

DAKIN STORIES

Coming
Together to
Save Lives

DAKIN HUMANE SOCIETY · FALL/WINTER 2019



Message from Dakin's Executive Director



Dear Friend,

We'd like to introduce you to three exceptional animals in this issue of *Dakin Stories*; Ty, a sweet-spirited dog found in a near-death state, and a pair of cats named Marie and Squanchy, who also needed time, patience and love to regain their health.

Dakin Stories is published three times a year by the Development Office for donors who make an annual gift of \$50 or more, Leadership Society members, Guardian monthly supporters, and members of Dakin's Legacy Society.

Cover: Ty cuddles with his stuffed bear during his recovery.

Each faced adversity before finding the brighter futures that your support made possible. Your concern for animals like them, coupled with the talent, passion and dedication of our staff and volunteers, gave them the second chance they so desperately needed.

Their journeys took place behind the scenes, as do so many of our stories about animals who find loving companions after a lengthy recovery. These three stories you're about to read are not exceptions, they are the new norm in animal care at Dakin. For every bright-eyed, playful animal on the adoption floor, there are many more in foster homes, in offices or quarantine rooms receiving focused medical attention, as well as loving care from staff and volunteers.

Your compassion makes all these efforts possible. You had a hand in the amazing transformations each of these animals underwent, and you play a vital part in creating a loving community that supports animals and the people who care for them.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Dakin Stories*, and I invite you to help us shape future issues by taking a few minutes to visit the link noted below and participate in a survey. We'd like to know what types of stories you'd like us to share, and the way we bring them to you. Your opinion is important to us.

Sincerely,

Carmine DiCenso



Please let us know what you think.
Link to survey: <http://bit.ly/DakinS>

Coming Together to Save Lives



When Ty, an emaciated white and brown pit bull, arrived at Dakin in Springfield, his appearance was shocking. “I was the first person to see him,” remembers Dr. Rebecca Carroll. “He was unable to walk, and was literally starved. He couldn’t lift his head, and his body temp was approaching a fatal level.” At 21 pounds, he should have been nearly twice that weight.

But Dr. Carroll wasn’t giving up. “When I met him, I knew immediately that he was going to pull through because he had a presence about him, like he was saying ‘I’m still here.’ We don’t get wins all the time, but he looked like a dog that wanted to win as much as we wanted him to. He won every heart in this building.”

His enclosure was filled with soft bedding to cushion his bony frame. A gigantic stuffed teddy bear was added

to give Ty something to cuddle with and to make him feel less lonely when he was between staff and volunteer visits. Ty clung to it.

The Long Way Back

His treatments were extensive. Ty needed medications to battle intestinal inflammation, anemia, pressure sores and an early-stage upper respiratory infection. Heaters and blowers helped maintain his body temperature. He needed to be treated for parasites, diarrhea and other problems. Because he couldn’t walk, Ty was hoisted up by a towel under his chest.

But he was also lifted up by an incredible team of caregivers who saw a future for him as a beloved family pet, and fought relentlessly to making that happen. As a



Above: Ty's delicate state required intense care from Dakin's medical staff.

Right: Ty gets some rest and comfort with his beloved stuffed bear.

Below: Dr. Carroll enjoys Ty's unbridled affection.



Dakin supporter you were part of Team Ty.

The center of his treatment was to re-introduce him to food. Dr. Carroll notes, "He had to gain his body back slowly and healthily. Dogs that have been starved have to be fed slowly and purposefully."

What drove everyone to put forth such a huge effort to save Ty? "Because some dogs have hard luck and are still good dogs," Dr. Carroll replies. "The more of them we can treat, the better we can do for the community, the animal population, and the people whose lives who will be enriched by this animal. And that's thanks to people who believe in our mission. Their willingness to help lets us treat animals like Ty."

Ty Reconnects to the World

A week after arriving at Dakin, the gentle pup with the trusting eyes tackled a new adventure; foster care. Ann Hurlburt, a longtime Dakin foster, was tasked with feeding him small, frequent meals of high calorie food. She would be expected to monitor him closely.

