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Shining stars

By Kellie B. Gormly



Forgetting Yesterday, Celebrating Today

Corey and Quincy, both survivors of abuse, savor their new lives as cherished pets.

At the hands of humans, animals sometimes experience scarring conditions and events, but thanks to the efforts of dedicated rescue volunteers and shelters, they sometimes are also given a second chance to experience unconditional love and a gentle existence. Both Corey and Quincy experienced these two sides of humanity, showing their resilience and ability to forgive and forget.

LOOK AT ME NOW

Although Dori Bryan, a professional dog groomer from the Baltimore area, already had three rescue dogs, she felt unsure at first about caring for a blind one. In her eyes, though, Corey was beautiful and special and worth the chance — and he turned out to be a cinch.

“I think all dogs are wonderful, so (his blindness) doesn’t bother me,” Bryan says.

A brave new world

Corey, a longhaired Dachshund with the double-dapple color pattern, didn’t lose his eyesight from disease or injury. Rather, he was born without eyes due to a birth defect caused by irresponsible breeding at a puppy mill.

At a filthy Arkansas puppy mill, agents from the Humane Society of

the United States rescued Corey, who was used as a breeding dog, and more than 100 other dogs in March 2014. The Dachshund’s missing eyes weren’t the only sign that his health was failing. Corey and his canine comrades had matted fur, ear infections, fleas and other ailments.

Corey’s happy ending came when Bryan adopted him in April after a client told her about the dog who was waiting at a Calvert County, Md., shelter. Corey, estimated to be 3 to 4 years old, landed there after the dogs rescued from this mill were sent to shelters around the country.

Zest for life

Bryan, who grooms dogs at Pikesville Animal Hospital in Pikesville, Md., had recently lost her Great Dane, Tinkie, and felt a void in her life. Because she loves Dachshunds, Bryant decided to meet the sightless pooch.

“I fell in love with him,” she says. “He came out wagging his tail around the world. He embodies what is happy, cou-

Dori Bryan holds Corey at the HSUS To the Rescue Gala, where Corey’s video debuted.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF KEVIN WOLF FOR THE HSUS



rageous and loving. He's everything you could want in a dog."

Corey doesn't need any special care for his blindness, Bryan says. Corey learned the house within an hour. He raises his head and senses that something, like a table, is there. The Dachshund gets along fine with the able-bodied household dogs and doesn't seem to struggle with his handicap.

"He's intuitive," says Bryant, who hopes Corey can work as a therapy dog with children. "It's amazing to watch."

DETROIT CITY KITTY

Unlike the double-dapple Dachshund who had been blind to his horrific surroundings, an unlucky cat named Nikki witnessed the perpetrators of his abuse.

Last June, teens in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood tied down a 1-year-old white-and-black cat and lit firecrackers around him, according to a witness. A volunteer for PAWS Chicago, a no-kill animal shelter and adoption center, found the terrified and emaciated cat, then known as Nikki. He had bruises and burns on his neck, leg and torso, and he couldn't walk.

The volunteer brought the cat to the PAWS Medical Center, where staff members treated Nikki's sprained back leg and his open wounds on the legs, back and stomach, says Sarah Ahlberg, PAWS communications manager.

Tender, loving care

The cat spent the rest of the summer getting loving foster care in the home of Brigette Supernova, a PAWS volunteer who gave him daily pain medicine and antibiotics. The cat warmed right up to his foster family and eagerly began the healing process.

"He is honestly the sweetest, most love-starved foster I've had to date," Supernova says. "He craves petting so much, he had a hard time choosing between delicious snacks and being snuggled."

Because of the cat's vivacious purr,

Supernova called him Nikki Detroit because he is Motor City, she jokes.

"He's got a few battered parts but is trying to keep going strong — just like Detroit," Supernova says.

Spark of connection

PAWS Chicago told Nikki's story on its Facebook page and kept fans updated on his progress. Chicagoan Tara Meabrod, a lifelong animal lover, followed Nikki's story and felt a maternal stir.



"I just felt really drawn to him for some strange reason," Meabrod says. "He'd gone through this horrific ordeal and seemed like he still was loving and feeling safe."

"I can kind of relate," Meabrod says. "I thought we'd be a really good fit and that I could give him a great life."

In September, Nikki went up for adoption. Meabrod met Nikki (who she renamed Quincy) at PAWS, took him home that night to her third-floor apartment. "It was like he had always been there," Meabrod recalls. "He adjusted immediately, and it was like a sign. It was validation."

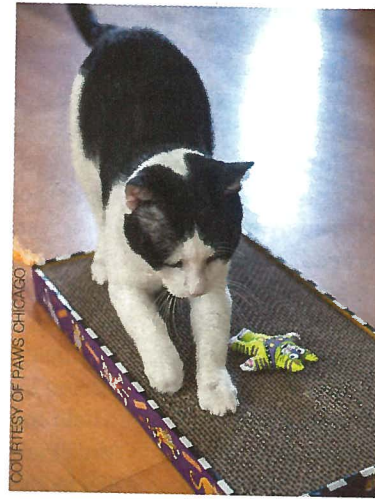
Meabrod expected the cat would be skittish, but he is loving and playful. Quincy — who makes a peculiar snorting noise when he gets excited — loves to curl up with her and her friends and chase the laser pointer light.

"He's just like a normal cat," she says. "You would never guess that he'd been through that ordeal."

For more about PAWS Chicago, visit pawschicago.org  

Kellie Gormly is a Pittsburgh-based journalist otherwise known as "Mother Catresa" to homeless kittens and cats. She blogs about her adventures in fostering at mothercatresaschronicle.blogspot.com

COURTESY OF PAWS CHICAGO

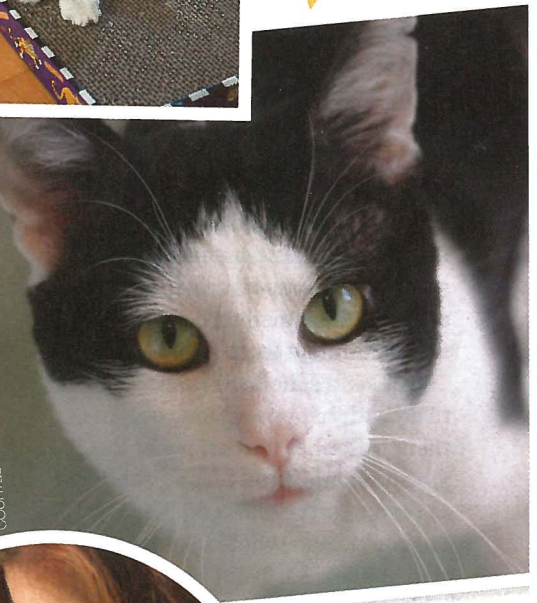


COURTESY OF PAWS CHICAGO

Over a few weeks, Quincy recuperates at PAWS Medical Center and at a foster home.



COURTESY OF BRIGETTE SUPERNOVA, OUTERFOCUS PHOTOS



COURTESY OF PAWS CHICAGO



Quincy's new owner pets him on his adoption day.

