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What A Mother Won't Do for Her Kittens

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Her claws dug into the wooden grate and tugged, tugged hard. Beyond the grate in the shadows under the house, she could see a safe place to hide away from the tidal pool, the animals there, the wetness that could sweep up and drown her if the rains continued to fall. She was so close to Long Island Sound she could hear the hiss of the waves as they reached the shore, but she didn't care for a trip to the beach. She had far more important things on her mind.

A little black and white, tuxedo cat named Izzy was pregnant and desperate to find a place to give birth, but time was running out. Izzy bit and clawed at the grate. One corner was loose. If she kept pulling she'd be able to remove the grate and enter the depths of the underside of the house, but she'd have to rip out some insulation, too. No other animals had been there, she could smell the sweet earth and staleness of the fiberglass and knew she'd be safe. Her kittens were wriggling inside her. She knew they'd be coming soon so she continued to claw away even though her claws were breaking, the sheaths splintering off into the grass.

At last the grate gave way and Izzy clawed at the insulation ripping it to shreds as she made her way under the house as far back as she could; away from the wet, the wild, the world.



©2016 Dana Kane, used with permission. Photos of Izzy under the house, then as the kittens get trapped and ready for a trip to "Aunt Katherine's House." If you look carefully, the bottom center image shows the area Izzy dug out to have her kittens.

Two weeks later...

Izzy gave birth the first night under the house to four kittens and began to care and feed them while she herself was slowly starving. She foraged for food but she couldn't be away from her kittens for more than a few minutes so often her attempts were unsuccessful. It was unusually cold for May, the nights especially so. Many other kittens born outdoors weren't going to survive and the odds were against Izzy's too.

One day a lady noticed the broken grate and pieces of insulation. She assumed it was done by a raccoon or opossum and didn't think much of it until she saw Izzy duck under the house. Not long after that she saw a kitten, then another. She loved animals dearly, but didn't know what to do. Of course she could put down food for the mama cat, but what about the kittens?

It's not always easy to find help for a mom and kittens. Rescues and shelters are overloaded, especially this time of year with other moms and kittens who need help. The woman called and emailed and after a week had passed she finally found Katherine, from Animals in Distress, who was willing to come help trap the family and get them to safety. Katherine had no problem getting the kittens, but she had to return to the home a few times, in the middle of the night and early the next morning on only a few hours sleep, until she finally trapped Izzy.



©2016 Katherine Reid, Animals in Distress. Used with Permission. While hoping Izzy would get into the trap, along comes who we think is the "baby daddy"! He's getting trapped next!

Once trapped, the problem was that Katherine only had one space for the family, in a big crate inside her bathroom. It wasn't ideal. Katherine has other cats. The more cats, the more chance of spreading disease to the kittens, whose immune systems were just developing. The best thing would be to move the cats into a home with no or few other cats, but where would that be?

That's where I came in.

Over the past year and a half I've been struggling to find a home for Laney and 15 of her offspring. I'm down to the final two, Jelly and Lolly, and frankly I was dreaming about taking a break when they got adopted, but part of me was also yearning to be around kittens. I've missed having little ones running around, learning to be confident little cats. I miss the joy of seeing them thrive, though I don't miss the heartache of seeing them get sick or worse.

I knew we had the space to take on the mom and kittens, but SURPRISE, I'd also just said OKAY to taking on six orphan kittens from two different kill shelters (stay tuned for updates on them)! Now what would I do?



©2016 Robin AF Olson. Our marvelous mama, Izzy.

Thankfully I have another foster home with Ms. J and her family. I love these guys to pieces. They always jump at the chance to foster but they've never had LITTLE kittens. There's a lot to learn and it can be a very tricky few weeks. At least there was Izzy to feed and clean the kittens. They were almost 4 weeks old and would start using the litter pan and eating on their own, but they needed guidance to do that. *Could I oversee their care when they were in another home? Would they be willing to take on such a task?* Inasmuch as they were new to fostering kittens, I needed to do a great job passing on my knowledge to them.

It took a few days to work out the details. Katherine grew ever more frantic that the kittens would get sick. I understood having had so many kittens suffering from upper respiratory tract infections from being in kill shelters. She called around to other rescues just in case I had to say no.

