



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

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Sun, 2018-04-15 19:22 — Robin Olson

I truly believe there's more going on in this world than science can prove with a test. That on a cosmic, metaphysical, religious, however you want to label it-level, there's something that brings people together for a reason, seemingly rising out of random events. Looking back on it we see the threads connecting us and, as we look forward, we wonder what the result of our connection will bring. Perhaps in our heart we already know the answer and that's why we've found each other at this point in time.



©2014 Robin AF Olson. The first days with Freya.

*Four years ago I took on a very tiny kitten named Freya. She fit in the palm of my hand. Her family could not provide care for her so they surrendered her to my rescue. She was born with a very rare birth defect called Atresia Ani with Recto-vaginal fistula. It basically means that because she was born prematurely, parts of her body never developed either at all or completely. She has no tail. Where her rectum should be was skin. **She could only void a little stool through her vagina, which is a very dangerous problem. Eventually the amount of stool would build up to the point that it would overtake her intestines and possibly burst, killing her from sepsis and internal bleeding.***

The vets gave her at 10% chance to live.

Freya will be four years old in August. *It was a very difficult and terrifying journey (you can read about it [HERE](#) ^[1] with links to her entire story and the final chapter [HERE](#) ^[2]). I had no one to talk to about this. The vets barely understood it and certainly had no idea on what nutrition she could survive on until she could have surgery. If I had someone to support me, guide me, it would have made a huge difference. It's scary enough having to face this with a fragile kitten, but being alone makes it all the worse.*



©2018 Robin AF Olson. Freya today, long recovered from life-saving surgery, now beating up our 20lb cat, Dood and otherwise being the tiny boss-cat of our home.

As a result of my experiences with Freya, and because I created a special [Facebook page](#) [3] for her, from time to time someone will find me who has a kitten with atresia-ani. **I always help those people because I want them to know someone has their back. Some kittens don't make it because they got the diagnosis too late. Many vets don't even know what this birth defect is and diagnose it incorrectly. Some don't make it because the repair can't be done, or it's too expensive to do, or the kitten doesn't survive the procedure. It IS a risky venture, but some kittens DO make it and live a relatively normal life afterwards.**

There are issues that can arise after surgery, ranging from incontinence to death. The kitten might require a second or third procedure because megacolon can occur from the kitten holding so much stool inside her body for such a long time. Another challenge: **kittens can't simply have surgery at any age.** They have to be big enough to handle sedation. Their body needs to be big enough so the surgeon can perform the procedure at all, but how do you feed a kitten so she doesn't fill up with stool? It's not possible, but it IS possible to slow the pace down by not feeding kibble (EVER) or feeding high carb canned food.

So then one might ask, *why bother?* The surgery is expensive; the risks many.

We bother because these little lives are precious. We try because it's possible to save a kitten's life and give her a GOOD life. We may fail, too, but if we do nothing that kitten WILL DIE and die in a horrible way.

Ten days ago I got an email from a lady named Kathy. She lives in Florida on a little farm with chickens, a cow, a dog, two cats and a handful of children of all different ages. Her husband works hard to provide for them. Their life is not full of frills, but they live a good life. Just as they were about to have their cat Pearl spayed, they realized she was already pregnant. **This would be Pearl's first and last litter since they know that it's important not to let things get out of hand.**



©2018 Kathy Ray. Used with Permission. Margo is born.

On February 4, 2018 two kittens were born. Pearl is a good mama-cat, but her kittens both

had birth defects. The boy only had one fully developed eye. His sister was in more challenging condition. One eye did not develop at all and the other was developed but not enough. The kitten was completely blind.



©2018 Kathy Ray. Used with Permission. My first look at Margo, seen here with mama-Pearl and her dutiful stepdad.

Cats are amazing in how they can adapt to pretty much anything, so Kathy found a home for the boy and kept the girl who was blind. She called out to the kitten, "Here Kitty!" but the kitten would not react. (In those early days she thought the kitten was a boy until she figured things out). As a joke she called out; "Marco!" as one might do playing the game, Marco Polo. The kitten turned to her and came over. So the kitten was initially named, Marco before she realized a name change was called for. **Meet Margo.**



©2018 Kathy Ray. Used with Permission. Being blind doesn't stop Margo from loving life.

