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## Foster Cat Journal: When Busted Out is Taken Literally

Sat, 2010-08-28 12:08 — Robin Olson

Little Maria and Pauly are safely out of Henry County, in the loving care of Bobby, our devoted driver, babysitter, and photographer of all kitties we rescue from there. Though knowing they're off death row is one thing, but the kitties are never out of the woods until we get them to see the Vet and get the results of their Snap Test, which lets us know with some accuracy (*depending on the age of the cat*), if the cat is positive for Feline Leukemia or FIV.



©2010 Bobby Stanford. Used with Permission. Some of the friendly staff at East Lake, where we often take our shelter rescued kitties.



©2010 Bobby Stanford. Used with Permission. Little Maria waits for her exam.

### I really hate waiting for results.

If a cat is positive for Feline Leukemia, which is easily transmitted between cats, then what do I do? Guidelines will say euthanize. I am terrified I will have to make that decision one day.

At least for Pauly and Little M., the results were **negative**. On to the next concern...what is wrong with Little M.'s rear end? Why does one bone in her right leg protrude out? What happened to this little baby?



©2010 Bobby Stanford. Used with Permission. Dr. Segal with Little M..

After a few xray's it was pretty clear what was wrong. Little M. has a broken right rear leg. It's broken near the femoral head, which is basically the top end of the femur that usually fits into the hip socket. Little M., who we are told is only **NINE WEEKS OLD, at 2.2 POUNDS**, has been living with this broken leg for quite some time. There is evidence of the injury healing itself, but not healing correctly. Little M. can walk, but with a wobble. She does not seem to be in pain, but she will be as she ages, if nothing is done.

Dr. Segal gave us some options:

1. Do nothing but give her cage rest-meaning lock her up in a small crate so she can't move around much and let the break heal on its' own. The result will be that Little M. will have one leg a bit shorter than the other, will develop arthritis in her leg and perhaps never be able to jump.
2. Amputate the leg. It's less expensive then a surgical correction, but then she will have to hop around for the rest of her life. Sure she can manage, but the leg isn't useless, it's just broken.
3. Have a surgical consult done and find out if this leg can be repaired. There's a procedure called Femoral Head Ostectomy <sup>(1)</sup> where the femoral head is removed, and the leg is re-set into the hip. It would mean a relatively normal life for Little M., **IF** that is the end result. **Right now we don't know what, exactly, she needs** , but we do know that the surgery has to happen soon since the break is already repairing itself incorrectly and she's just a baby and growing fast. We need to take action, but the surgery is going to cost a few thousand dollars AND we may need to have the surgery done in Georgia...after that is done, when can we hope to get Little M. to Connecticut?

**And...Little M. is sick.**



©2010 Bobby Stanford. Used with Permission. One of the Vet Tech's checks out Little M.'s hips.

She has an **upper respiratory infection and a temp of 104°F** . We can't even think of doing any surgery to her until she is clear of the disease. With any luck she will be fine in a week, but she is young, sick and just came out of a shelter. We all know that URIs can last for months.

Even through all of this, Little M. purrs and is a sweet cat. She will even try to play. Her will to live is still strong. One day I hope we can look back on the challenges we're facing with this kitten and realize it all ended up well. I guess my gut will be in a knot until things get sorted out for her.



©2010 Bobby Stanford. Used with Permission. Pauly does a great job defying gravity.

Meanwhile, there's Pauly. At about 4 months old, he's a bundle of raw energy mixed with sugary sweetness. Pauly does not want to hold still for the camera, especially when he's being fussed with at the Vet. He is in good shape, but of course, has been exposed to Little M.'s URI, so we will see how big of a mess this turns into.



©2010 Bobby Stanford. Used with Permission. Pauly isn't so sure about this...is it a treat or treatment?

Pauly finally burned himself out long enough for Bobby to get a photo of him. His white toe tips and tail tip is adorable! He's got very lovely tabby markings and beautiful eyes. All we have to do is get him neutered and he will be ready to go in no time! Connie said she felt he will do well here in CT-I agree 100%.



©2010 Bobby Stanford. Used with Permission. At last, Pauly relaxes long enough to be photographed.

