



Forgotten Cats

@ForgottenCatsInc · Nonprofit Organization

Learn More

forgottencats.org

Home

About

Events

More ▾

Liked

Message



Forgotten Cats

December 11, 2020 ·

Feel Good Friday!!! Check out this story about the amazing journey of Maude the cat and her happy reunion with her family!

M&T Bank Kitty Hits the Jackpot
by Collette L. O'Neal

To an average person seven miles doesn't seem that far of a distance, but for a cat that's quite a journey; especially when crossing state lines, darting through traffic on a major highway, and surviving on one's own for almost half a year is involved.

On May 5, during the middle of COVID-19 lockdowns and stay-at-home orders, Mike McCallum woke up at his home in Chadds Ford, PA to the realization that his cat Maude didn't come into the kitchen for breakfast like she does every morning.

After searching Maude's usual spots in the house, Mike and his husband checked their security camera and realized she had slipped out the night before. Despite not having a collar or ID tag, Mike was





As soon as he was able, Mike put up lost pet flyers in his neighborhood and posted on social media sites in the hopes that someone would notice her. Most importantly, though, he made sure that the contact info on Maude's microchip was registered and up to date.

In the meantime Mike said he tried his best to remain optimistic because Maude already had street smarts from being a stray cat in New Jersey where he and his partner originally adopted her from. "She's an expert fly catcher at home so my hope was that while she was out on her own she would be good at catching insects and other prey to survive until someone found her," he said.

That first month she was missing, Mike went out at night with a flashlight calling her name and left food out on the front porch. He also followed up on a few calls he'd received about possible sightings.

After four months, though, he started losing hope that she'd ever come home. Instead of thinking the worst, he focused on the idea that maybe someone had taken her in and just didn't get her scanned because of the COVID-19 restrictions making it difficult to get to a vet or a shelter.

"She's a very friendly cat and is very trusting of people. Whenever we have guests over she loves to come greet everyone, get pets and be a part of the social gathering," Mike said. "So I knew if someone found her and loved her, she'd be okay." Little did he know that by this point not only had she survived on her own, but Maude made her way to Wilmington, DE.

On October 5, Forgotten Cats volunteer Kathie was at the Brandywine PetSmart dropping off newly adopted cats for the organization. While waiting for the adopters to arrive, she was told by a volunteer with the Delaware Humane Association that the store received a call about a friendly but scared cat hiding near the Concord Mall.

After making a few calls of her own, Kathie immediately headed over to the location. When she got to the nearby M&T Bank, she could hear a small, skinny cat crying piteously from under the brick building. "I could tell she was a lost cat because she didn't quite know what to do," Kathie said. "She wanted to trust people and when I put food down she would come forward but dart back and then come forward again. I slowly dropped the food closer and closer to me until she eventually ate out of my hand."

Now having a general understanding of the situation, Kathie had to come up with a game plan. Since she hadn't expected to do trapping that day, she had to leave the cat there until she could come back later that night with all her equipment.

Luckily, not only was Maude still at the same spot at 11pm when Kathie returned, she was more than happy to be caught. "She was just so scared because of all the noise and was so ravenous that when I put the food in the trap she hurried right in," Kathie said. "She





Kathie then arranged for the cat to stay with Sue, who is a fellow Forgotten Cats supporter with lots of experience. Within the next few days she was taken to a local vet to get vaccinated and treat her severe diarrhea and mild skin issues with medication. While there, she was scanned for a microchip, but the number written down by the staff was accidentally missing a digit. Kathie also looked at lost pet websites in the Delaware area to see if she could find this sweet, cross-eyed kitty's family, but nothing turned up.

Unfortunately, Maude's posts were limited to Pennsylvania. After spending 10 days with Sue recuperating and regaining weight, Kathie picked up the cat and took her to Forgotten Cats' Trainer, PA location for formal assessment. She was re-scanned and to everyone's delight the full microchip number had good news for them. They now knew the cat's name was Maude and she had been missing for five months; within two hours she was reunited with her owner.

For Kathie it was a special moment to be a part of the full-circle experience, but she knows there was a dedicated support system beside her. "I think the outstanding thing in this case is the efficiency and teamwork it took to get Maude home," she said. "I may have coordinated it, but there were lots of other people involved that got her registered in the system, got her to the vet and into a secure environment."

Though, the most influential people that helped get Maude back to her daddies and doggie siblings was the out-of-town couple staying at the nearby Days Inn hotel who spotted her, gave her food, and called the PetSmart that unbeknownst to them had two animal rescue partners on site.

Overall, Kathie said Maude's rescue reinforced what she already knew but with a slightly improved perspective that everyone can benefit from. If a pet goes missing near a state border, she said it's vital that owners provide information in both states through social media and official lost pet websites. Even giving nearby shelters in the neighboring state a quick call can be helpful, that way they know to keep a look out for the pet when new arrivals are brought in.

Once Maude was home, Mike and his husband set her up in a spare bedroom to get her accustomed to being in her old territory again. As soon as they opened the crate she was her loving self, and within a few weeks she was back to drinking from the faucet, sleeping in her favorite places, and grooming her doggie sibling.

Although escaping again is not something the family constantly worries about, her wanderlust is something that keeps everyone on their toes now that Maude has settled into her habits again. "She's always had it in her to want to go outside, and I think that stems from her being an outdoors cat originally," Mike said. "So now I find myself having a routine of making sure she's here before I go to bed, when I wake up in the morning, and before I leave for work."





involved in making sure she was safe. He knows without them and a small piece of technology she never would have come back. The most important lesson he says he learned, though, is to never give up hope.

Now as she trots into the kitchen for her food every morning and sleeps on his bed every night, he is reminded of the kindness that random couple showed and the feeling he had when his husband walked through the front door with their beloved Maude in her carrier.

"I had a knot in my stomach ever since she left. It's that feeling of the unknown, and to get her back pretty much unscathed was such a relief. It was a moment of joy because after five months I thought I would never see her again. It was a great day."



You and 308 others

31 Comments 28 Shares



Love



Comment



Share

Most Relevant



Write a comment...

