



Double edition newsletter, thanks for the stories, fully included!

# CAAN Connection



promoting programs that keep animals out of the pounds

Community Animal Allies of Niagara

Winter 2015, Volume 7, Issue 1

[www.caan-catmobile.org](http://www.caan-catmobile.org)

**DEDICATED TO SOME OF OUR  
FRIENDS, THANKS EVERYONE  
FOR SHARING YOUR STORY.  
TIME, LOVE, COMPASSION**

**DATES TO REMEMBER:**

Sunday November 22, 2015 The St. Catharines Santa Clause Parade, The CatMOBILE and furry friends walking

**HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS**

at Court Animal Hospital 10-4p daily  
Friday NOV 27 to Sun NOV 29 and  
Friday DEC 4 to Sun DEC 6

**JANUARY 17, 2016 the CAAN Dinner**

and silent auction fundraiser , buffet dinner, penny table, at Club LaSalle, St. Catharines, tickets available at Court Animal Hospital

## A Story about Herc

It was a hot afternoon, Labour Day weekend, we were working a big yard sale fundraiser in Ridgeway. Lisa got a phone call from Maria, a friend of CAAN ... "a lady here has found a litter of kittens, she has been watching for hours and the mother has not been seen. They are crying weakly and we think they are in trouble".

A half hour later, Maria and the lady arrived with 3 kittens in a box – about 2 weeks old, cold and wet, clearly dying. Lisa and I flew into the house with them, quickly rinsed them in warm water to remove gunky layers of urine and other cold wet sticky residue, wrapped them in warm towels and started drying them with warm air from hair dryers. As we worked, we realized to our horror that what appeared to be a layer of dirt was actually a thick layer of maggots which completely encrusted the babies – they were being literally eaten alive. The maggots had eaten their way into the babies' anuses and through the skin in spots. We placed a call to Dr. Julia who, by lucky chance, was at the Court Animal Hospital that afternoon. Once the babies were completely dry, we gave them each a small feeding of very diluted formula, and I jumped into the car with them and headed for St. Catharines.

Dr. Julia is no stranger to the art of saving babies who are almost beyond saving. She was all set up and ready when I arrived, and she quickly instructed me on what we needed to do. We sat there, she and I, wearing magnifying headsets and wielding tweezers . Hour after hour we picked maggots out of wounds and dumped them into a bowl of alcohol. We dripped drops of lidocaine to numb the pain and we dripped drops of wound flush to draw the maggots out. At intervals we took breaks to give the babies some fluids and nourishment, and then went back to picking ..... and we picked and we picked until the maggots were all gone.

In retrospect, it is one of those things that would make you say EWWW I could not do that, it would give me nightmares. When you are faced with it, though, you just do it without thinking because it has to be done, little lives are at stake. What the babies are enduring is a thousand times worse than anything we have to endure while trying to help them. And OH the relief when they are warm and dry and fed and asleep wrapped in warm fleeces. It can reduce you to tears, thinking about what might have been if they had not been found in time..... and thinking about all those who are NOT found.....continued on page 2



**CARING ENOUGH TO SHOW UP  
MEANS SO MUCH**

# fostering, socializing, relocating, adopting, all are so vital. to see them and be their lifeline!

I took them home that night, snuggled together in warm fleeces in a large carrier, and began a 3-hour cycle of feeding around the clock by syringe. After 2 days it was becoming clear that the smallest baby, little Monkey, was failing. The maggots had done too much damage, and there was nothing we could do to repair it. His little body didn't have the strength to fight, and we had to gently euthanize him on Tuesday morning. It was heartbreaking that we couldn't save him, but at least we could stop any further suffering.

The other two, fluffy tabby "Herc" and black-and-white "Oreo Cookie" seemed to be fighting off their nasty beginnings. Their beautiful blue eyes opened a week after their rescue, and they were eating well, gaining weight, starting to climb around a bit. Then my sweet Cookie stopped eating suddenly ... no interest at the 4 am feeding, too tired. At 7 am – still no interest, very lethargic. By 8 am I was on the phone to Dr. Julia, and by 10 am we were in the clinic and she was sadly saying, "We have to let her go Ronni. there's nothing we can do to help her." There was internal damage from the maggots that was showing up finally, too much for her body to overcome, and she was too young and too small for us to fix it. All we could do was to gently euthanize her, to put a stop to further suffering.

Mighty Herc has continued to fight, and grow, and is beating the odds. He went through a nasty couple of weeks when his genitals became extremely red and swollen with what appeared to be a bacterial infection. At Dr. Julia's recommendation, we did itty bitty sitz baths with Epsom salts at every feeding which helped keep the swelling down and ease any discomfort, and liberal smearings of Manuka honey helped fight off the infection. Good food and strong probiotic supplements have remained a major part of his ongoing treatment, and he now seems to have recovered completely. As of this writing, he is 7 weeks old, eating big boy food, now using a kitty litter box, and playing rowdy with older, bigger foundlings. There are always always always other foundlings.

