

# DAKIN STORIES

Coming  
Together to  
Save Lives

DAKIN HUMANE SOCIETY · SPRING/SUMMER 2019



## Message from Dakin's Executive Director



*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: Persian cat undergoing sulfur dip at Dakin Humane Society.

Dear Friend,

In this issue of *Dakin Stories*, you'll read about animals who arrived here in need of significant medical attention. In each case, substantial resources were necessary to restore their health. With your help, these animals received round-the-clock care, repetitive treatments, endless lab tests... the list goes on.

More and more animals we receive have medical or behavioral conditions that require us to go above and beyond to help them. Because of this, we wanted to establish a program that would identify these needs and provide guidelines for care. That's why we created PAWS, the Program for Animal Wellness.

In the past, many of the animals brought to Dakin were young, healthy and quickly found homes. But there's been a noticeable shift in our animal population for the past several years. Dakin is seeing fewer animals who can immediately move to the adoption floor after arriving here, and more animals who need considerable time in our care before they can get on the road to adoption.

Together, we can support these lives that are worth saving. These are the most vulnerable animals that arrive here, and they usually don't have other options. Dakin will always accept an animal that comes to our door.

Because of your support, PAWS can focus on helping the neediest animals find refuge, preventing suffering when necessary, providing compassionate euthanasia when it's the most humane option, and offering animals life-saving treatment.

The road to creating a healthy and happy environment for animals can be long and challenging. Together, we can continue to face these challenges and create a humane community. Thank you for the role you play in that.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carmine DiCenso".

Carmine DiCenso





# Coming Together to Save Lives



*Vet tech Meg Delaney provides a shampoo and sulfur dip, and afterward, a cuddle (below).*

A PUREBRED PERSIAN CAT is distinctive for her long, luxurious fur and her flat face. But a fancy pedigree is no guarantee that she won't wind up in an animal shelter. Thus, begins the tale of eight Persians—five adults and three kittens—surrendered to Dakin when a local cat breeder became overwhelmed with the care of his cats.

Like many animals first arriving at Dakin, the Persians were in poor condition, suffering from bad colds and ringworm—a highly contagious fungal skin infection. Dakin's Supervising Veterinary Technician Mary Jane McGuire was up for the challenge. "We're really good at treating respiratory infections and ringworm," she says, "and it felt good to be able to provide life-changing care."

Dakin's technicians and animal caregivers set about administering antibiotics and twice-weekly shampoos and sulfur dips while also controlling the spread of disease. Any staff who handled the cats had to don disposable gowns, masks, gloves, and booties. The whole process of caring for the cats and their living quarters consumed two hours each day.

Dakin Veterinary Technician Lorie Benware was one of those charged with bathing the cats in strong-smelling sulfur dip. She says, "The kittens were easy to handle; they weren't bothered by being shampooed and dunked



*"It felt good to be able to provide life-changing care."*

in the sulfur. But the adults would try to climb up your shirt to get away!"

According to Mary Jane, Dakin's approach to care is holistic. Between the countless rounds of medications, dips, and tests, gowned volunteers visited the cats to provide playtime and to ward off boredom. "Having that enrichment really got them through it," says Veterinary Technician Meg Delaney. "They were far happier to see the volunteers approach their cages than us!"

Despite the staff's best efforts, Abner, the weakest of the three kittens, failed to thrive. He simply could not gain weight or recover from the respiratory disease that gripped him. Finally, the staff had to relieve his suffering. Says Mary Jane, "It's part of our reality that, even though we provide high quality care, some just don't make it. In spite of all we were doing, Abner was suffering. We wanted to be able to offer some compassion and dignity at the end of his life. We carry a lot of weight and sadness in making these kinds of decisions, but we get through it knowing that we're going to help the next animal that comes along."

After weeks of care, the surviving seven Persians received their clean bills of health and headed home to waiting adopters.

Looking back, Meg recalls, "When I started here in 2013, we wouldn't have been able to save these cats. There were so many of them, that our resources were stretched thin. Where we were then versus where we are now is like night and day. We saved them!"



*Multiple fungal cultures were taken to monitor infection during treatment.*

*Scarlet (left) and Vern, during their 6-week recovery period at Dakin. Thanks to you, both have found new beginnings.*



It is your support of Dakin's work to reduce our community's cat population—and to help us provide routine and complicated veterinary care to animals in need—that makes this victory possible.



## Snoopy's Fighting Chance



*Snoopy being  
x-rayed and (below)  
on exam table.*

Lorie Benware. She recalls, "He was lying on his side on the exam table when they first brought him in. Everyone was so sad, because we were afraid there was no hope for him. I wanted to help save him."

