

Tiny Tim rescued from Orange Park air conditioner

Puppy now in a foster home awaiting adoption

By Kyla Woodard
For Clay Today

ORANGE PARK – With the help of one vigilant phone call and two heroic officers, a tiny puppy's life was saved.

Clay County Animal Services recently responded to a residential call regarding an eight-month-old stray puppy in a dire situation, and weeks later, officers say the puppy is on the road to recovery.

Given the name Tiny Tim, residents found the dog trapped underneath an AC compressor in an Orange Park backyard.

"Upon further inspection, we found that he was, in fact, stuck under one of the pipes, and he could not move freely in and out," said Animal Control Officer Kaleb Varady.

Tiny Tim mistakenly went under the compressor after entering the open gate in the resident's backyard. Varady said the residents claimed to hear strange whining noises from under the machine, and went outside to look for themselves. What they found required immediate action.

"They didn't know he was in the backyard. He could have very well perished underneath that air conditioner system because they don't have pets," said Animal Control Officer Kelly Minix.

Varady said he and Minix went to the home, hoping to rescue the vulnerable puppy. After grappling with the best possible ways to get the dog out safely, Varady and Minix used a leash to secure his front. Minix pulled while Varady slowly pushed him out of the narrow space.

"We were able to get him out slowly be-

cause we didn't know about any injuries at the time," Varady said.

Upon freeing the pup, Minix said that, regardless of his pain, Tiny Tim responded kindly and had a friendly spirit, immediately taken to being swaddled in a towel like a baby.

"Some dogs are in fear, or they're in pain, but he wagged his tail. He was ready to be picked up. He was ready to go," Minix said.

Minix said dogs are placed in a kennel on the back of their truck. However this case was a little different. With Tiny Tim being so fragile and the extreme heat, the officers said they held him in the cab.

"He fell asleep in my arms," said Varady.

Tiny Tim suffered a pelvic fracture, which Varady said will heal with time and rest.

With the number of tragedies they experienced, the officers said they were glad with the positive outcome. Getting frequent calls daily, the officers said they have seen some of the worst. But the stories of survival and recovery are what keep them going.

"You see them prosper and get better over time, and that's always something I love to see," Varady said. "It shows that you save this animal from a certain situation, and how much they've grown, and you end up seeing them when they get adopted. So, personally ... I like to see that."

After being immediately scanned, they realized Tiny Tim wasn't microchipped. He was placed on a three-day stray hold at the shelter to await the arrival of his owners.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CLAY COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES
Animal control officer Kaleb Varady and Kelly Minix pose with Tiny Tim, who was trapped inside an air conditioner in Orange Park.

However, the owners never retrieved him.

Tiny Tim is in a foster home, awaiting his adoption date.

"He's in a foster home to get him out of the shelter environment. Where he can be in a home that [has] one-on-one care, around loving, caring people all the time," Varady said.

Varady said the foster home does get the first pick on the pup. If the foster home doesn't want to adopt, he will return to the shelter for an open adoption.

Using this story as an example, Minix urged pet owners to get their pets microchipped or tagged. She said that is a cru-

cial step to help get stray animals back with their owners.

"Instead of being put in foster care, he could've been home and at the vet's office with his owners. He's obviously owned by someone they just did not take those precautions," Minix said.

Clay County Animal Services continues to spend its time being a voice for those who can't speak. And they hope that the general public will do the same.

"If you see something, say something. We can't help and respond if we don't know. So, be aware of your surroundings," Minix said.