Herc is an easy going cutie pie, loves everybody including dogs, people and other cats. The only thing he likes better than rowdy playing is snuggly cuddling. He has a loving family waiting for him as soon as he has had his first vaccination and a clean bill of health from his Dr. Julia, hopefully in another week or two.

Ronni Dingwall

Herc

**Thank You Thank You**



**Thank You  
Thank You**



Mel and Herc



Nikki and the kittens and Nikki helping Mr Fluffy with the assissi loop healing too



Board Members: Ronni Dingwall, Dr. Julia Murray, Janet Campbell , Barb Dvernechuk  
and welcome to Nancy Little and Lisa Hueston

FROM THE NO KILL ADVOCACY CENTRE:

WE ADVOCATE TNR (TRAP NEUTER RETURN) TO REDUCE COMPLAINTS BETWEEN CATS AND HUMANS AND TO

STOP THEIR KILLING IN SHELTERS OUR GOAL IS NOT AND NEVER WAS 'NO MORE FERAL CATS'

OUR GOAL IS NO MORE KILLING OF FERAL CATS.

Evie , Ebony, and  
Emma below

are three sisters

## **we are all looking for a home**



Kitkat



Goliath



Mittens



Butch



Teddy

**Thank-YOU** the gift of life  
the gift of life

life      **Thank-YOU** Thanks

**Thank-YOU**

IN THE NIAGARA PENINSULA

ABOUT 5,000 CATS GET DISPLACED FROM THEIR HOMES EACH YEAR. MOST OF

THESE CATS AND KITTENS DO NOT FIND NEW HOMES AND ARE EUTHANIZED.

# Thank You Thank You

**all volunteers , supporters**  
 our annual Fall Bazaar  
 organizer Nancy and the  
 grandkids, Janet and the  
 grandkids and friends of the  
 grandkids, Nada, Isobel,  
 Sue, Ronni, Lucy, Denis,  
 Noella, Julia and the  
 grandkids, and all our  
 supporters and  
 mike the T-rapper, Nikki,  
 Melanie, Tovah, Paula, Mel  
 and Mel  
 as always Donna and Dale  
 hosts ( and staff) at  
 Pet Valu Glendale  
 adoptathons

Niagara South Mobile Veterinary Services

Niagara Community Foundation, Let Petslive fund

Dr. Julia Murray,everybody at Court Animal Hospital

**Thank you CatTIP supporters**  
**Court Animal Hospital**  
**Pet Valu Pendale**  
**Artistic Impressions**  
**Ruffins. Hartzell Rd**  
**Water Superstore**  
**Global**

money raised in our tips cans goes toward the spay/neuter of our community cats

Thank You

# Thank You Thank You Thank You Thank You

**all volunteers , supporters**



# Thank You

# Thank You

thank you thank you

thank you **Erin** for  
 collecting food for your  
 birthday wishes to  
 donate to the cats

the colonies in our care at Charmin's Place are doing well  
**WISH LIST**  
 friskies wet canned cat food towels and blankets

**Thank You**  
**Thank You**  
**Barn program**  
 thank you thank you  
 you  
**thank you**

# fostering, socializing, relocating, adopting, all are so vital. to see them and be their lifeline!

## Miss Clover

This is a sad story with a happy ending. In the summer four cats were found stuffed in boxes and left behind Court Animal Hospital. Their fur was matted, several needed medical care and they were traumatized from the ordeal.

Community Animal Allies of Niagara (CAAN) took on the responsibility of caring for these cats until permanent homes could be found. After several weeks of being socialized at the clinic they were ready to find new homes. But who wants an adult cat? That is where this story has a happy ending.

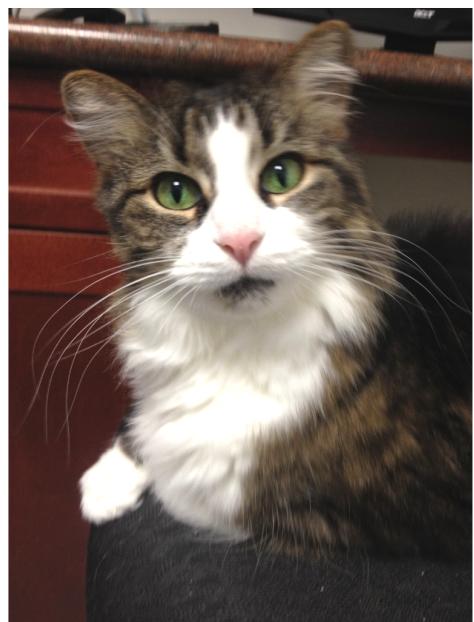
A young single mom and her 3 year old daughter were looking to add a cat to their home. They heard about the abandoned cats and came to the clinic to meet them. It was obvious right away that Miss Clover would make a good addition to their family.

