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Mia's Story: A Very Long Road

Thu, 2015-05-07 18:53 — Robin Olson

*Last June I asked all of you to weigh in on a question that was plaguing me; **whether or not to transport our foster mom-cat, Mia from Georgia to my home in Connecticut along with her kittens or just transport the kittens.** It wasn't an easy question to answer because I knew that Mia was not friendly enough to be adopted as she was and I wasn't sure IF she'd ever be friendly towards humans. It would cause a serious rescue-roadblock if she couldn't be socialized. I couldn't take on more rescues because she'd be taking up precious foster space, but I also owed it to her to find her a safe harbor and not just kick her to the curb.*



©2104 Warren Royal. *Pregnant, terrified, but out of danger Mia's story with us begins.*

Mia's first foster mom, Moe, was able to pet her, but they were in tight quarters and Mia had nowhere to hide. Her kittens were newborn so they didn't get in the way of any of Moe's attempts to socialize her. Moving Mia north, also meant she'd be in a bigger room and I'd have a tough time working with her, especially with her much bigger kittens sharing the room. Ideally I'd want to sequester her so it would be just one on one, forcing Mia to either become desensitized to humans or I'd eventually realize I couldn't "turn her around." The problem was; **I didn't have the space to separate her from the others.**

I'd have to wait months for space to open up. The kittens would eventually be adopted but I'd end up with an adult feral cat remaining that I couldn't allow to be with any new foster families. It was too dangerous. This **HAD** to work or **I'd be forced to consider sending Mia back to Georgia where our good friend Warren would add her to his small feral colony.**



©2104 Aunt Moe. Mia was a great mama. Here she is with baby Woody (left) and Lil' Snickers (right).

Warren originally trapped and rescued Mia when she was still pregnant, getting her away from a terribly dangerous situation. He told me I could count on him to take her back if things didn't work out. It would be my very last option and I prayed I'd never have to go that route. It wouldn't be fair to have Mia indoors for months, then chuck her back outside, especially to a place she's not familiar with. Odds are, she'd run off and get killed or slowly starve to death. This situation weighed very heavily on me. I just couldn't give up on her.

Moe needed a much deserved break and after careful consideration I decided that Mia should head north with her family.



©2104 Robin AF Olson. Mia arrives and she's not the only one who's scared.

In late June, Mia and family arrived. From the moment she hissed, racing out of the carrier, I knew I was in trouble. I'd only ever worked with feral kittens, who typically socialize fairly quickly depending on their age. My own cat, Cricket was a horror when I began fostering him and he was 6 months old when I started working with him (*in many books too old to try to socialize*). He would have rather ripped my face off then let me pet him, but these days he'll seek out attention, even sitting on my lap. It took years for Cricket to blossom. He's brave now and even solicits attention from new people who visit our home. It required Sam and I had to work with him every day, but it paid off.



©2104 Robin AF Olson. The first day everyone was scared but it didn't take long for the kittens to seek out attention from me.

The problem was, I didn't have the bandwidth to work with Mia.

Mia was never aggressive with me. She just hissed. She had no interest in toys or catnip, just food. She'd come to me, on occasion, if I held out a treat to her, but the kittens would usually snatch the morsel of chicken before I could shoo them away. I couldn't pet Mia at all. It was just too chaotic in the room to try because she'd always back away and hiss.

I knew as soon as Celeste's kittens were out of the blue bathroom I'd move Mia over and get to work. Then after Mia and family were adopted I would FINALLY take a break, too. **It was the closest I'd gotten to thinking I could take some time off and frankly if I didn't get it I was a bit worried about what would happen to my mental health.**



©2104 Aunt Moe. The first of Laney's older kittens are rescued.

After a month off from fostering, Moe contacted me about her neighbor's cat. She'd never been spayed and she was 3 years old and was pregnant again. There were kittens of various ages running around this family's yard. Moe found one dead. The family flippantly told her "*some just go off and never come back.*" Most of the kittens were sick. There was a bowl of cheap cat food out on the porch. It was filthy and covered with flies. One of the mom-cat's daughters was pregnant, too. Moe asked told the people if she could get help would the family would allow us to start spaying and neutering the cats or maybe let us take them into our program?

I hadn't had a break from fostering in 5 years and I didn't want to take them on, especially

because the head count, with soon-to-be-born kittens could be over a dozen cats (*in the end it was closer to 16*). I didn't believe I could easily place two adult cats who were part of the group and I didn't know how we'd afford it or how much longer it would mean for me to be fostering. I told Moe; **"First things first. Get a head count and let's get those mamas. We'll start spaying and neutering the ones that are old enough."**



©2104 Aunt Moe. Laney (front left) with her six kittens and daughter Winnie (behind) with her sole surviving kitten (somewhere in the pile of other kittens).

While I couldn't promise I'd bring all the cats here, I told her that we'd sort it out later. I knew we could raise the funds for their vet care but it would be costly to provide for them for the coming months. **Clearly these animals were at high risk of dying and even though Moe and I were tapped out, we had to do something.**

That was last August.

It's been a blur since we took on Laney, Winnie and their 7 kittens, plus 6 other kittens that were from Laney's previous litters. They were all in lousy shape and it was a lot of work on Moe's part to care for so many cats and to get them back to health.

Meanwhile I was experiencing one after another calamity with my foster kittens. Twinkle-Twinkle broke her leg, Fernando ripped his eyelid in three places, Greta ate a string and had to have a barium study done all within a month.

Slowly, I started doing some adoptions. I knew I had to get the numbers down because Laney and crew would need the space in a few months. We got a great foster home with Jame and her family so they took on a few of the kittens to give me some relief.

I finally managed to free up space in the blue bathroom so I thought it would be time to move Mia there. It was early September and for the first time since I could remember, the bathroom could be used as a bathroom and I was a bit reluctant to change that.



©2104 Robin AF Olson. This tiny kitten would end up changing my life forever.

Before I could do a thing I got a call from my friends over at Animals in Distress about a kitten with a serious birth defect and could I just foster her for a weekend?

...to be continued.

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Comments

Fri, 2015-05-08 13:02 — jmuwj (not verified)

RE: MIA ^[15]

One thing about it, Robin: When you care and put that caring into action on behalf of those in need, there's never a dull moment, is there? ;)

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