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[Home](#) > Trying to Move Heaven & Earth Part 1 of 2

Trying to Move Heaven & Earth Part 1 of 2

Mon, 2012-07-02 15:49 — Robin Olson

I don't feel like I can breathe. It's 1pm. I haven't eaten anything since last night. I feel like I'm going to collapse. I'm so wrung out and tired. I don't want to hear the sound of my phone ringing or the tone that indicates I have an incoming text message. Every time I hear my phone chime, my heart races. What am I going to find out now? How much more can I take?

I barely stepped off the plane at JFK Airport when things started to race downhill. Opal, our rather feral, far too young mama, gave birth to a kitten last Monday. **Cyndie, the foster mom, found the kitten laying on the tile floor, cool, but alive.** She put the kitten with Opal, hoping Opal would care for her newborns. **Twenty four hours later, Opal gave birth to 3 additional kittens.**

The next three days were a blur of phone calls, texts, e-mails. **Opal wasn't caring for her kittens and we weren't even sure if she had any milk to give them if she could.** Opal was more and more fractious. Cyndie had a tough time intervening, but eventually was able to start bottle feeding the neonatal kittens to ensure they were getting some sustenance.

The challenges began to pile up. Cyndie couldn't provide round-the-clock care to such young animals. Frankly, I couldn't have done it, either. **I started a frantic search to find a nursing mama cat we could either rescue** (and take any of her kittens, too), or one we could put our four kittens with. There were no mamas to be found—all already had 5 or 6 kittens. We couldn't put 4 more with them.



©2012 Cyndie Tweedy. *We need a name for this little kitten.*

Cyndie called an old friend who had experience with newborns. She offered to take the kittens and give them all the care they needed. It would relieve Cyndie and give the kittens a better chance at surviving. **Cyndie chose to only give her to the two most critical kittens, a boy who was born first, and a girl who was born last (Opal wouldn't even clean off the amniotic sack on this kitten, who Cyndie initially feared was dead).** The other two kittens appeared to be doing ok. Opal seemed to be feeding them, but no one was really sure since getting close to Opal meant getting clawed.

Meanwhile, two kittens were doing worse and worse. **Then, on Thursday, the little boy passed away. We knew that the mortality rate for newborns is 30-40%, but it didn't make what happened any easier. The little girl, Baby G., was not doing well, either.** As if things couldn't get worse for her, they did. The bottle feeder who was helping Cyndie had to rush to the hospital because her Mother had a bad gallbladder attack and had to have emergency surgery. **Now Cyndie was alone with the ailing kitten and didn't know what to do. She placed the kitten with Opal, who ignored her baby.** When Cyndie looked at the little kitten, she realized **the other two siblings were MUCH larger and clearly doing much better.** A few hours passed and Opal had her leg over Baby G. Baby G. wasn't nursing or doing much of anything. Something had to be done.



©2012 Maria S. Maria took this photo last year. This is Opal, just a kitten, before she became hateful of humans and had her kittens. It's so unfair to see this precious kitty and know her fate as it is now.

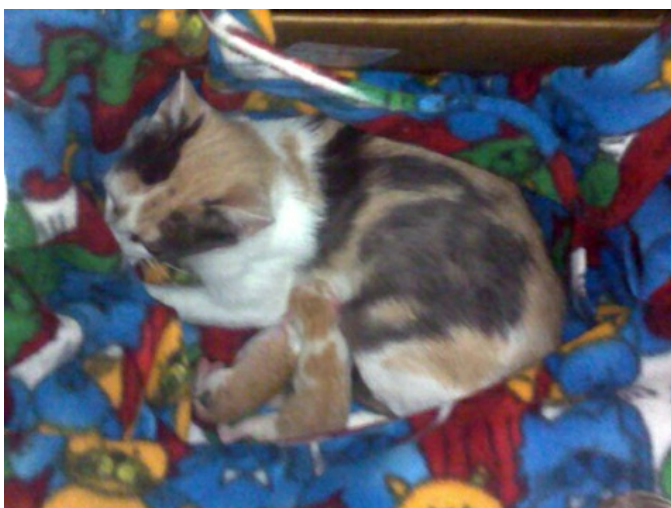
I have to take on the responsibility for ALL decisions for our foster cats and trying to do it from 1000 miles away is grueling. Not only do I emotionally support our volunteers, I have to help them make difficult choices and **I have to KNOW what I'm talking about to do that...which would be fine IF I knew what I was talking about.**

I took a Bottle Baby Bootcamp class at Tabby's Place a few months ago and it dawned on me that Baby G. should be tube fed. Cyndie was massively sleep deprived and stressed out and didn't feel this was a good option and that it could hurt the kitten. **I had to try to draw from my own reserves to help her have faith that tube feeding was the best and possibly last option for Baby G.** I wished I could have just taken the situation out of her hands so she could rest. We were both so tired, but in the end the buck stops with me. **It was barely 6:30 AM on Friday the 29th. Not the best time to even be able to think (at least for me)**

Cyndie rushed Baby G. to our Vet. They weren't busy and could offer her supportive care until she stabilized. **Over the course of the next few hours Baby G. was fed and got some fluids. She perked up and they thought she was going to improve** so we made plans for them to keep her at the Vet partly so Cyndie could rest and partly so we could be sure Baby G. was stable before we brought her back to her mom.

