

Spotlight On Rescuers!

When we read a cage card at KittyKind, we wince at the backstory of the cat—its hunger, fear, confusion. We smile, later, when we read the happy ending. We may not reflect upon the rescuer who, with courage and care, helps to write the new chapter. In this issue of the newsletter, we focus on the dedicated rescuers of KittyKind.

RETIREMENT AND A NEW CAREER!!

Mimi S.

“My name is Mireille (Mimi) S. I was born in France. I began working for the United Nations in New York in the mid-’60s. I retired from the UN in the late ‘90s, after working in NYC, USA; Nairobi, Kenya, East Africa; Montreal, Canada; and Kosovo, and an Eastern Europe Peacekeeping Mission. For the past 14 years my new mission was rescuing feral and stray cats—a real mission.

It all started a few months after I retired to the Upper East Side, sharing a small apartment with my daughter Veronika. We never ever saw a stray cat in that neighborhood. But a colleague of my daughter who lived in Queens, asked for us to help catching kittens in a garden across her building. We saw a mother cat and four kittens running around. All five in bad shape, in particular one kitten that could not see because of his eye infection. I jumped the fence and spent some time trying to get the kittens, but only managed to get the one with terrible eye infection. We named him Munchkin. He was our first housecat in NY and lived to be 18 years old. No more rescuing happened until we moved to Sugar Hill, Harlem, in 2006. I had started volunteering at the ASPCA in 2005, socializing cats.

So in March 2006, the fun began when on our first day in our new apartment we opened our windows overlooking a courtyard/backyard. We counted over 14 cats roaming around!!! We found a way to access the backyard and started feeding the crew!!! Given the number of cats, I decided to learn how to trap at the ASPCA. But the first unforgettable rescue was not by trapping!!!!

Her name was Lilly. We first noticed her especially because she was the quiet one, always alone, sleeping quietly on the stairs in the backyard for hours on end. In July 2006, we noticed that she was pregnant. So, we prepared a



Lilly and Kittens

large cardboard box lined with newspapers, put it in a passageway to protect from the rain, and waited. On 13 July, Lilly gave birth to four kittens. On 15 July, we noticed only one kitten in the box, the orange one. We waited for a few hours and became worried, so we went to pick him up. We did not know better at the time. And naturally, Lilly showed up eventually looking for the tiny one. So we went back and put the kitten back with Lilly. I must mentioned that the courtyard was filled with construction material, cement parts, ripped boards, etc—the typical mess. On the 18 July we had what we called an African downpour and rain accumulated in the backyard, very fast. When it stopped we heard meows and saw a kitten floating trying to find ground. We rushed downstairs rescued the kitten, warmed him

up in a towel and put him back with his siblings. Lilly came back and for a few days all was well. Except that the orange kitten did not survive and as you know, it is so hard to lose them. As expected, Lilly moved her kittens under the messy rubbles. We could not find the family for a while. Then on 2 August, we had a horrible thunderstorm around 11:00 pm. Water was gushing out and we heard meows again. We rushed downstairs, in our nightgowns, to rescue the family. Water up to our knees, we grabbed one floating kitten, searched and found another one, and could not find the third one. Never did. We put the family in a clean container, and kept watching them. On 7 August we heard a bang on the door, and it was Building Management telling us to stop feeding the cats and remove Lilly and kittens immediately. We did not have carrier, box or trap. Following day we cabbied it to ASPCA and got cardboard boxes, rushed back home, grabbed the kittens and left a box for Lilly ... my daughter kept telling her to come inside to be with her kittens ... in one hour she came in and we reunited the family in my bedroom. Her two adorable kittens were adopted easily, Lilly stayed with us forever, even when we found out she was FIV positive when she was spayed. She was so gentle, she never had any fight with anyone. I do miss her still. Thanks for letting me tell her story.

MIRACLES HAPPEN

Evon H.

“It all started in 2004. I was one of those well-meaning cat lovers putting out some food for the neighborhood strays. First there was one sniffing around by the garbage cans. Then there were two. Soon there were kittens. It soon became clear this was no life for them. I was getting very upset watching them suffer through long hot summers and frigid winters. The term "feral" as used to describe a cat's temperament was not part of my vocabulary at that time; they were all just "strays". I learned the hard way after rescuing the first litter of feral kittens that there was a lot more to the story! The hissing, growling, swatting little angels were feral kittens and needed to be socialized to humans. I was intrigued! How does one do that? No clue at the time! Some were friendly strays and

some were not socialized to humans given they were born outside with little direct contact with humans aside from getting a nosh here and there. So much to learn!

