

## A furry tail come true

It was more than a decade ago that I adopted my first pet through Pet Haven. I had recently lost my two 15-year-old Siamese cats, and my mother was dying of lung cancer. I had gone to many adoption sites and seen dozens of lovely kitties, but my intuition said, "Not yet."

I was just about to leave a Pet Haven adoption event when I spotted a small green cat carrier across the room and noticed a slight movement within. Something compelled me to ask the volunteer, "Who's in that crate?"

She answered, "Oh, that's a little girl we just took in, but she's too sick just now to be showing her."

My internal bells began to jingle and I asked her, "May I see her, please?"

Out came an emaciated tan tabby, every vertebrae and rib articulated, and her ears scratched bald from a mite infection. To be honest, she was one of the homeliest creatures I'd ever seen. I knew in my heart she was meant to be mine.



My reasoning? I needed to prove to myself that someone in my life could *get well*.

And get well she did. We picked her up a week later, after the mite medicine had done its job. Xander is now about 11 years old, a healthy, happy, beautiful and adored snugglepuss. (See her picture with my husband Anthony.) She has adapted beautifully to a household with six other pets, three of them notorious-for-cat-chasing Westies.

Speaking of which, we adopted the third of those Westies, Keely (see Keely's story on the Happy Tails page). All of our seven companion animals are rescues. Adopting is a great way to keep our carbon footprint (and/or their paw prints) smaller. We purposely refuse to support puppy mills or breeders who, through their animals-bred-for-profit focus, wind up taking away homes from deserving, needful pets by flooding the market with "new product."



Our so-called cast-off critters are the most loving, wondrous family members we could dream of having. The way they all so instantly adapted to one another simply supports my belief that they were kindred souls awaiting a reunion under our roof.

We will march in this year's Grand Old Day parade with Pet Haven's group to advertise our wonderful adopted doggies: Mortimer—of James River Humane Society, Jamestown, N.D.; Blanche—Southwest Metro Animal Rescue; and Keely—Pet Haven. No matter their respective association, the kind-hearted people who intervene to save the lives of homeless animals all deserve an enormous thank you.

As I am currently in the midst of writing a book on coping with pet loss—which I hope will someday be published and make gazillions of dollars so I can contribute a healthy portion to Pet Haven—I was delighted to discover I could volunteer my writing/reporting skills in the meantime to give back to this fantastic organization.



I knew this was the most reasonable way for me to contribute, as I'd be an abject failure as a foster mom—I'd wind up keeping every four-legged orphan I saw. And I've checked, they don't allow hobby farms with 57 dogs and cats in the heart of Minneapolis!

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