We're going to have to do a fundraiser to help cover Little M.'s expenses and to pay for transport (*some day!*) to come north. I'm getting the nagging feeling I may have to drive down there to get the cats. I can't imagine putting a cat who recently had surgery onto a big, loud, transport. If any of you are going to be traveling northward in about 3 weeks or so, let me know! Until then, we just have to hold tight and hope that Little M.'s fever comes down and Pauly doesn't get sick, too.



©2010 Bobby Stanford. Used with Permission. Kitty artwork at a Vet's office is always a good sign.

You just never know what you're going to find out once you "bust" cats out of a shelter, but aside from any health issues, in time we'll find the same thing we always do—loving, lonely cats who deserve the best forever home possible.

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## **Comments**

Sat, 2010-08-28 12:47 — [Gabbylove](#) <sup>[17]</sup>

## **Little M** <sup>[18]</sup>

I so hope her leg can be reset, she deserves every chance for a happy healthy life

Sat, 2010-08-28 12:53 — Debbie (not verified)

## **I think I'd end up voting for** <sup>[19]</sup>

I think I'd end up voting for amputation. There are many cats and dogs who get by with 3 legs with no apparent problems....and since she's so young it shouldn't scar her anymore than how she got it broken to begin with.

Sat, 2010-08-28 13:26 — [Robin Olson](#) <sup>[20]</sup>

## **From Margaret Gates, A Story about Her Kitty, Kai** <sup>[21]</sup>

What happened to Little M sounds a lot like what happened to Kai (the Feline Nutrition logo-cat). When he was about a year and a half old, we noticed he was limping one day after jumping off a counter. At the vet, she said she was pretty sure he had a broken hip. X-rays confirmed that he had broken off that little ball at the top of the femur that sits in the hip socket. We got a rush appointment at the orthopedic surgeon at 7:00am the next day. The surgeon told me that yep, it was broken, and had been for at least three months! His has also started to heal. Talk about feeling like the worst kitty mommy ever! My cat had had a broken hip for three months and I didn't even know!

Kai had never limped or shown any sign of being injured and we had no incident that we thought could have caused it. Talk about the stoic cat! We opted for the surgery (in this case being a young cat was a good thing as he would heal faster). The little knob was removed. The surgeon said he would be fine without it, as the knob doesn't actually rest inside the socket (no bone touching bone) and it is really the muscles that hold everything in place. He had to have PT afterwards, which was basically me putting his leg through motions a couple times a day. Kai hated PT. Also, no painkillers, as pain is the only thing that would tell him to go easy on the leg for a while. He came through it all like a champ, and now he runs, jumps and moves just like any cat. You would never know he'd had a problem unless you were told. It was expensive, around 2 grand. I looked at it this way, he will likely live 20 years, isn't it worth \$100 a year to be able to walk and run like a normal cat?

Count me in for a contribution for Little M's surgery!

Margaret Gates  
Feline Nutrition

Sat, 2010-08-28 18:12 — [Marg \(not verified\)](#) <sup>[22]</sup>

## **Little M** <sup>[23]</sup>

If you decide to go with the surgery, let me know and I will blog my heart out to try to raise the money for her. Or be glad to do anything else to help.

Sat, 2010-08-28 18:57 — [Robin Olson](#) <sup>[20]</sup>

## **Fantastic!** <sup>[24]</sup>

THANK YOU VERY MUCH for your offer. We WILL be doing a fundraiser for her once we talk to the surgeon on Monday! Stay tuned! XO

Mon, 2010-08-30 01:25 — MV (not verified)

## **Waiting for snap test results** <sup>[25]</sup>

Waiting for snap test results is nerve-wracking. We have had two false positives at the no kill shelter where I volunteer. One adult cat tested positive for FeLV. We put her in a foster home with no other cats while we waited for a retest and she ultimately tested negative. We had a kitten test positive for FIV and he stayed in a cage (the shelter is cageless) while he waited two months to have a retest. He ended up testing negative, too. It is always worth doing a retest for anyone tests positive...

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Robin @ [Google+](#)

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