Miss Clover quickly settled in and loves to be brushed and listen to stories when the Mom reads to the little girl at bed time.

The mother has asked "Why would anyone abandon such a great cat?" In the society we live in why would anyone abandon any animal when there are so many other options? But unfortunately it continues to happen. Miss Clover got a second chance and a forever home because CAAN was there to provide emergency care for her. Goliath and Hecate are adult male cats that were found with Miss Clover. Both males remain at the clinic waiting to be adopted. Hopefully by spreading the word we can find forever homes for them before Christmas.

(Clover was adopted by Lindsay and Emma, Thanks **Kim Epple** for the story)  
And Hecate has now been adopted.

**Thanks** the gift of life  
thanks Lindsay and Emma



**Thanks** the gift of life  
thanks Kim for sharing



**Thanks** the gift of life thanks Carol

Received January 24, 2015

I just wanted to let you know that my two sweet kitties that I adopted in Nov 2011 just celebrated their 4th birthday this month. They are honestly the cutest cats I've ever owned. They are so different in personalities but they love being together. All the best to you, from Sugar, Spice and Carol Shore, in St.Catharines.

Happy Birthday to Sugar and Spice, thanks Carol

# fostering, socializing, relocating, adopting, all are so vital. to see them and be their lifeline! and fundraising too

It was a hot and humid Labour Day Weekend for our second garage sale of the summer held in Ridgeway. Donna and Dale were wonderful hosts and with Lisa's help got everything set up before the St. Catharines crew (Denis with a truckload, Nancy, Piper, Chelsea and myself with another truckload) pulled in. Considering we did not have a lot of big ticket items we did fairly well, raised a total of \$920+ \$190+ (\$125 towards the kittens care) Thank goodness the chip wagon next door was closed, less calories consumed but a lovely covered picnic area that we could sit under and sell our baked items and preserves.

Kim's Carrot Cake Jam and Peach Salsa were big hits, we sampled them both. Thank you to all who helped at the sale, donated items and baked goods and thank you to those that bought and supported the sale. The baked stuff always sells well and is a good income generator so if there are any bakers out there willing to donate their wares the next sale will be in the spring!!

It was a day dodging wasps and trying to keep cool but worth the effort knowing that the money will help our furry friends. That weekend 3 abandoned kittens (that's another story, p.5) were found that needed our help, so our hard work was put directly to use.

See you at the next sale!

**Janet Campbell**



**International Homeless Animals' Day**

Oh what a night! Our CAAN dinner was once again a huge success!

I am so glad to be given this opportunity to thank everyone who made it possible: to the kitchen staff, from peelers to prep cooks, dishwashers to servers, cooks to organizers and cleaners. It's all run smoothly because of you, and Thank-You Gloria for your expertise.

The hall, silent auction and penny table is a huge success because of all the work the set-up crew does.

To my "Italian" team who makes the auction and penny table look so fabulous.

Thank you to the wonderful donators who just awe me with all the donated items. Such generosity, Thank you.

Thank you Janet for your delicious baked goods and Thank you Piper and Chelsea for your time and work put in helping at the door.

It was as always a pleasure to be there.

**Nancy Little**

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On July 4th and 5th CAAN had a yard sale hosted by Donna and Dale Baer. This was the weekend of Ridgeway Days. There were other groups in support of animal rescue. Last Chance Pony Rescue, Fort Erie Humane Society and Niagara Dog Rescue. Many generous people donated goods and Janet made her awesome baked goods. A good time was had by all. To top it off 2 dogs were adopted from the groups. We would like to thank

Donna and Dale and everyone who contributed in one way or another. Thanks to the people who set up, sold items and put everything away. This hard work paid off to the tune of \$1,200.

**Sue Conway**

**Thanks Gerrie Sue Nicholas Janet  
Donna Dale Lisa Denis Nancy Piper Chelsea  
Kim and Nada and everyone**

**JYNX'S GREAT ADVENTURE**

It was sometime in late July a friend of mine emailed me a photo of a beautiful Chocolate Point Siamese and asked if I would take him. I laughed, I had just euthanized my cat of 18 years and the last 3 years of his life were full of medical bills and worry trying to ensure he was living without pain and had quality of life. We weren't really ready to make that kind of commitment again so I declined and that's when fate must have played a card. A few weeks later I found myself having dinner beside this same handsome gentleman in my friend's back yard.