I wanted to help them, so I reached out to Neighborhood Cats and took the TNR Workshop in 2005. My life took on completely new trajectory after I took that workshop in 2005. Two years later I made a complete career change and had the privilege to begin a career with The Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals became active in the NYC Feral Cat Initiative which spanned nearly a decade. At that time I got to know the wonderful KittyKind team as there always ready to be adopted out cats and kittens as part of one's TNR and rescue work! My life's mission became increasing awareness about the needs of community cats and helping them in any way I can. My independent rescue and TNR work has continued. It is focused on East Elmhurst now, but has spanned Astoria, Woodside, and other areas over the years. Rescuing a hungry frightened wandering stray, rescuing young litters of kittens and doing TNR for the community cats who are most comfortable call the outdoor world home has created a better quality of



Tibbs

life for the felines and for the humans in the communities as well and that is very rewarding. Education always plays a huge role. People want to help cats but they don't always know how.

It's challenging given the sheer numbers of stray and feral cats out there. There are not enough rescuer and TNR folks. I've long said that if we had one TNR/rescue person on every city block the cat overpopulation crisis would be OVER. Another BIG challenge is the need for more clinic resources. NYC needs to increase spay neuter services. We're very lucky to have the resources we have, but we can't keep up.

Aside from improving the lives of so many cats and preventing new litters from being born when there is already a cat overpopulation crisis, the most rewarding experiences for me have been the cats that make a remarkable recovery after a long time surviving on the streets. Tibbs is the most memorable:

Many years back, a very, very sick, rail-thin intact orange tabby started showing up. His eyes were crusted over, his mouth was swollen, he was drooling and he was sneezing blood. He would not come close to me; clearly very fearful. I finally rescued him using a humane trap and brought him to the clinic. He was too sick to be neutered. An exam revealed severe stomatitis; a very painful inflammation of the gums. There were lesions on his tongue and throat. Other causes were ruled out. A bad upper respiratory infection and the stomatitis were the culprits. He was emaciated because it was too painful to eat. He would jump in pain and scream every time he tried to eat even the softest food. Too sick to undergo a dental and neutering, I brought him home and kept him comfortable in a large crate to let the long acting injected medications get him some relief. He was too feral acting to medicate otherwise and pain in his mouth made oral meds impossible. He would hide in the carrier inside the crate and would not come near me.

Once he was better, he went in for a dental and to be neutered. Fifteen extractions. He came home to recover and be medicated, and was back in the crate. Still acting feral. As he started to feel a little better, he started to make eye contact with me. Wow. Another week passed. I heard a loud purr as I approached! I couldn't believe my ears. A few more days went by. Then, the most incredible moment in our journey together. As I opened the crate door to feed him, he came out and nudged his head against my hand! While purring! He was friendly!! I get chills and have tears in my eyes writing this. THIS is the most rewards part of all the hard work; that incredible unspoken communication of love a gratitude for easing their pain and fear. Tibbs was never feral but a former house kitty who ended up fending for himself without knowing how.

All seemed well but the stomatitis soon returned with a vengeance so back Tibbs went for full mouth extractions which finally gave him relief for good.

Tibbs was fostered by me for two years. In that time he just about doubled his weight to a whopping 17 lbs. Not a tooth in his mouth but that didn't stop him. Tibbs and I became very close. He followed me everywhere and would look into my eyes in way that I can't describe. I had never had this kind of communication and overt affection from a cat. I knew he'd be a wonderful companion for the right adopter but he was VERY shy of strangers. I



Ellie and Tibbs

received inquiries but nothing panned out as he would hide when someone came to meet him. Eventually he went to a foster with intent of adoption. He came back after three weeks. Another potential adopter gave him a try. He was returned again. My poor baby. I wanted a forever home for him but the right one had not materialized. I got in touch with KittyKind. They had a wonderful foster in mind. I brought Tibbs over. I liked them immediately and Tibbs seemed less fearful. A few weeks passed.

An inquiry came in from Petfinder. A woman who had adopted from KittyKind years ago. Tibbs and his story captured her heart. I met Cathy and instantly had a good feeling. As it turned out, she was the right one. We started with foster with intention of adoption. I wanted her to be SURE. No pressure. Tibbs was cautious yet open to some affection, but terrified of strangers for long time. Love, patience and some very helpful recommendations from her vet transformed Tibbs into and incredibly social and playful cat. Trips to the door and to the elevator to meet visitors and play dates with the super's dog ensued! I was amazed

Tibbs has been with Cathy for nearly five years now and is the happiest cat. Cathy reached out to me to see if I had a potential pal as the he was lonely when her other kitty succumbed to cancer. Ellie, another frightened former colony kitty joined their home. Love and patience once again helped Ellie feel safe once again. It took nearly a year for him to feel 100% safe but it happened. She and Tibbs love each other.

