



Ottawa Humane Society

MEDIA RELEASE

Humane Society has own holiday miracle at Christmas time

OTTAWA, Ont. (27 November, 2003) – An older brown tabby cat will be spending Christmas in the lap of luxury, after an amazing story that began more than six months ago when he was surrendered to the Ottawa Humane Society.

Max's story began last April, when he was surrendered to the OHS by his owner. The owner had allergies and could no longer keep the cat. Max came in with a few disadvantages: he was an older cat, he was badly in need of dentistry, and he did not cope well with being in a shelter environment. It quickly became apparent that without special care, Max would not be a good candidate for adoption.

Wanting to give Max the best possible chance at finding a new loving home, OHS staff started things off by arranging for the cat to have dentistry performed on his teeth. Max was then placed into one of the OHS's over 100 foster homes, where he stayed for more than a month to recover from the dentistry and to adjust to being away from his initial home.

Upon returning to the OHS, Max remained in the shelter's adoption ward for close to two months, where he waited—somewhat impatiently—for someone to take him home. In early September, Max lucked out and was adopted by Dave and Marie Currie. The Curries had recently lost their cat, Handsome, to cancer, and were looking to fill a void in their lives. Mr. Currie, who is retired, first saw Max on the Humane Society's website, and came down to the shelter immediately to meet the cat. Mr. Currie says he was immediately taken by the cat's character and also felt badly for the cat, who was competing with dozens of younger cats and kittens to find a home. "I knew he was just the right cat," says Mr. Currie. It was a perfect match.

Unfortunately, Max's good luck took a bad turn when he became gravely ill almost three weeks after he was adopted. Mr. Currie rushed his new pet to a veterinary clinic, where he was told that the cat would need exploratory surgery to determine what was wrong, but that because of Max's age and because the problem was unknown, a positive outcome could not be guaranteed. "It was déjà-vu," said Mr. Currie. "When he got sick, Max was showing many of the same symptoms that Handsome had."

Once apprised of the cat's history, the veterinarian contacted the Humane Society, who offered to humanely euthanize the cat at the shelter. Mr. Currie said that he and his wife had gone

through so much with their previous cat, he just couldn't face the emotional issue. He agreed to have the cat returned to the shelter and signed ownership of the cat back over to the Humane Society.

At this point, Max's nine lives were quickly running out, but once again, he got lucky. Not willing to give up so quickly on a cat who had already been through so much, and recognizing how attached his new owners had become to the animal, OHS staff decided to try to stabilize the cat over the weekend. The Humane Society contacted the original veterinarian, who provided advice on how to manage the cat's care. "This cat, and the Curries, had all been through so much," says Cathy Leclair, OHS shelter worker. "We just wanted to give them all another chance."

Mr. Currie returned to the OHS the following Monday, having barely been able to eat or sleep all weekend. He expected to be told that the cat had been euthanized. Instead, he was greeted by a subdued Max, who was still hanging on. Mr. Currie was ecstatic. OHS staff cautioned that the cat was still seriously ill and that he should remain at the OHS until his condition stabilized. Several days later, Max was looking much better, and Mr. Currie, assuming the role of "foster caregiver," took the cat home. Having Mr. Currie act as a foster caregiver allowed the OHS to remain responsible for Max's medical care and expenses while the cat recuperated and in case the cat's condition suddenly deteriorated again.

In late October, Max was finally deemed "out of the woods" and the Curries resumed full ownership of their beloved pet. Today, Mr. Currie says Max is living the life of Riley. "You would never know that he had been through such an ordeal," he says. "They're calling him 'Miracle Max'" at the shelter!" Mr. Currie has nothing but glowing comments to say about the staff at the OHS. "They're the reason he's still here," he says.

Bruce Roney, OHS Executive Director, says that the Society goes as far as it can to help all the animals that come into its care, although resource constraints limit what can be done for each animal. "We certainly wish that all of our stories could have such a happy ending!"

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A word about the Ottawa Humane Society:

The Ottawa Humane Society is a registered charity founded in 1888. The Society works in and with the community to provide leadership in the humane treatment of all animals, to address the causes of animal suffering, to encourage people to take responsibility for their animal companions, and to provide care for animals who are neglected, abused, exploited, stray or homeless.