"The first week or so the focus was on keeping him warm, breathing and walking," she remembers. "After that, when he really started recovering, he was just a joy to be around. Now he was noticing birds and bunnies, and he became obsessed with flies. He would catch and eat them, and he loved getting his feet wet in puddles. He gained sixteen pounds, his personality really bloomed, and he still needed his teddy bear."

A month after Ty entered foster care, a couple met the charismatic pup and instantly fell for him. "I leaned into the back seat of the car to say goodbye to him," Ann recalls, "and he just brushed me off by jumping into the front seat as if to say 'Time for another adventure! Bye bye!' That actually made it easier."

Ty's miraculous recovery touched everyone at Dakin and reinforced the important role that you play in his story... and so many others. With your gift, you are saving gentle souls like Ty and letting them bring love wherever they go.

When Trust Returns

"A good hunter," "friendly to one child in the family, shy with the rest," and "bullied by older cat." These were the notations in Marie's incoming profile. The 1½ year old cat was brought to Dakin because she had soiled every room in her house except the one belonging to the only person she wasn't afraid of.

"We're seeing an increasing amount of house soiling cats at Dakin, and we look for ways we can help them become successful in their next home," says Feline Success Coordinator Alanna Regan. Details about the cat's previous home are reviewed, especially concerning the location of the litter box, how often it was cleaned, and what type of litter was used. Alanna adds, "Felines can be very specific about their litter box needs."

"Marie was conflicted," says Alanna. "She wanted to be social, but was too scared to solicit attention." Alanna enrolled the striking brown tabby in the Jackson Galaxy Cat Pawsitive Pro (CPP) program, which builds feline confidence. But first Marie was relocated to the office of Digital Marketing Coordinator Danielle Cookish as a refuge from the bustling environment of the adoption floor.

Danielle studied CPP training methods, and knew to take it slow. "Days went by, then Marie offered slow blinks," she recalls. "One day, I felt a whisker graze my hand, and later a little nudge. Then she let me touch her head and rub her cheeks. I made sure to reinforce her



Thanks to your support, hard-to-place cats like Marie can find loving homes.

contact with the treats she enjoyed."

Adult cats at Dakin are usually here for about a month, but Marie needed more time. Cats like her require more resources from multiple departments, and a dedicated team to seek an appropriate home for an otherwise hard-to-place cat. Alanna notes, "Now other organizations reach out to us and ask for our behavior plans. Everyone who supports our efforts is now touching lives far beyond our community."

After six weeks in our care, Marie found a new home. Two days later her people sent an update. "Marie was already on their bed with them, soliciting attention and playing," remembers Danielle.

Years ago we saw a small number of cats with Marie's behavioral issues; now many need our care and guidance. Marie got a chance to turn her life around thanks to the generosity of people like you. She can't say thank you, but we can.

The Evolution of Shelter Medicine

A shelter veterinarian has to combine their focus on both an individual animal and the care of the entire population. Dakin's shelter veterinarians have implemented changes in the way animals in our care are handled, treated and prepared for adoption over the years. We talked with Dena Long, DVM, medical director at Dakin, and Executive Director Carmine DiCenso about how this role has evolved.

Q: How many veterinarians are on-staff at Dakin and what are their duties?

Dr. Long: I'm one of three shelter veterinarians at Dakin. One works full-time performing spay/neuter surgeries on pets that have homes, one also performs those surgeries part-time then also tends to shelter animals, and I concentrate on shelter animals while overseeing the vet staff. It was just 10 years ago that Dakin hired its first full-time veterinarian.



Q: Looking back 20 or 30 years ago, what was the focus for a shelter veterinarian at Dakin or at other shelters?

Carmine: Back then our animal population was higher and we had a larger percent of young and healthy animals. We were also a limited admission shelter, which meant we could restrict the number of animals brought to us, so vets were caring for gener-

ally healthy animals that were fast-tracked to the adoption floor. Their main focus was on things like vaccinations or spay/neuter surgery. When we launched our Springfield Adoption Center in 2009 and became an open admission shelter, we began to accept all cats, dogs and some small species. Now we see more animals with health or behavioral issues coming to our

door, and this creates more challenges for our shelter vets; they need to spend more time with these animals, there's more care involved, and more time in consultations and assessments.