There are no words to express the gratitude I have for Cathy and adopter like her and to KittyKind for all their help. That foster home was the transition point for Tibbs. He was able to venture out from the protective shell of the home of the rescuer and trust others.

Here are Tibbs and Ellie in recent photos. They adore each other and their mom and they are so loved. Cathy and I stay in close touch and have become friends over the years. Rescue leads to some lasting relationships and that is another beautiful part of what we do.

He was the first of many that followed. I now never assume a cat is feral. Sometimes they've been through so much fear and pain and have lost their trust of humans. Given time, love and patience, miracles happen.

BEHAVIOR WITHOUT BORDERS

Emily A.

Some cat behavior is universal and sought, a head butt, a purr, but some, such as marking and scratching, can wreck an adoption. When an adopter seeks to relinquish a cat because of behavior, the KittyKind Intake team reaches across the Atlantic to Emily A., a rescuer and a behavior specialist who now lives in Ireland. Below is Emily's story of how she heals across the waters:

I started volunteering with KK almost 20 years ago, before that I volunteered and then worked weekends at Bide-A-Wee. I loved KittyKind from the beginning: how we are made up of such dedicated volunteers and rescuers, and how crucially we work with rescuers and the public, which is different from many other groups but I believe fundamental to change.

I started as a cleaner/feeder, then adoption rep, member of the Intake Team, and Board for several years. I did a Humane Society program on Cat Retention, and now focus on enquiries that involve relinquishment due to behavioral issues that come to the Intake Team. I find it fascinating delving into what could be causing a cat to behave a certain way – cats are such complex, emotional beings and I feel that they aren't always recognized and appreciated for this. Recently we had a case about two cats urinating outside the litter box, which so often is due to the stress of the setup or feeding routine. They had high-sided litter boxes that they had to jump into, with biodegradable litter, and were being fed very small amounts during the day after which their food was removed, and the cats would follow their owner around. (She was used to dogs and didn't realize cats are grazers). We advised on going back to basics: open boxes with regular litter and leaving their food out, and she immediately reported how there were no further incidents. She was great and quite unusual in how fast she acted on the suggestions, not all are like this if they're even open to suggestions, but on the Intake Team are first approach will always be relinquishment prevention through education.



Picture of Zeus, a Dublin rescue. He now lives with Emily, as well as her “NY gang of elderly females, who have occasional spats with each other, but who didn’t even give him a hiss!” A year-long-rescue attempt, Lily, has just moved in, too.

I rescued in Little Italy and Chinatown and LES before moving back to Dublin where I am from originally, and also focused on the deli cats in my area. When an enquiry came to the Intake Team about cats in one of these areas I’d investigate when possible, which is how I ended up with four of my own cats: Henrietta from Henry Street, Wilhemina from Delancey, Athena from under the Manhattan Bridge, and Marigold from a parking lot on Eldridge. They were all cats that wouldn’t have done well at the adoption centre while many of the others from these sites came in for adoption. There are a couple that stayed on my mind over the years, in particular an older tuxedo left behind in a large clothes factory near Canal Street after they shut down. She was hiding behind a box and very scared when we eventually found her in the deserted factory. She was quickly adopted by a woman who’d never had a cat before, and she kept in touch throughout the cat’s entire life. She said she had no idea how wonderful cats were until she adopted her, and she went on to adopt another cat from and become a real advocate. Another cat was Lily-on-the-Bowery, as we named her. Lily lived in a kitchen supply store her whole life. Many of the other stores on the street had Lily lookalikes, i.e. stunning long haired pastel calicos, and several of their kittens came in for adoption prior to the adults getting neutered. After much detective work we eventually found out that the original breeding adults lived in another kitchen supply store in the Bronx and we were able to get them neutered and stop the cycle 10 years in!

Since moving back I volunteered at the DSPCA, which is like a very small ASPCA, and now am with Cats Protection, which I feel is most akin to KK while they don’t have our own premises. I feed a very small colony in the centre of Dublin in derelict land behind a high fence. All the cats there have been neutered apart from the elderly mom cat that we call Lizzie who has eluded all attempts, but we’re not giving up! A couple of months ago I was feeding when a guy came over to ask if he could take a photo of them and he explained he had two black cats in NY that he adored (Lizzie and the other cats there are all black). I asked him where he got them from and he said KK on Union Square and we couldn’t believe the connection down to knowing their adoption rep, Kathy S! It’s small world where cat lovers are concerned.