What was really great was that Ms. J and family were ready for the challenge. They knew that there are plenty of risks involved...that something very bad could happen if they weren't careful and even if they were careful. You have to have a big brave heart to do rescue and be willing to be crushed, then do it again and again because you love cats, because you need to help make their lives better. If Ms. J hadn't said yes, this story could have ended in a much darker way.



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So I began to shop for things the kittens would need: *baby food (chicken!), goat's milk, syringes, cotton pads (to help them eliminate their wastes), pee pee pads, paper towels, cat food* for mom. I put together a trunk full of stuff including a new baby scale. The kittens have to be weighed every day to ensure they are growing properly and so we know if they need some help with extra supplemental feedings.

Two days ago, Katherine, Ms. J and family and I met to get Izzy and family set up in their new foster home. Ms. J's two daughters were glowing they were so excited. As Katherine introduced us to each kitten, we all swooned. We have a litter of four tabbies, with lovely sharp-edged stripes along their brown fur.



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Katherine and I began talking about what to do for the kittens, how to do it, when to do it, all while the kittens were being passed from one of us to the other. **We marveled at their markings and took notes about which two were our boys and which two were our girls. Two of the kittens, a boy and girl, are almost identical with the exception that the girl has a tiny white tip one her tail.** We hugged and kissed them, welcoming them to [Kitten Associates](#).^[1]



©2016 Robin AF Olson. *Safe, with mama and a fully belly, it doesn't get any better than this.*

It takes a lot of effort and sacrifice to rescue one kitty family. It also takes resources and that's something we need a lot of help with. These kittens will need vaccinations, de-worming, to be spayed or neutered. **Izzy eats as much as three adult cats and fairly soon the kittens will be eating cat food, too.**

Katherine and I focus on doing the right thing for cats in need. We hope that our efforts will be appreciated and that in the end when we need help, it will be there for our foster cats. Without it we simply can't keep our doors open or rescue another cat.



©2016 Robin AF Olson. *One of the boys gets some extra nom noms.*

That's where you come in.

Since the kittens do not have names yet, I've decided that for every donation of \$10 or more, **YOU CAN MAKE NAME SUGGESTIONS**. We'll review the suggestions and we may pick yours. It's one way we can say thank you for loving what we do and for caring about our kitties.

Be a part of our life-saving efforts by sharing your love in the following ways:

For super fast donations of a specific amount use:

[\\$10 Donation](#) ^[2] make a name suggestion for one or more kittens

[\\$25 Donation](#) ^[3] helps keep Izzy's tummy full

[\\$50 Donation](#) ^[4] provides cat food and treats

[\\$75 Donation](#) ^[5] lots more cat food, toys and treats or first vaccinations for all the cats

[\\$100 Donation](#) ^[6] covers spay/neuter one kitten

[\\$200 Donation](#) ^[7] **which sponsors one kitten's complete vet care**

Make a donation [HERE](#) ^[8] to use our **DONATE TODAY** button (*and yes, you can use your credit card*).

Send a check to **Kitten Associates, P.O. Box 354, Newtown, CT 06470-0354**

Kitten Associates IS a 501c3 non-profit rescue so your donation is tax deductible. Our EIN is 27-3597692

Purchase cat food or chicken baby food or teenie tiny toys through our [Amazon.com Wish List](#) ^[9] so you can choose exactly what gift you'd like to give to our foster kitties.

Purchase catnip-free cat toys at [Purrfect Play](#) ^[10]. **We LOVE their toys because they're small and not scary to growing kittens. Since we have six MORE kittens coming in, we'd welcome more toys!** You can ship to our P.O. Box 354 (see above).



©2016 Robin AF Olson. Learning how to syringe-feed. Yum!

Every single dollar adds up and no gift is too small. We appreciate everything we get and sharing on social media helps, too!

We're working on getting Squee TV HD up and running so you can watch our kittens 24/7 so stay tuned to our [Facebook](#) ^[11] page for updates and a link to the web cam!

Thank you to the family who found Izzy and went to bat for her and made sure she found safe harbor with Katherine and I'm not thanking Katherine because she knows why. Hee hee...hey..we blogger/cat rescuers have to have a few secrets once in awhile.

NAME THESE KITTENS



©2016 Robin AF Olson. Boy 1



©2016 Robin AF Olson. Girl 2



©2016 Robin AF Olson. Girl 3



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