His introduction to me was so cute, he jumped up on the chair beside me and sniffed my chicken kebab. I looked him in the face and said "Well that's rude, you have not been invited," to which he then sat back very politely and watched me eat. Not being a fan of feeding animals from the table I made him wait till I was finished then offered him a nibble of chicken a few feet away. After gobbling it down he then returned and jumped up on my lap, my friend giggling with joy the whole time.

"He's been hanging around my house for the past 5 months," she explained, "when he first came he had a flea infestation, ear mites and worms". She had taken him in only to find her two existing cats stalked and beat on him mercilessly and eventually had to care for him on her screened in porch. "I think he had an owner because he disappears every once in a while, but I think they go away for long periods of time and just leave him outside, he's been sleeping on my front porch for the past 3 weeks".

I was absolutely mortified, who in their right mind would leave a gorgeous creature like this outside, let alone not care for him enough to see him with fleas, mites and worms - heartbreaking. To add insult to injury she lived on a very busy street with cars buzzing by at all hours of the night and day. It was a wonder that the poor guy had lived this long. She had put his profile on the SPCA's website, they were too full to take any cats into the shelter, and no one had claimed him. Still, I wasn't budging, I had a partner to consider and I couldn't just show up with another cat without at least preparing him for it. But again, fate played a card and as I was leaving this handsome boy jumped into my car and sat on the seat beside me ..... and that is how Jynx came into our lives!!

( cont'd page 8)

**OPERATION NORTH STAR**

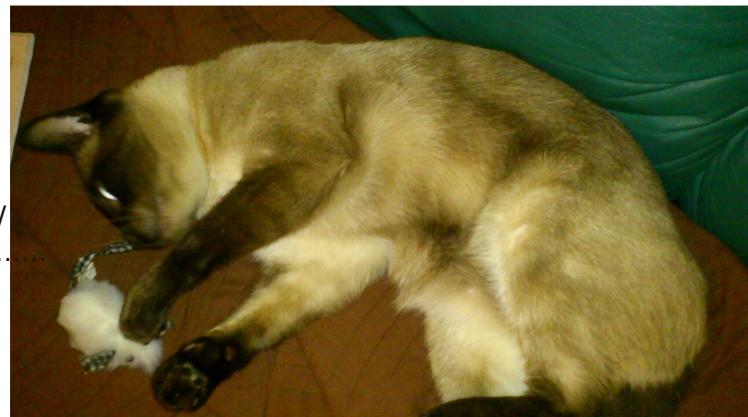
**Lost  
Lost  
Lost**  
**lost  
lost  
found**  
**found**

**found  
found**

your eyes and ears and posters and flyers and facebook and twitter and word of mouth and support and hope

**THANK  
you**

**JYNX**



**Cats can live comfortably outdoors with daily food water and warm shelter and a loving caregiver.**

**Thank-YOU**  
the gift of life  
the gift of life

**Thank-YOU**  
life  
**Thanks**

**Thank-YOU**

I apologize for the lengthy pre-amble but it seems relevant to the story that I am about to tell ..... fast forward two years. Jynx has become a member of our household, he joins our doggy Dexter and two more tabby cat foundlings that I adopted after. We are one big happy family (insert breaking noise here) well NOT really.

My gal tabby is very stressed by Jynxie's presence and will often stock him and fights break out. At the beginning of the summer this had escalated and I was having fur flying on some occasions. This is very hard as you want all your fur babies to be happy and I have been taking all kinds of steps to ensure that they be that way including taking Jynx away every weekend to our place on the lake in Port Maitland. We have a lovely screened in porch and Jynx loves to sit and watch the birds and a mouse that lives in our garden. He is happy there and acts like his old self and my tabby Portia also has a vacation at home being cared for by our neighbour.

About three weeks ago we were leaving to come home. Jynx is a bit noisy when we travels and there is very little room in the cab, so we put his cat cage in the back of our pick up,( it has a cap) and we open the windows to ensure that both Jynx and our dog Dexter have fresh air and comfortable beds. On this particular morning about a kilometer from our place, my partner Bill decided to pick up some branches on the side of the road for fire wood. I remained in the cab and he fired the logs in the back, since we were close to our place he said, I'm just going to drop these off. Always in a hurry we turned the truck around and started forward when all at once we heard a crash assuming it was one of the logs. I quickly looked in the rear view mirror and to my horror saw the cat cage in the middle of the road, the door sprung open and Jynx looking pretty freaked out. Now don't get me wrong, I am confident that if Bill thought this would have happened he never would have left the tailgate down for the wood. He thought that the cage was secure in the back, but being made of plastic made it slippery and it slid right out at the slightest acceleration.

