to recover from the antibiotic load she's been given. I gave her some [Nutri-Cal®](#) ^[1], but after I read the label, I'm not so keen on giving her any more.



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. Cara enjoying play time after keeping her breakfast down!

As I continue to monitor Cara's food intake, I read more about [PRAA](#) ^[2]. One of our CiCH friends was kind enough to share some information with me about another kitten, named Sassy, with PRAA who was with a rescue group in Wisconsin. I asked to speak with the kitten's foster Mom. This afternoon we had a chat. Linda, Sassy's "Mom" told me that Sassy was her first foster kitten! It's one thing to take on a foster kitten with a URI or who just needs TLC, but Linda really had to work hard to keep Sassy alive.



©2011 Two Left Paws. Sassy.

Sassy was very lucky. In addition to her foster mom, Sassy also had the support of [Two Left Paws](#) ^[3], the group who rescued her. They were determined to find out what was wrong with this sickly kitten who clearly could not keep anything but liquidy food down.

Two Left Paws had to make the same decision for Sassy that I will have to make for Cara. Do they spend \$2500-3000 for ONE rescued kitten or do they put that money towards 50 other rescues? At what point does saving one life, possibly cause other cats to perish? Or is this just a ridiculous line of thinking?

I suppose that question might also include-is the cat going to have a great quality of life? Is the cat friendly? Would you do the same surgery for a feral you'd offer to a friendly cat? I can't say I have an answer. One of my ferals was suddenly lame. Though it took two weeks to trap him, I got him to the Vet and he got the care he needed. But if it's a matter of stretching an already tight budget, would I still provide the care for the cat or save it for a friendly, adoptable one?

It's worth discussing, but you all know me. **I'll probably go down in the record books as the worst rescue in the world,** but if a cat needs something, I'll find a way to get it done. That's it. I help as many as I can. It's not perfect, but if I choose to take on the responsibility of providing care for an animal, by God I'm going to see it through. Also, what if I didn't rescue ANY cats? Then my money would go to buying something dumb, like a vacation and even more cats would die.

If Cara or any other cat had a poor prognosis or poor quality of life, that would certainly require a great deal of careful consideration. Other than that, we gotta get these cats well!

Sassy's PRAA included [Megaesophagus](#) [4]. **Feeding became a carefully controlled event. Lot of small meals, with high quality food, pureed in a blender to make it smooth enough to pass through Sassy's throat.** It took trial and error, but Linda found a way to get Sassy to gain weight and grow big enough for the surgery. In the meantime, Two Left Paws went to work looking for donations to help Sassy. With a generous donation from [Sergento](#) [5], along with other donations, they put the funds together **and on Feb. 4th, Sassy had her surgery!**



©2011 Two Left Paws. Sassy after surgery.

Sassy's doing very well. She's only vomited a few times since her surgery and the surgeon said that due to Linda's care, Sassy's esophagus didn't become overly enlarged. They hope that, in time, she will grow out of this problem and be able to eat a normal diet.

Sassy is stable enough to be adopted, though she's considered special needs. Linda knows it will be tough to say goodbye to Sassy, when the day comes, but I hope she knows that because of her dedication and care, this kitten has a great future ahead of her. **If you're interested in adopting Sassy, you can see her Petfinder page [HERE](#)** [6] If you'd like to find out what Two Left Paws is up to or thank them for helping Sassy, you can visit them on [Facebook](#) [7].

I just got off the phone with Dr. Weisman, who did Bob's liver surgery. I love Dr. Weisman. She's just awesome and a very talented surgeon. **We spoke about Cara and she let me know how serious a PRAA surgery is and that it's VERY hard on a small kitten and that some times they don't survive.** She reminded me; "this is heart surgery, after all." Dr. W. doesn't mince words and is a straight shooter. She suggested that the next steps would be to have a scope (*little camera*) put down Cara's esophagus to take a look at what's going on. It's smart to do this, than go straight to PRAA surgery since we don't know if Cara even needs it.

Scoping will cost around \$1500.00. It may cost less if they only look down her throat and not do a full [endoscopy](#) [8], but they won't know until they take a look.



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. Mama-Mazie, next to dear, Cara. Polly is in the background. She's getting so big!

I'm not going to ask to do a fundraiser today. I want to see how things go with Cara, first. Sure, if we raise the money now, we will have it when we need it, but if we don't end up needing it-yes we will bank it for the next special needs case, but I would rather wait to ask until I have more information. What I, in my deluded mind hope, is that Cara just needs some time to get some calories on board and she will be able to eat solid food one day. Maybe all her problems are from taking long term antibiotics? Ha ha ha..yeah, right.

That said...**Cara just ate some baby food with canned food mixed in with it.** I added a bit of water, just two teaspoons worth and made a puree. Cara loved it and kept it down, then ate more and kept that down, too. It's as if she were never sick to begin with. Is this the answer? No, it's way too soon for that. Cara's hanging in there. Baby steps...baby steps.

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Comments

Thu, 2011-02-24 21:02 — [Shelli](#) ^[17]

[who could say "no" to that](#) ^[18]

who could say "no" to that punim? I mean seriously?!

Thank G-d for you, Robin. My eyes water up with SO much gratitude for you.

Know this dear.

xo

Thu, 2011-02-24 21:02 — [Shelli](#) ^[17]

[PS - I KNOW likfe's a bit](#) ^[19]

PS - I KNOW likfe's a bit crazy, but for all things good and holy in this world, will you PLEASE "Spencify" me a bit? Even just a quick iphone shot to my cell would work. In fact, i could make that your picture...

Thu, 2011-02-24 21:33 — Catnynouse (not verified)

[I Love that picture of Mazie,](#) ^[20]

I Love that picture of Mazie, Cara & Polly! You are doing such a great thing for all of these babies and you know we will help if you need it (atleast as much as the wallet will allow us).

PRAA ^[21]

What ever happened with your kitten with PRAA. My daughters kitten was just diagnosed and we are unsure what to do?

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Links

- [1] <http://www.vetoquinolusa.com/AdditionalProducts/NutritionalSupplements/DietarySupplements.html>
- [2] <http://clivekittensurgery.blogspot.com/p/persistent-right-aortic-arch.html>
- [3] <http://www.twoleftpaws.com/>
- [4] <http://pethealth.petwellbeing.com/wiki/Megaesophagus>
- [5] <http://www.sargento.com/>
- [6] <http://www.petfinder.com/petdetail/18735350>
- [7] <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Two-Left-Paws/47208448715?sk=wall>
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