The Vet graciously offered that one of their Vet Techs would take Baby G. home and tube feed her over the weekend. They would do it for NO COST, which truly was a blessing. I think everyone on Facebook started to feel like all their prayers and hopes were working. I did, too.

Early that evening, Cyndie called me. Baby G.'s temp started to fluctuate wildly. Shortly thereafter Baby G. took her last breath and passed away. I was speechless. What happened? I really thought we were going to save her life. How arrogant of me to think that! Now Baby G. would join her brother, the two would be cremated together. *I found it ironic that the costs for the cremation would be more than what we spent for her Vet care. They would ship the ashes to me. I already have many little tin boxes of ashes and these two babies could rest with my cats, never to be forgotten.*



©2012 Cyndie Tweedy. Opal with the surviving kittens.

After many tears I hoped that perhaps we all could finally breathe? The stress gone, only our broken hearts remained. **Over the past day, Opal had started to produce milk and eat a great deal of food, indicating that her milk production was strong. The two remaining kittens, a boy and girl, were twice the weight of the kittens who died.** These two had a very good chance of making it. Opal, fiercely protective of her young, was in mom-mode now. We just had to keep her fed and keep an eye on the kittens, but she would do the rest for the next few weeks.



©2012 Maria S. Tater Tot on the way to the Vet.

Less than a day passed and Maria called me. She didn't like the way Tater Tot was looking. His belly was big, his eyes runny, he seemed flat. She feared FIP. I didn't want to accept that-who would? I asked if she de-wormed him and she said she had a few days ago when she first noticed his belly getting round.

The next 24 hours were spent in a mad dash to see if there was anything we could do to save Tater's life. Part two shares our roller coaster ride with you.

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[Vets](#) ^[4]

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[FIP](#) ^[6]

[Rainbow Bridge](#) ^[7]

[Kitten Associates](#) ^[8]

[Maria](#) ^[9]

[Rest in Peace](#) ^[10]

Comments

Mon, 2012-07-02 16:29 — Shelley Mack (not verified)

Treatment for Tater ^[11]

Here is the response i got back from Sass and Sass about the treatment for tater. I would donate but am not currently working, I hope this helps...

To: kalismack@hotmail.com ^[12]; info@coveredincathair.com ^[13]

CC: info@sassandsass.com ^[14]; alegendr@utk.edu ^[15]

Dear Shelley,

Sorry about Tater. PI is an experimental vet biologic, and its use in FIP is experimental as well. The protocol for obtaining PI legally is the same for everyone: your vet needs to contact Dr. Legendre -- the only person authorized for experimental use of PI, and if Dr. Legendre agrees to do a compassionate release and notifies us of his decision, we will ship PI to the vet's address.

In order to ship Polypreryl Immunostimulant, we would need your billing info/address and your vet's shipping address, incl. name on the card, CC #, expiration, sec code for CC (we accept all major credit cards except of AmEx and we accept Paypal). We ship to vet offices only. Please indicate the current weight of the cat as PI is dosage is weight sensitive.

Polypreryl Immunostimulant is currently provided for free, and we ask for reimbursement of:

(a) vials materials, packing and filling - currently \$9.70/vial,

(b) actual shipping cost per published rates and fees by FedEx (recommended for the first shipping) - please indicate which method of shipping you prefer FedEx Overnight, 2nd Day or USPS Priority,

(c) associated shipping cost for communication/processing/packaging/supplies/handling/pick-up/delivery cost (\$50.00 plus extra \$50 for the first shipment), and

(d) credit card merchant processing fees (~3.99%-4.99% + \$0.43 per transaction each).

Considering your rescue status, we will be willing to waive the \$50 account setup fee to help out.

The best and the fastest way to communicate to us is email.

Sincerely,

Tanya Kuritz, Ph.D.

www.sassandsass.com ^[16]

Sass & Sass, Inc.

115 A Flint Rd., Oak Ridge, TN 37830

865-368-3168

865-940-0042 fax

Mon, 2012-07-02 17:47 — [Robin Olson](#) ^[17]

Wow! ^[18]

But doesn't this only work on the DRY form of FIP, if it will work at all??? Tater probably has the Wet version.

Mon, 2012-07-02 17:33 — [Teri and the ca...](#) (not verified) ^[19]

Heaven & Earth ^[20]

My heart aches for you, and the ones who passed...and wonder where the strength comes from for you, and then I remember...

"Saving the life of one animal may not change the world, but the world will surely change for that one animal"

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[Robin @ Google+](#)

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[2] <https://coveredincathair.com/taxonomy/term/51>

[3] <https://coveredincathair.com/taxonomy/term/63>

[4] <https://coveredincathair.com/taxonomy/term/85>

[5] <https://coveredincathair.com/category/cich-content-categories/georgia-rescue>

[6] <https://coveredincathair.com/category/cich-content-categories/fip>

[7] <https://coveredincathair.com/category/cich-content-categories/rainbow-bridge>

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