We immediately stopped as Jynx ran into the deep forest of Rockpoint Provincial Park and we realized in horror what we had just done to our precious little boy!

## **www.missingpetpartnership.org**

, for lost pet recovery tips, recovering a panicked pet, a Pet Detective directory and more. Their mission is to use the highest ethical standards and innovative techniques to reunite lost companion animals with their owners and guardians through training, education and partnerships

I am lucky enough to be good friends with Ronni Dingwall and I can't tell you how many times Ronni has come to my rescue when I have a pet emergency or questions. She is our angel and her tireless effort to help and to save animals absolutely humbles me. She is on speed dial on my phone and it was the first thing I did while Bill and Dexter charged into the thick bush to try and catch him. On this day she is working at Court Animal hospital and tells me she will call Barb from CAAN. Barb is experienced in lost animal retrieval and she will get some advice and call us back immediately.

Ronni can't get a hold of Barb but advised that we stay at the point where he entered the forest. Since I am supposed to be at work, Bill and I decide to divide and conquer, he will stay at the road where Jynx was last seen and I will head home to take care of the other cats and make a plan of action. We are both absolutely heartsick and there are tears (lots of them from me) and guilt, but this isn't the time to indulge, we need to do everything to get our Jynxie back. To add insult to injury, cell phone's don't really work that well in the boonies and Barb's attempt to contact Bill fail, but Ronnie calls me with instructions and I continue to text and call Bill's phone and my personal phone which I had left fully charged in case his ran out. Barb advises that we think like the cat, she tells us he may be injured and to look under the brush where he may be hiding scared. She also advised us to leave the cage with some food and a blanket that smells like us hidden in the bush there too in case he comes back.

Bill waits by the road for 5 hours with no luck, I am certain Jynx is having the time of his life, running through the forest, smelling new things and exploring his inner lion. I am also certain that at nightfall the forest is full of predators like coyotes and raccoons, predators he may not have

encountered before and I am feeling sick thinking of him being there. Armed with the knowledge that I must think like Jynx I remember he is friendly to strangers and he loves to eat. There are over 100 campsites in Rockpoint not far from the forest and while at home I make up a dozen posters with his face on them and tell people he is friendly and please contain him, we will come right away to get him, the park lets us put them up everywhere!

We then go back to our trailer home and wait to see if he comes there or comes back to his cage. Lucky for me I have understanding cat lovers for employers, they give me the time off to search. The bird banding station in Rockpoint has a live trap for raccoons and feral cats and has lent it to us, we check it every couple of hours with no luck

..... Eventually we reluctantly go to sleep that night with windows wide open waking at every little sound that our boy has returned.

Morning brings nothing, but I am feeling better and calmer, we decide we will spend the week there as I can work from my laptop and Bill is self-employed, we will stay as we both believe he will come there. All day long we go back to his cage, the live trap and circle the park calling his name and looking for him, it is to no avail and we resign ourselves to the fact that we must spend another night without him.

We decide to make some dinner, and suddenly my cell phone rings, I don't get to it in time and the call goes away. Not seconds later, Bill's cellphone rings, he answers the phone and cries, Jynx has been found, and they are bringing him here!!! Some Day campers saw the posters and found him in a tree, they said he came right to them and had no reluctance getting in the car, he must have been scared.

Jynxie is now home safe and sound and there are some very good lessons that we have learned! The first being, NEVER leave the tailgate open when you have precious cargo in the back!!! NEVER declaw your cat, you NEVER know when he may need those claws to escape from danger!! AND support your animal loving friends at CAAN who were there to be called upon in an emergency situation. Much thanks to Ronni, Barb and Julia for all you do, there are places for you in heaven, of this I am sure!!!

By Jen

## Thank You Thank You

We have lost another animal lover. Don Davidson left us November 6, 2015 at the age of 65. He will be missed. **Love from the Conway family**

## Thank You Thank You

Patti Gaye Welch consellor for people and their companion animals , she can be found at Pet Valu Pendale, St. Catharines on weekends or email [welchpg@hotmail.com](mailto:welchpg@hotmail.com)

nutrition and wellness , chronic care, feline behaviour, grief/bereavement





# CAAN landers

a new regular column

**for trains, planes and automobiles? NO, for dogs , cats and humans!**

## Question: any new and upcoming books for fundraising?

.... at night when the lights went out (cats see better in the dark) the animals would sit in their cages and talk with each other. This was Graycee's favorite time.

There was a kitten with a broken leg and an old cat with a bad tooth that was waiting for surgery and a bird with an injured wing (but he slept in a shoe box in the bathroom). Some of the animals had owners and homes to go back to but others were like Graycee, they were known as CAAN animals, animals that needed help but had no human owner.

