



Volume 13
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The Cat's Meow

Autumn
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FIRE SWEEPS THROUGH ISOLATION WARD AT MID HUDSON ANIMAL AID IN BEACON, NY

On Saturday, September 14th Mid Hudson Animal Aid, home to 164 abandoned and abused cats and kittens, experienced an event that anyone in animal care dreads: a fire. At approximately 11am, shelter staff smelled the strong odor of smoke coming from one of the rooms and quickly discovered that there was an intense fire raging. The effected Isolation Room housed those animals that were recovering from or receiving medical treatments for various ailments.

Due to the swift actions of Shelter Manager Audrey Lodato and her staff, all humans were unharmed and a majority of the 160+ feline residents were saved. Sadly, eight feline souls were lost and three additional cats were rushed to the animal ER at Hudson Highlands Veterinary Medical Group in Hopewell Junction, NY where they were in critical condition ~ *continued*

Where does one begin? Heartbreak. Grief. Disbelief. Lost friends. Yet there's been so little time to despair since that fateful Saturday morning. To paraphrase Marianne Williamson, 'in our community there is work to be done and there are wounds to heal and in every heart there is the power to do it'. The focus has and always will be with our furry charges and their well being. Together, we persevere.

There is remarkable comfort drawn from the depth and scope of the support MHAA has received. Even at our most vulnerable and during our greatest heartache, our friends and families, supporters, local businesses, strangers, famous internet pets, and the animal care world (as far as Japan), have beaten a path to our door to offer donations large and small, have ensured that our spirits remain high, our cats are safe and loved, and the reconstruction of our special sanctuary remains an attainable reality.

I have been involved as a volunteer and Board member since MHAA opened to help abandoned and abused cats in 1990. I have witnessed suffering and inexcusable neglect, hoarded cats barely clinging to life, lack of funds and volunteers, and endured many a sleepless night. But through the challenges faced, MHAA has always bounced back and found the resources and determination to become a better facility able to offer the highest standards of care and a living environment that is positive and home-like for its residents.

A fire distills things, both figuratively and literally. It reduces your material goods to rubble and ash, while clearly illuminating the knowledge that the best things in life are not things at all. While these intangible virtues can feel fleeting as we mourn the loss of those that perished in the fire and again say goodbye to the saved as many of their foster homes become permanent, they are also brilliant in the permanent impact they have on our lives, our communities, our residents, and our mission. As strongly as we mourn for the eight souls that passed over and realize that the most difficult goodbyes are the ones we never get the chance to say, we hold on to the knowledge that a brighter future lays ahead.

Helen Keller once said, "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart." MHAA has felt your compassion and commitment. We are blessed and moved by the incredibly generous support shown during this difficult time. Each of you have touched our hearts and given us the one thing needed most: hope.

Don Petruncola, MHAA Board President

Make a secure donation at www.midhudsonanimalaid.org

Remember, there is no such thing as a small act of kindness.

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and placed in oxygen tents. One of these animals, Twinkie, was resuscitated on site by Beacon Fireman Gary Simmonds. Those lost this day were: Cassiopeia, Stuffin, Floopey, Daniel, Pieces, Sadie, Sparkler, and Atlas.

The animal care community immediately pulled together to support MHAA through this crisis. MHAA would like to express its gratitude to: Veterinarians Twila Whitefield and Holly Kalba, and Vet Technician Autumn from Hudson Highlands Veterinary Medical Group who arrived on site to lend assistance; the Roosevelt Animal Hospital in Beacon who also arrived on site to lend assistance; Animal Kind, Pets Alive, Hudson Valley SPCA, Ulster SPCA and the many volunteers who showed up to assist in evacuating cats and setting up emergency foster care, as well as clean-up operations.

All of our residents were accounted for and placed in foster homes. Cleanup operations are completed at the shelter and we are anticipating start of reconstruction and improvement efforts shortly. Much has been lost but with your help, we will re-open to a brighter and better future.



**GOD BLESS
Cassiopeia, Stuffin, Floopey,
Daniel, Pisces, Sadie, Sparkler,
and Atlas**



To genuinely care about the well being of others, especially animals, is compassion.

Atlas

In Greek mythology, Atlas held the weight of the world on his shoulders. The name means to suffer, endure, bear. The staff at MHAA definitely choose an appropriate name for the poor black-and-white kitty with the white mustache bound in a bag like discarded trash, faintly purring.

Atlas was abandoned at our door on the morning of June 19th with a raw, gaping wound extending down the length of his spine exposing the infected flesh underneath and rendering him helpless and in shock. MHAA rushed him to Middlehope Veterinary Hospital where Dr. Richard Solomon willingly volunteered his day off to perform three grueling hours of emergency surgery. Removal of necrotic tissue, draining of the infections and stretching of the skin using special sutures were the first in a series of medical procedures.

Atlas soon began his recuperation in a foster home and healed faster than expected. A spirited overachiever, he quickly regained mobility and let his voice be heard, pulling out his drain and refusing to wear his e collar. Time and again his collar could be found in the litter box as if to say 'that's what I think about this.' Held together by staples and love, Atlas bore a striking resemblance to Frankenkitty, healing rapidly and returning to MHAA in a few short weeks. We may never know what caused Atlas' injuries or whether they were accidental or intentional. But his strength gave him a chance at a brighter future. He became an official greeter for potential adopters that arrived at the shelter and his widely shared story made him a local celebrity.