I am very grateful to remain part of KK and its exceptional group of dedicated volunteers.

HEALING “MIRACLE,” THE CAT WITHOUT A NOSE

x

Carol has been rescuing since 2013, primarily in Flushing, Queens, NY

I was walking home one day on June 27, 2018, and saw a ridiculously injured kitten lying on the side of the street. I thought *she's dead*.

Found a plastic bag, wanted to take her somewhere to bury her.

To my surprise, she was still alive !!

Immediately I made an appointment to bring her to vet clinic the next day.

That night, I didn't sleep and checked on her every few minutes.

At that time, I call her Maggot kitten, 🤢 because so many maggots came crawling out from her belly wound, I

used a tweezer to tweeze away the maggot, but within minutes...new maggots kept crawling out...OMG !!!

The next day, without much hope, I went to the vet clinic.

I asked the vet, “Do you think she can be saved with injuries like this?”

Vet looked at me for 10 seconds, and he said, “I think so!!”

So I name this kitten MIRACLE 💕

From 6/28 to 8/15, I brought Miracle to the vet clinic every 2 days, so that the vet can clean her wounds and applied fresh medicine.

It was so heart warning to see her getting better & better each day.

She's fully healed now, although without a nose. The vet said it's not a problem.

She's extremely shy and afraid of strangers. I don't blame





her, she must have suffered horrific torture to have wounds like that.

Now she's with me for 2 years.

I didn't list her with any rescue groups, because I don't know if anyone would like to adopt a cat without a nose and SHY, whoever would love to adopt her needs to be super patient to slowly get her to trust you!

She's very mellow cat, gets along very well with my other 3 cats.

Between horror and hope is a rescuer. Please remember to say "thanks" when you see a rescuer. As many of us know, that little "meow" rescues "me," too.

Resources to Assist Rescuers

Help Donate Food and TNR Traps to Rescuers

[www.https://greatergood.com/](https://greatergood.com/)

Help Feral Cats: (Online Courses Available)

[www.http://animalallianceny.org/feralcats/](http://animalallianceny.org/feralcats/)

Advocate for Legislation to Support Animal Welfare, Local and National

<https://www.aspc.org/take-action/volunteer/aspc-advocacy-volunteer-opportunities>

RESCUING DURING COVID-19

Paula K.

Please See KittyKind's Facebook Page. "Brother 1" Needs Help! Fundraising Details are on Facebook.

When Emily A. moved back to Ireland, she asked me to keep an eye on a few of her store cats. I would stop by once a week with some treats or toys or catnip and just check on them and give them some attention. These two (always known as The Brothers) lived in the basement of vegetable distribution place on the lower east side. When the city started shutting down, I was worried the store was going to close. None of the workers seemed sure what was going to happen, so I started going down there daily to see. One morning I got there just as the owner was locking up. He had decided to close and was just going to leave the cats in there. I told him they could come stay with me while he was closed. He agreed, unlocked the door and Brother 1 came right over to me and I threw him in a carrier. But Brother 2 had climbed up into a dropped ceiling and wouldn't come down. We tried to reach him with a ladder but he kept dodging us. The owner agreed to come back in





two days to try again. We did this for a week – even borrowed a trap, but I set it badly and it didn't work. Finally, the owner said he couldn't come into the city anymore and Brother 2 was on his own. But he showed me a hole in the outside wall about the size of a grapefruit. I set a milk crate up under it so I could reach in from the outside and drop in dishes of food to try to keep him alive. A friend and I went down every other day and dumped cans into the hole. I rigged up a water dish that could be pulled in and out. This went on for TWO MONTHS and I

worried about him every day. Meanwhile Brother 1 adapted really quickly to being in a house and was living a life of luxury.

One day I was on my way home from a vet visit with one of my own cats and I stopped there to feed Brother 2. I was chatting with Misty, a homeless woman who's been living in front of the store with some others, and she told me that she'd seen the cat outside - on the single-story roof next door and even on the sidewalk. I had no idea he had an exit and I was even more worried about him. As we were chatting, I heard a "thump" behind me and saw a black flash out of the corner of my eye. Without even a conscious thought I shot my arm out and grabbed him. He had

jumped down from the roof and was preparing to make the jump into the hole in the wall. I practically tackled him as he fought me - I had him scuffed and I got him between my knees as I knelt on the sidewalk. Misty took off down the block to find a box for me to try to secure him. He was wiggling so much and there was no way to completely close the box so I went to Plan B. Somehow I got my cat out of her carrier, put her in the box and got Brother 2 into the carrier. Thankfully my cat froze and figured the box was a good place to be. Just as I was wondering how I





could possibly get both of them home, an empty cab turned the corner right where I was standing. Seeing any cab at all was so rare during the pandemic when no one was going anywhere! In any event, with great thanks to Misty, Brother 2 got to my house, safe and happy.