Once her broken bones were healed Graycee was ready to leave the clinic, but because she had no tail it would be hard for her to .....

( part of Graycee's story written by **Kim Epple**, more to come in the New Year)



**Graycee**

spay neuter your critter  
**spay neuter your critter**  
**spay neuter**

online donations visit [www.canada helps.org](http://www.canada helps.org) or the button on our website



to become a member please fill out the form, membership is \$15 year ( starting from the month you join  
 Community Animal Allies of Niagara (CAAN), 3358 Troup Rd, Port Colborne, Ontario L3K 5V5

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone and email \_\_\_\_\_

membership \_\_\_\_\_ donation \_\_\_\_\_

and we welcome your stories, poems, pictures, etc., we will print some of them please submit...thank you

## Hope For Hailey

It all started one cool, sunny day in September. It was a typical Monday morning, with all of our family rushing to get ready for work and school. My husband, Billy, mentioned that he had stayed up late waiting for our cat to come inside the night before but that there had been no sign of Hailey.

Hailey is one of our two cats. He typically liked to be outside a lot while there was warmer weather but usually stayed in the backyard or on the back porch and came in when we went to bed every night. Before we left that morning we called him and searched the yard but still had no luck. Observing that there was a large crane making a lot of noise on the property next door to us (as they were building a house), we thought that maybe it had scared him and he was probably hiding somewhere a little farther away and would be back when the crane left. So, we all left for the day.

To our surprise, that evening there was still no Hailey. Now, very worried, we walked around the neighbourhood calling his name. The next morning we went to the Humane Society to file a missing cat report, printed posters with his picture on it and hung them all around the area, and spoke to some neighbours to see if they had seen him. We then posted missing pet ads on Kijiji as well as two Facebook sites for missing animals and a few days later we also posted an ad in the St. Catharines Standard.



We have glass blocks for sale.

**Thank you** Sesame for modeling with them!

**Cats can live comfortably outdoors with daily food water and warm shelter and a loving caregiver.**

We still had no idea what had happened to our precious Hailey, who was now 13 years old. He was given to us when he was just six weeks old. We started to speculate the worst; maybe he had been hit by a car or, being an older cat, maybe he ran away because of the crane and became disoriented and couldn't find his way home, or maybe he just fell asleep and didn't wake up. Like all cats, Hailey is a loving, amazing soul full of all kinds of character and personality that is so unique and special to us. I couldn't imagine our time with him ending this way. We were worried sick and didn't know what else to do.

The next day, while I was desperately searching the yard again trying to call him home, I happened to look down at my feet and saw a chilling sight. I was standing in a large circle of some very large tufts of cat fur, orange and white in colour just like Hailey. I dropped to my knees feeling utter shock and panic set in and yelled for Billy to come quickly. My husband and I held each other for a few moments trying to compose ourselves as our 5 year old son Liam was in the house playing and we didn't want him to see such a gruesome sight. We searched the yard some more and found one more large area with lots of cat fur about fifteen feet away from the first patch and all the same colour. Losing most hope, yet desperately wanting to hold onto a shred of it, if possible, we prepared ourselves to soon tell our son that Hailey would not be returning home because he has gone to cat heaven. Our other cat Shadow was already showing signs of depression because she was missing her friend.

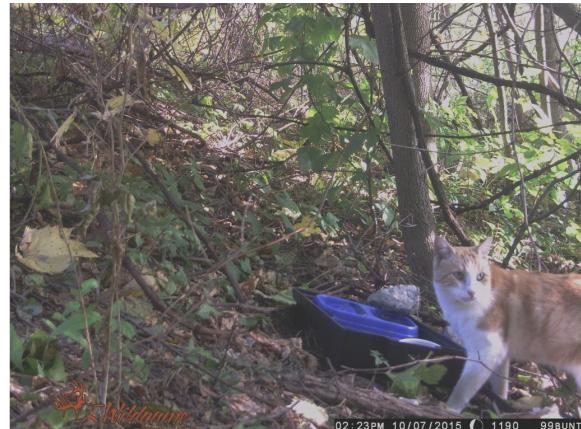
We did some research that night on the fur we had found and unfortunately it seemed very consistent with what you would find after a coyote attack. The thought of our beloved Hailey becoming dinner was unbearable and my husband and I were devastated. I think I was in a state of denial, and so the next day I decided to hand out posters to every veterinarian in St. Catharines in hopes that if he, by a miracle, got away and someone found him injured, then maybe a vet had seen him (we know he got away once because there were two attack sites). Again, that search turned up no results but all of the vets agreed to help us by putting our poster up on their bulletin boards. In a last ditch effort, not wanting to give up and realizing that if he was lost and hurt his time

to get help might be running short, I put out some more flyers. This time I dropped them directly into the mailboxes of people in the area.