Their first night together was a struggle. "He needed constant care. I had to turn him over every two hours," Lorie remembers. "He needed to be hand fed because he couldn't lift his head, and I gave him water through a syringe. That lasted

MARCIA HAWKINS has a big heart. She cares for a friend, Yari, who is living with Lou Gehrig's disease. And Marcia loves dogs, especially Yari's dog, Snoopy.

A big-eyed black and white Chihuahua, Snoopy usually charms his friends and family by jumping in their laps and shaking his belly to make them laugh. But two days after Christmas, Snoopy was attacked by another dog, leaving him in terrible distress.

Fearing that Snoopy was dying and knowing that his family was in a tough spot and unable to afford veterinary care, Marcia raced to find help. That's when she reached out to Dakin. "I remember the staff there saying 'this is what we're here for' and thinking, 'he's going to get some help!'"

Because Snoopy's condition was touch and go, he spent time in foster care with Dakin Veterinary Technician

a couple of days until he was strong enough to eat by himself."

Lorie used her kitchen sink for hydrotherapy to relieve Snoopy's pain and swelling. Says Lorie: "He started to actually feel good during the hydrotherapy. He looked at me with so much love."



*"He needed to be hand-fed  
because he couldn't lift his head."*



*The dynamic duo:  
Snoopy and his foster,  
Lorie Benware.*

Snoopy soon began to antagonize Lorie's other pets. She knew he would be happier as an only dog.

Although Dakin often returns animals like Snoopy to their original families for follow up care, we all agreed that Snoopy would be more successful in a new home. While his family loved him, they understood that Snoopy's needs would be better served by someone who could concentrate on his ongoing medical care. Snoopy now lives with his new family in Chicopee.

"Yari said to say 'I love you' for caring for Snoopy," reports Marcia. "She and her family were so happy to hear of his new home. I think the right people showed up at the right time."

Once a charmer; always a charmer. Snoopy bonded quickly to Lorie, crying when she left the room, gazing soulfully into her eyes, and showering her with kisses. The temptation to adopt the little dog was strong, but spirited

people. By donating to Dakin, you helped us save Snoopy. Your support of Dakin's efforts, doesn't just help an animal. You also help the circle of people around the animal, sometimes even creating a new family in the process.



*Volunteer playing with cats in  
Leverett shelter.*



*Dogs enjoying a stroll  
at Greenfield shelter*

## **Celebrating 50 Years of People and Pets Together**

*Since we opened in 1969, you have been by our side, building a future for animals and the people who love them that is kind and compassionate.*

*Together, let's continue the journey.*



# Tiny Miracles

IT WAS A WINTRY THURSDAY morning in January when a distressed family rushed their two-year-old calico cat, Tiny, through Dakin's doors. Tiny was trying to deliver kittens, but the first one was stuck in her birth canal, a deadly condition known as dystocia. Dakin veterinarian, Sherri Therrien, already starting the day's fully booked surgical schedule, dropped everything to try to save Tiny's life with emergency surgery.

Although Dr. Therrien feared that Tiny's kittens had already perished, she committed herself to at least saving Tiny. As the surgery began, though, it became clear that all four kittens were alive... but in need of urgent care to be saved.

With quick precision, Dr. Therrien delivered the kittens into the waiting hands of Dakin staff. Although the kittens were limp and lethargic, the staff stepped in to rub them and gently remove fluid from their noses to allow them to breathe. Staff then placed the kittens under heated blankets and administered corn syrup to their gums to give them an energy boost.

Once Tiny had recovered from anesthesia, staff returned her kittens to her. But the young mother was having none of it and ultimately rejected her kittens. Cue Foster Care Coordinator, Megan Tolpa. Megan quickly reached out to her volunteers for help.

With your support, Dakin made sure the kittens' foster parents had the food, medicine, and supplies they'd need to care for the infant kittens during their round the clock vigil of care and feeding. You helped us provide essentials like formula, fluids, bottles, disinfectants, baby wipes, heating disks and more.

Although Tiny—now spayed—didn't have a knack for motherhood, she did get to go back to her grateful family. Her kittens are thriving in their foster homes, and soon they will meet the people who will fall in love and take them home for good.

Like many of the animals that arrive at Dakin's doors, Tiny was in desperate need of life-saving intervention. And like many families, Tiny's trusted us with her care. Your generous support not only saved Tiny, but also put four intrepid kittens on the road to adoption.



*Seconds count as staff members revive Tiny's kittens. Your support helped them beat the odds and thrive.*



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*"My true passion in life is animals, especially cats! Volunteering at Dakin lets me fulfill that passion, and my employer, Travelers, takes my contribution one step further by making a donation to Dakin through its Volunteer Rewards Program."*

*—Linda Phelps,  
Volunteer and  
Guardian Society  
Member*

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