Q: How does Dakin meet these challenges?

Carmine: Donor support has made all these incredible developments possible. Without it, we'd either have to return to a limited admission status or we would not be able to save as many animals as we do. These successes are shared with everyone who has supported us, and we hope they will continue this journey with us.

Q: How has Dakin's focus shifted as shelter medicine changed over the years?

Dr. Long: We used to exist because too many animals had no place to go. Now we exist to care for some animals that the average home can't care for.



Squanchy's Journey to Wellness

Squanchy was a resilient two-year old stray cat whose strength was tested when he was brought to Dakin after being attacked by a dog. He arrived in very rough shape, with several bodily injuries and multiple infected bite wounds of unknown origin.

"I gasped when I saw him," says Veterinary Technician Meg Delaney, who was on duty when Squanchy arrived. "He was lethargic and in so much pain. I didn't think his outcome would be good, but I still had hope."

Massachusetts state law requires that animals with wounds of unknown origin be quarantined for four months. This allows enough time for the rabies virus to be detected, in the rare event that it is present, and prevents outbreaks.

The handsome black and white cat was fitted with a cone collar to prevent him from licking the wounds that covered his undersized body. He was placed in a vacant ward at Dakin to begin both his quarantine and recovery.

Meg saw a lot of Squanchy and was struck by his outgoing, playful nature. She hoped that each day would bring her affectionate friend with the striking gold eyes



closer to a new life as someone's prized companion.

During his stay, Squanchy was neutered, received treatments for a limp, hair loss, skin issues and Feline Immunodeficiency virus (FIV+). There were 34 medical notations in his paperwork; most animals have maybe a dozen at most.

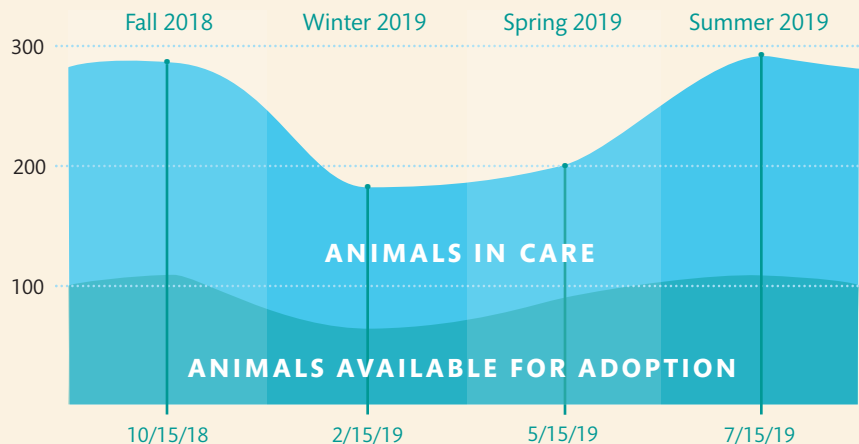
Each year Dakin receives dozens and dozens of cats that require a four-month rabies quarantine period, keeping them physically well and providing enrichment. By donating to Dakin, you allow animals like Squanchy a chance to embrace a warm and loving future.

Nine days after he went on the adoption floor, Squanchy found a terrific new person, and can now bask in the joy of having a home.

"If it weren't for our compassionate and generous donors, animals like Squanchy wouldn't have a positive outcome," says Meg. "I got to see his full transformation from day one to adoption day, and I feel lucky and thankful for the support we receive."



PAWS serves the most vulnerable animals that need extended care before adoption. Behind the adoption floor is a network of teams treating complex medical cases.





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We depend on you.*

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

"I feel very fortunate to be a part of the vibrant Pioneer Valley culture, and as a business owner I know how important it is to support other local businesses and organizations in order to keep the Valley happy and healthy. That's why Lucky's has, for several years, held holiday fundraisers for Dakin. Pets enrich the lives of so many in our community, so we especially want to support folks doing the work that helps make those connections."

Zach Torrin, owner of
Lucky's Tattoo & Piercing



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