At eight weeks of age, Kathy noticed something wasn't right with Margo. Since Pearl no longer cleaned her kitten, Margo's behind was very dirty looking. Upon close inspection, Kathy saw the malformed rear end, signaling that something was terribly wrong.

Kathy began to do research online and found me. She wrote, asking for help for her little kitten. She attached a photo of the wee lynx point Siamese mix kitten hugging her mom. Those cosmic strings tightened and I knew I had to take action.



©2018 Kathy Ray. Used with Permission. Tiny sweetheart.

My reply was short, "Call me." I said and left her my number. I explained to Kathy that Atresia-ani has to be dealt with very carefully and quickly to keep the kitten stable until she's big enough for surgery, IF surgery can be done. I told Kathy I would find a rescue in Florida to help her with her kitten. Though it pained her very much, she said she would give up the kitten to a rescue if it meant she would be cared for, because sadly, there is no way she can provide the funds needed for surgery.

I began to search, contact all my rescue friends in the south, and ask them to ask around on my behalf, for help. I spoke to a number of rescues, and boy do some of those folks LOVE to talk and talk and talk, but only one offered to help. After some digging around I found out their rescue had been visited by the animal control and had over 28 animals removed from the property. There was NO WAY Margo was going there.



©2018 Kathy Ray. Used with Permission. Margo had a rough few days after she began treatment to keep her stool soft so she took refuge in a slipper.

I worried that wherever this kitten went, if I wasn't 100% sure she was safe that I could not move her at all.

Meanwhile, I asked Kathy to get Margo to the vet just for an initial check and test for FeLV and FIV. I knew if a rescue would take the kitten it would be easier if they knew she didn't also have another health challenge. **Kathy wrote back and said Margo didn't have FeLV or FIV, so that was great news. She only weighs a bit over a pound, so she has a long way to go before she could have surgery.**

But now what do we do? What do I do to help this kitten who lives over 1000 miles away? My non-profit cat rescue, [Kitten Associates](#) ^[4], has helped cat owners in the past by paying a small portion of their vet bill when they prove they cannot afford it. We usually can't provide much, but when we have it we do try to help. It wouldn't be out of the question to help Margo, but we have never had to raise thousands of dollars for an owned cat. It could effect my ability to fundraise for my foster cats. I grappled with what to do. What would our supporters think? Would they help us or tell us we can't help a cat who has a family already?

I had many conversations with Kathy trying to sort out what to do. She sold three of her chickens to pay for Margo's initial vet bill. I could not, in good conscious, walk away from this situation when someone tries so hard to help their kitten.

Back to the "cosmic" threads I mentioned...earlier this year I said to Sam, my VP of Kitten Associates and partner in life, that I was thinking maybe I wanted to focus on difficult medical cases and only take on a few cats a year, not try to fill up the house with kittens.



©2018 Kathy Ray. Used with Permission. THIS.

I put that intention out into the universe and I thought that Pistachio and his sister, CatsheW were the answer to that need, but in truth though they battle health issues (*mycoplasma pneumonia*), it's not really what I had meant.

Then I learned about Margo and I realized I could do more. I CAN help this kitten. I CAN try to provide the funds for her life-saving surgery. It doesn't matter whether or not she is in my foster program.



©2018 Kathy Ray. Used with Permission. Margo in her tiny diaper.

Helping Margo simply is the right thing to do.

Our Goal: we've found terrific Board Certified Surgeons at the [University of Florida Small Animal Hospital](#) ⁽⁵⁾, not too far from Kathy's home in northern Florida. We're putting together a plan for Margo, but it's not perfectly laid out just yet.

Normally, I get a detailed estimate on costs, then ask for help. Without 100% transparency how would anyone trust our need? In this case, we can't get a line-item estimate just yet, BUT we need time to raise the funds. We won't get a complete estimate until just before Margo has surgery, but by then we won't have time to put the funding together!

We need to act NOW to be ready when the time comes.

I've pushed the matter of the estimate with Uoff, but all I have is a rough estimate of \$3500-4500. This won't include, pre-op

blood work. We may need to do an ultrasound. In my perfect world we WOULD do a CT Scan, but it's another \$2000 and we can probably get by without having to do that, too. My goal is to ask for a reasonable amount and no more, with the understanding that we could need a lot more if things go sideways.