A few weeks passed with little results other than a few false alarms from well meaning people who had identified the wrong cat as Hailey, a mean prank call telling us that someone had Hailey in her house but sending us to a false address, one well-meaning person trying to give me his cat, and one possible sighting by our neighbour a few doors down from us. I tried to get there as quickly as I could when I got the last call but by the time I arrived the cat had disappeared. Riddled with grief, I was a mess and decided that I had to fully deal with the obvious conclusion, stop grasping at straws, and accept that Hailey had met a terrible end and I would never see him again. It was on this day that I received a phone call from Barb.

Barb is part of a volunteer organization started in 2006 called C.A.A.N (Community Animal Allies of Niagara). She explained that she had seen Hailey's poster at Court Animal Hospital and she wanted to help me find him. I explained how dire I thought the situation was at that point but, if she was still willing, I would love to hold onto some hope and would take any help or advice I could get.

We started by talking about what had happened the day Hailey went missing, the days following, and a little bit about Hailey's personality. She gave me a website to check out with some great information for anyone with a missing pet. It is [www.missingpetpartnership.org](http://www.missingpetpartnership.org). Barb and I met the next day at my house so that she could see the areas Hailey liked to hang out, as well as where we found evidence of an attack. We then walked over to the last place Hailey was spotted by our neighbour. Barb suggested keeping a journal of everything that had happened in detail so we could paint a picture of what may have happened and piece it together like a puzzle. She also let me know that, because an animal's behaviour is much different when it becomes lost or displaced, I shouldn't approach this search as if Hailey is the cat I knew. He was in survival mode which may cause him to hide from me.



Barb was amazing and kept me thinking in a positive and open-minded way. She also suggested putting out more flyers on the street behind the area that Hailey was sighted. I did this the next morning and the following day received one more call from a woman stating that she had seen a cat matching his description crossing her backyard. We found that this was right near the area that the other neighbour had seen him. With this new promising information, Barb and Sue (another amazing volunteer working with Barb at C.A.A.N) set up a few feeding spots with some cameras. Barb also spoke to a few people and found that a lady who walks through the area every day had also seen a cat come out from the bushes a few times.

Within a few days the food was being eaten and there were a few pictures of a cat resembling Hailey at the feeding spot. I started going over there every chance I could and gently calling out to him but either I was not there at the right time or he was hiding so I didn't see him. Knowing that Hailey can't resist the smell of Kentucky Fried Chicken, I started showing up with a box of KFC and picnicking in the area, holding the chicken in the air trying to let him catch the scent. I'm sure that I looked like a crazy lady and I did attract some attention from the parks maintenance crew who were very nice and understanding once they approached me and found out what I was actually up to. They probably still thought I was a little crazy but harmless so they left me alone. There was still plenty of evidence coming through the camera of an orange and white cat feeding in the area, as well as some raccoons that scored some free snacks.

It wasn't long before I met Sue Conway. We first crossed paths coincidentally one day when she came to change the food and collect the camera information while I was wandering in the area. I had been hoping that Hailey would pop out from behind the bushes and come running into my arms, though deep down I knew that, given the information Barb had shared with me about lost animal behaviour, this kind of reunion might only be a dream. I would have to be much more patient than that. I knew that Barb had someone helping her with the feeding spots and cameras and I was so glad to meet Sue face to face. Sue has a very sweet and gentle spirit and she is a truly kind and selfless person. I knew I was very blessed to have her help.

Throughout the next few weeks Sue devoted much of her time to building a rapport with this sweet cat wandering the woods looking for food. In a few more weeks, Sue and Barb were able to establish a feeding pattern and predict when he would show up. It also became apparent that he could see us from wherever he was hiding. He definitely had a great hiding spot because we could not see him unless he decided to grace us with his presence on his own terms. It was at this point that Barb informed me that we were ready to move to the next step in bringing Hailey home, which is setting a humane trap. Barb assured me that the trap would only be set when she or Sue were there to watch it so that if captured he wouldn't be stuck in it all alone for long. She also reassured me that, thanks to her brother-in-law David who put together the remote mechanism, it is extremely humane and will not hurt him. It is much larger than most traditional box traps and it has a door that closes using the remote control cleverly designed by David.

I had the privilege of watching Sue work one cool October afternoon when I came to the feeding site after the cat had been spotted by Barb. Unfortunately, I missed him again but I was so happy to have the opportunity to watch and work with Sue. Her calm spirit really comes through and it is no wonder that this lost soul started to come out whenever Sue showed up. She was luring him using the KFC method I had tried earlier on, but for her it was working! This also earned him the nickname "The Colonel" for his love of the chicken.