There have been very few cats whose injuries have been as horrific in our 23 year history. How someone could see the condition of this cat, whether pet or stray, and abandon it in a plastic bag at a shelter rather than take it directly to a veterinarian remains a mystery. How Atlas maintained his affectionate and warm persona despite what fate dealt him is a tribute to his big heart. He loved and welcomed all people, being the center of attention, and had a bright future awaiting him. Atlas was residing in the Isolation Ward of MHAA on the morning of September 14th when a fire broke out and claimed the lives of eight cats. We are heartbroken to report that he succumbed to smoke inhalation during the fire. His journey ended far too abruptly and sadly. His three months with MHAA have inspired many and touched countless others. He leaves a legacy of hope and triumph, and his spirit will comfort the next generation of needy souls that pass through the sanctuary doors.

Death leaves a heartache no one can heal, love leaves a memory no one can steal.

Phoenix is an adorable, trusting little kitten who had rocks thrown at him by children as he lay in a gutter. A kind woman came to his rescue and MHAA arranged for emergency veterinary attention. It was discovered that Phoenix had both bones of his lower leg exposed, and his leg was so swollen and gangrenous there were no pads on his foot. Phoenix's leg was amputated at the hip, and he is now recovering well and doing wonderfully. Phoenix arrived at MHAA and was sent to the vet shortly before the fire broke out. The Good Samaritan who rescued him and brought him to MHAA chose to remain and assist us with recovery efforts. We are grateful to her on many levels and proud to say MHAA's mission continues despite the most difficult of circumstances.



Cage Sponsorships

Just in time for the holidays! Give the gift of warmth and comfort to a caged cat while honoring a friend, loved one, pet, or advertising your business. Each sponsorship will include a decorative frame with three lines of text mounted on the cage.

Prices are: 3 months \$90 / 6 months \$180 / 12 months : \$365.

A dollar a day can make such a difference!



Mid Hudson Animal Aid, Inc.

Essie Dabrusin Cat Sanctuary
54 Simmons Lane
Beacon, New York 12508
Phone: 845-831-4321
Email: info@midhudsonanimalaid.org

To charge your donation, take a moment to fill out this form and return it to MHAA
Please notify us if your address has changed.

Name _____

Email _____

Please indicate donation amount: \$ _____ Phone: _____

Visa MasterCard Acct. No. _____ Exp. ____/____

Signature _____ Date _____

All contributions to MHAA are tax-deductible. Receipts are sent out for gifts over \$250.

Aster's journey has been a rocky and eventful one. Receiving minimal care from her owners and despite a deformed and damaged leg with limited mobility, she was cast outside and exposed to danger, disease, and other animals. The delivery of her four babies prompted her owners to "get rid of her". Unwanted and exhausted, she arrived at MHAA in a feces encrusted carrier scared and protective of her tiny, helpless kittens.



Aster thrived in her new, loving environment and became an exceptionally attentive, nurturing mother and an affectionate and grateful resident. Aster was found lethargic in her cage one day and was rushed to the vet where extensive tests revealed she had distemper. She was given supportive care and a 50% chance of survival. Aster's babies were put under quarantine. Barely 4 weeks old, the loss of the comfort and warmth of their devoted mother was frightening. They huddled together while the staff attended to them and syringe fed them every three hours. Too young to do battle with the ravages of distemper, three of them succumbed to the disease (the mortality rate for kittens is 95%). One resilient baby remains.

Aster's spirit and determination saw her make a long, but full recovery and become one of the 50% of adults with distemper that survive. After two foster homes fell through, she received a successful placement and has spent her quarantine period being spoiled and given the love and attention she craves and deserves. Aster's future holds much promise. Fundraising efforts have garnered some financial support for the extensive surgery on her leg. The root cause of her crippled foot is unknown, but it limits her mobility and puts her at risk of a complete leg break. Young and playful, Aster frequently gets her damaged foot caught in her other foot and falls down. If she lands wrong while playing and attempting to jump, her leg may snap. Surgery is crucial for her continued well being and optimal health.

Our Facebook plea for help after the fire caught the eye of an adopter in Ohio. An amputee herself, she immediately felt a connection to Aster and her unique story. Aster will soon undergo surgery and then be transported to her new home by the Underground Railroad Rescue Kitty Network. Several drivers will participate in bringing Aster to her forever home across the states.



I'd Spend all 9 Lives With you

MHAA is proud to announce our annual Goods and Services Auction on November 2nd at the Knights of Columbus Hall on Townsend Avenue in Beacon, NY.

The preview begins at 5:30 PM and live auction starts at 7:00 PM. Featured items: Pet Portraits and Pampering, Tickets to the David Letterman Show, Theater and Performing Arts Tickets, Sports Tickets, Art and Antiques, Local Restaurant and Store Certificates, NYC Hotel stays, Helicopter ride to Manhattan, and Gourmet Wine and Cooking certificates. \$15 admission includes finger foods and dessert. Sponsored by: Royal Auto Parts, Hopewell Jct. All proceeds benefit MHAA and assist in our rebuilding process. For more info: mhaaauction@yahoo.com

Kindness is not an act, it is a lifestyle.