About two weeks after Brother 2 arrived I woke up one morning to find Brother 1 collapsed on the floor, panting and drooling. I rushed him to Blue Pearl where they diagnosed him with congestive heart failure. The vet and I agreed he should be put to sleep because he was in bad shape and this was not something that gets better. When they brought him in to me after working to stabilize him he had stopped panting, was alert and bright-eyed and

was purring so loud you could hear him across the room. The vet agreed that perhaps it wasn't his time quite yet and I brought him home and put him on heart meds. He's acting like nothing happened. I guess he decided he hasn't had enough of living in a real home yet so I'll just keep loving on him for as long as he's got. Thank goodness he wasn't in the closed store when this happened!

Both boys are officially retired from store duties now and will stay with me while Brother 1 is being treated for his heart condition.

TIMELY TIPS

Sonia Perez and Joyce Liang are the coordinators of the KittyKind Health Maintenance Group ("Meds"). They'd like to share tips on using masks and gloves now, and, later, with the KittyKind cats:

Gloves:

- (1) Pinch the outer base (near the wrist) of the first glove.
- (2) Peel the glove off, holding the removed glove in your other gloved hand.
- (3): While still holding the first glove in your remaining gloved hand, slide two fingers inside the other glove and peel it off.
- (4): You should now have the first glove that was removed inside the second glove, which should be inside out. Dispose of the "stuffed glove" properly in the trash.

Masks:

Please see the attached pdf of instructions on how to wear a face mask properly made by the CDC.

- 1) Wash hands. Distinguish which side of the fast mask is the front. The colored side must face away from you, and the stiff bendable edge is the top. The stiff bendable edge is the component meant to mold the shape of your nose.
- 2) Never touch the white side of the mask. Hold the mask by the ear loops.
- 3) Place the loop around each ear. Then pinch the bendable edge to the shape of your nose and along both sides of your face.
- 4) Pull the bottom of the mask below your chin.
- 5) When discarding the used face mask, remove each ear loop without touching the colored side of your mask and then into the trash. Wash hands.

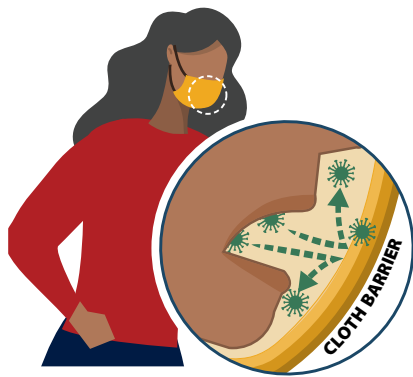
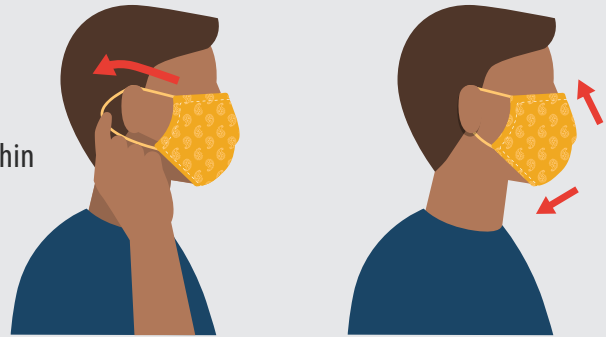
We miss you! Stay safe. Stay well.

How to Safely Wear and Take Off a Cloth Face Covering

Accessible: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

WEAR YOUR FACE COVERING CORRECTLY

- Wash your hands before putting on your face covering
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- Make sure you can breathe easily
- Do not place a mask on a child younger than 2



USE THE FACE COVERING TO HELP PROTECT OTHERS

- Wear a face covering to help protect others in case you're infected but don't have symptoms
- Keep the covering on your face the entire time you're in public
- Don't put the covering around your neck or up on your forehead
- Don't touch the face covering, and, if you do, clean your hands

FOLLOW EVERYDAY HEALTH HABITS

- Stay at least 6 feet away from others
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Wash your hands often, with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds each time
- Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available



TAKE OFF YOUR CLOTH FACE COVERING CAREFULLY, WHEN YOU'RE HOME

- Untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops
- Handle only by the ear loops or ties
- Fold outside corners together
- Place covering in the washing machine
- Wash your hands with soap and water



Cloth face coverings are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators, both of which should be saved for health care workers and other medical first responders.

For instructions on making a cloth face covering, see:

[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)