My goal is to raise, \$5000.00 for Margo. My rescue will hold the funds and disperse them directly to the University of Florida Small Animal Hospital. That way all donations are tax-deductible. Also, should we NOT use ALL of what we raise, I will either give Kathy the leftover funds for future needs, or if she wishes, we will use the overage for our foster kittens. Either way all donations will go to provide for Margo and/or our foster kittens.

If the worst happens, and we lose Margo after we raise the funds, but before surgery happens, we will direct the funds to the other cats in our program.

FUNDRAISER UPDATE 4/20/18: WE HAVE ONLY RAISED \$2600 OF OUR \$5000 GOAL. THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HAS BECOME ONE OF MARGO'S FRIENDS. WE HAVE NO HOPE OF SAVING HER LIFE WITHOUT MAKING OUR GOAL. YOUR SUPPORT AND LOVE MEANS THE WORLD TO MARGO AND HER FAMILY and ALL OF US AT KITTEN ASSOCIATES. THANK YOU!

Be a part of Margo's Life Saving Team:

DONATE

Give a gift of any amount over \$1 to Margo using our PayPal.me link (you don't have to have a PayPal Account to give a gift) [HERE](https://www.paypal.me/kittenassociates) ^[6].

Quick shortcuts to donate a specific amount :

To donate \$5: <https://www.paypal.me/kittenassociates/5> ^[7]

To donate \$10: <https://www.paypal.me/kittenassociates/10> ^[8]

To donate \$25: <https://www.paypal.me/kittenassociates/25> ^[9]

To donate whatever you wish: <https://www.paypal.me/kittenassociates/> ^[10]

Please note: We choose not to use fundraising web sites because they charge a fee on top of the fee PayPal charges us so we get less of a donation. Some of the fundraising sites also take a LONG time to relinquish the funds and we do not have the luxury to wait. If we reach our goal I let you know so that we can close the fundraiser.

If you wish to write a check, **Please make out your gift to: Kitten Associates and send it to: P.O. Box 354, Newtown, CT 06470-0354 and add a note that it's "For Margo."**

Your gift is tax deductible. [Kitten Associates](#) ^[11] is a 501c3 non-profit. Our EIN Tax ID is 27-3597692.



©2018 Kathy Ray. Used with Permission. Margo is a happy kitten even with all her challenges.

There's so much bad news in this world, I hope all of us can join together to make some good news happen for this precious little sweetheart.

Thank you everyone. Remember, sharing is caring, too. If you can't help with a gift, maybe one of your friends, can.



©2018 Kathy Ray. Used with Permission. Sweet dreams, precious girl. We've got your back!!

UPDATE: WE MADE OUR GOAL!!!



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Comments

Mon, 2018-04-16 14:15 — [jmuhj](#) (not verified)

RE: MARGO and family ^[20]

It is so inspiring when caring people come together in an effort to help someone in need. Margo is so precious. Sharing to social media in hope and with *PRAYERS* for the need to be met for her.

Mon, 2018-04-16 15:15 — [Eastside Cats](#) (not verified) ^[21]

\$\$ for Mango ^[22]

I sent a donation; please keep us up to date on her progress!

Wed, 2018-04-18 16:48 — [Robin Olson](#) ^[23]

Thank you! ^[24]

We'll be updating on Instagram @RobinAFOlson and on Facebook on our "For Freya" and "Kitten Associates" pages. If time

allows I will also update here, but I am woefully behind in my blogging! Thank you for helping Margo she is doing well so far. We have a May 8 app't with the surgeon so hopefully we will have our funds raised by then. xoxo

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

Source URL (modified on 2018-04-23 11:33): <https://coveredincathair.com/content/margo-ch-1-save-her-life?page=2>

Links

- [1] <http://coveredincathair.com/content/freya-20-little-girl-no-more-part-16>
- [2] <http://coveredincathair.com/content/freya-20-dreams-really-do-come-true-part-17>
- [3] <https://www.facebook.com/forFreya/>
- [4] <https://kittenassociates.org/>
- [5] <https://smallanimal.vethospital.ufl.edu/>
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