Soon The Colonel started to recognize Sue's truck and came running out to greet the vehicle when he knew his new friend had arrived with his chicken. He would come about four feet away from her to eat and also slowly started to warm up to the idea of crawling into the large crate we were trying to capture him in. At first he was afraid of it but eventually Barb ended up with pictures of him relaxing on top of it. Given The Colonel's new, friendlier behaviour, it became clear that Sue would be the key to bringing Hailey home, as she was doing such an exceptional job of connecting with him.

November 7th was a cool, sunny Saturday. Hailey had been away from home for fifty-four days and, though I had tried numerous times, I hadn't laid eyes on him since he first disappeared. I packed up a picnic lunch for Liam and myself, hoping to enjoy a little bit of outdoor time before winter came. I decided to go to the feeding spot for our picnic in hopes that we could spot Hailey as I knew it would make Liam very happy to catch a glimpse of him. When we arrived, I saw Barb's and Sue's vehicles parked close to the trees. Not wanting to disturb them, I parked at a distance in case there was a capture in progress and indeed there was! Moments later I saw The Colonel jump out of the bushes and run back in. He was happy and playful. Not long after that Barb called my cell phone letting me know that it was over and he was in the crate! Filled with joy and excitement we rushed over to see.

It was one of the most amazing moments of my life. All the work that had been going on for so long had come together in an instant and there he was! There were lots of hugs, tears of joy, and high fives! Sue and Barb had done an amazing job and saved a life. Little did we know at this point it was not Hailey's.



We all went over to the Court Animal Hospital where we met Dr. Julia Murray, veterinarian and President of Community Animal Allies of Niagara. She was great with The Colonel. She understood that he had been through a lot and suggested that we board him at the animal hospital for a few days to allow him some adjustment time. We were a little disappointed to leave him but we understood and said a happy goodbye for the time being.

In a few days, when she was able to examine him closer, we found that though he had many similarities to Hailey and was almost a perfect look-alike, he had all of his claws intact. Hailey, however, was missing one back claw that had been surgically removed years ago when he injured it by getting it stuck in some carpeting. Also, Hailey was neutered and this cat was not. Barb called us immediately in order to meet her and Sue so they could regretfully deliver the sad news that we would not be returning home with Hailey and the search will continue. We were heartbroken but happy that some good had still come from these events.

We are so grateful to Dr. Murray and the staff at Court Animal Hospital for being available and willing to help The Colonel on a late Saturday afternoon. They are all very kind-hearted people doing an amazing job helping animals. Hailey's ending is still unwritten and we will continue our search in a new direction.

As for The Colonel, he is a two year old feral cat who was in need of help. Dr. Murray found that he had a broken tooth that would have become very painful for him if ignored. She fixed his tooth and neutered him as well. The Colonel is now micro-chipped and, because of the bonds created between him and Sue in the past months, she will be his loving caregiver with our help. I will definitely come and visit our new little furry friend regularly and bring him some KFC treats whenever I can.

We are thankful for Mike's help, who will set up a very large area cage in Sue's backyard not too far from The Colonel's original home in the woods. This will become his safe spot as he gets used to the area and he will soon be released and will be welcome to stay if he so chooses.

Though the circumstances of the capture did not turn out as my family had hoped, I am still more grateful than I can express to Barb and Sue for reaching out to us in our time of need and putting so much time and effort into this rescue. They did an exceptional job and taught me a lot along the way. I can't say enough about the caring, compassionate people that make up the C.A.A.N organization. Though it's not Hailey's, a life was still saved and I am honoured to have been a part of it. Whether Hailey's story ends in happiness or sadness, his circumstances have helped another cat in need and we can take comfort in that as we miss him and continue our search. We are so grateful for all of the help and support we have received from family, friends, neighbours and co-workers. We will continue to pray for Hailey's safe return to us and keep our hope alive.

I will be in touch with Barb and Sue as we continue the next chapter of our search for Hailey. I hope to become a volunteer like Sue in the future. I feel like Sue has much she can teach me and I am ready and eager to learn. I would love nothing more than to be a part of more animal rescues as it is a very special and rewarding experience.

Lastly, I would like to share with anyone who has a missing pet the valuable advice that Barb has given me, these words that are guiding me through this difficult time: Keep an open mind, and stay hopeful, your hope is all your pet has. It is with these words in mind that the search for Hailey will continue. There may one day be a new chapter to write in this story of Hailey and The Colonel, two lives connected in hope.

**Nicole Torrance**

**Thanks**  
T-Rapper  
Mike

