

LAS CRUCES SUN-NEWS

On the Positive Side : Many thanks to those who saved a kitty named Cupcake

By Elizabeth Baca

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We named her Cupcake because she's so sweet.

Cupcake came to us as a stray kitty with a severe injury to her tail and bottom area. Our attempts to treat her on our own did not work and her injury became worse.

After a trip to the emergency animal clinic on a Sunday, we were informed that surgery and tail amputation was necessary and infection had set in. We had just enough money (\$140) to get two antibiotic shots and a test for feline leukemia, which thankfully, came out negative. We were advised that the bill to continue with surgery would be approximately \$1,000, which did not include possible boarding or after-care. Our attempt to qualify for Credit Care fell through, along with another attempt under a local program.

We were due to leave that Wednesday evening for an emergency trip to Oklahoma and enduring a financial hardship because of it, on top of a plumbing emergency. I struggled to figure out what to do to save this sweet kitty with such limited time. We had decided that if she survived, we would keep her and give her a good home.

Putting her to sleep was not an option, but a possibility that I would try my hardest to avoid. I decided at that time, to forego my emergency trip to Oklahoma. I had \$300 I took from our rent money to put towards Cupcake's surgery and would go to a loan shark if needed, for the rest.

After numerous calls to different local vets and community groups, with no luck, I received a call from a wonderful man by the name of Frank Bryce, with the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico. He was a godsend. Frank gave me so much critical advice and put me in contact with a number of individuals who could possibly help.

With his information, I made contact with Michelle Corella (NMSU Feral Cat Management Program) and Jean Gilbert (HSSNM's Cans for Critters) and the life-saving process quickly began. The next two days were a whirlwind of phone calls, e-mails and text messages. I hope I don't forget to recognize anyone's help. Gilbert offered to pay the cost of the initial office visit needed to re-evaluate Cupcake, and posted her pictures online for possible donations.

Corella got in contact with Calista Animal Hospital.

On my way to sign on an extremely high-interest loan for \$500, which would be added to the \$300, I received a call from Corella with amazing news: Dr. Calista agreed to perform the surgery at a discounted rate, and she offered to keep Cupcake until Monday so I wouldn't have to cancel my emergency trip to Oklahoma.

Dr. Calista and her staff were so caring and accommodating during this whole process. They gave me regular updates on Cupcake's status post-surgery while I was in Oklahoma. Michelle also kept me informed with vital information and updated me when they ran into an issue prior to surgery. Cupcake needed a total blood transfusion due being very anemic. She's a fighter and she pulled through everything.

During all of this, a generous person came forward and offered to cover the remaining balance once all donations were made. This person chose to remain anonymous, as did the other donors. Not sure how to ever thank them properly.

Cupcake came home Monday afternoon and is enjoying being spoiled.

She didn't much like the bed we got her, and preferred to sleep on the floor. But she loves it now and also hops into bed with us at times or with our daughter. She enjoys playing with our daughter's hair in the middle of the night.

I told Michelle that angels DO exist — this has certainly been proven.

A number of them came down and helped save a precious kitty's life. We can never thank each of them enough.

Elizabeth Baca is an animal advocate and hopes more will join in the fight to protect God's little gifts. She may be reached via HSSNM President Frank Bryce at fvbryce@hotmail.com.