

# The Artemis Project

Summer Newsletter 2008



*The Artemis Project is a non-profit, grass-roots animal rescue organization operating on New York's Upper West Side. Our mission is to help all the animals that come to us, not just the readily adoptable ones. Sometimes this means providing extensive and costly medical treatment. Sometimes it means months of daily socialization before an animal loses its fear of humans and can be placed in the loving home it deserves.*

*We work exclusively with Lincoln Square Veterinary Hospital (LSVH) to provide medical and adoption services for stray and abused animals. Thanks to your kindness, we've helped over 450 animals over the past six years. Our work is labor-intensive and sometimes quite costly. Your tax-deductible contributions make it all possible. We hope you enjoy reading the following stories and realize what a difference you've made!*

## THE LONG JOURNEY HOME

Porkchop and Applesauce are two little tabby kittens who were born on the streets of Harlem. Chances were good they wouldn't survive their first year. Fate, however, had different plans.

Every so often, Porkchop and Applesauce wandered into the garden of an opera star with a heart of gold. One day, Lauren looked out and saw the kittens cowering before a big, growling tom cat. Lauren immediately shooed him away but she knew he'd be back. The kittens' prospects were bleak. Lauren trapped them and took them to Artemis.



**Applesauce cowers in her cage**

Porkchop and Applesauce were very scared. At 10 weeks, they were well on the road to becoming feral. They crouched at the back of the cage and hissed. It would be a challenge to socialize them.

I decided to foster them. Soon, Porkchop would come to my beckoning hand. She was learning to like human touch. Applesauce was another matter. She backed away from my hand and was clearly stressed. She battled recurring upper respiratory infections and diarrhea. I searched for some way of petting her that she enjoyed. By chance, I tried holding her on my left shoulder. To my amazement, her fears seemed to evaporate. She became a Purring Machine. Once I got past her fears, Applesauce had a lot of love to give. We bonded.

Porkchop and Applesauce had made great progress in their month with me. It was time to expand their horizons. They needed to learn to trust someone else. I knew just the right person. Sarah is a violinist with the New York Philharmonic and a colleague of mine. She's fostered many Artemis cats and truly has a gift for winning an animal's trust.

Sarah immediately agreed. In the month Porkchop and Applesauce spent with Sarah, she emphasized play. Kittens at play forget their fears. They also develop their coordination and find a suitable outlet for any aggressive tendencies.

The kittens made remarkable progress under Sarah's tutelage. It was time for them to experience the wider world. We took them to LSVH. Although they would be exposed to an endless parade of strange people and big dogs, it was the only way they'd find a home. It was now up to them to attract the Right Person.

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Weeks stretched into months. No one seemed interested in Porkchop and Applesauce. Their prospects dimmed as they changed from cute kittens into gangly adolescents.

Finally, in January, a long-time client at LSVH and her elderly father expressed interest in the kittens. They took them home for a trial weekend. As Fate would have it, a door slammed shut in the hallway just as the father was petting Applesauce. Applesauce freaked and both girls were returned the next day.

A few weeks later, a mom and her teen-aged son were interested. When their references checked out, the kittens went home with them.

A few days later, I got a call from the mom. She'd decided two cats were too much for their small apartment. She wanted to return Porkchop. I told her to return both of them. These kittens had been through too much to split them up now.

Sarah and I despaired. Would Porkchop and Applesauce ever get the home they deserved? Why couldn't people see what incredible cats they were? To top it off, Applesauce got an intractable case of diarrhea. We tested her for everything but everything came back negative. I suspected it was stress-induced. These girls had certainly been bounced around a lot from place to place on their long journey to find a home.

Winter dragged on. Finally Lizz, the Adoptions Coordinator at LSVH, called me to say the girls had just gone home with Gerry, an Irish doorman on the East Side. I called Gerry a couple of days later. I half-expected to hear him say he was returning them. Much to my surprise and joy, he was head-over-heels in love with "The Twins." Applesauce's diarrhea



**Sisterly affection**

stopped the moment she met Gerry.

In the coming weeks, Gerry and I corresponded frequently. I received almost daily Cat Reports in his rich Irish brogue. He would refer to Porkchop as "Her Royal Highness" and to Applesauce as "The Poet." A typical Cat Report might be, "The Poet has had supper and she's retired to her study to compose." Translation: "Applesauce has eaten dinner and is now in her bed." Or, "Her Royal Highness and The Poet were at a fly in the window. The

fly, poor devil, hadn't a chance. HRH dispatched him with a sharp left hook." Gerry's reports kept me laughing and his obvious love for the girls warmed my heart. I wasn't the only one. Several tenants from his building wrote me notes about how the kittens had transformed his life.

One black day in May, I got a message from Gerry. Porkchop was gone. She'd bolted out into the night as Gerry was coming home. Had Porkchop escaped the streets of Harlem only to end up on the streets of the Bronx?

Gerry was distraught and so was I. He tried a dozen schemes to get her back. I was often at the other end of the phone line, offering advice. Nothing worked. I could hear Porkchop's plaintive meows. She was spooked, disoriented and hungry. Catching her wouldn't be easy.

I called Gerry early on Day 3 of Porkchop's Great Adventure. He'd slept out on a lawn chair in his backyard for two nights now, trying to catch Porkchop. It was time to marshal all our resources.

"Gerry, I'm hiring a car. I'll be up at your place in an hour. Is that OK?" Gerry is a proud and independent man. I knew he must be desperate when he agreed.

...*The Long Journey Home* continued

I went up to the Bronx armed with a laundry bag, a peacock feather and a device I'd bought 7 years before. The device was a net with a noose at the opening mounted on a pole. I hoped to lure Porkchop into the laundry bag with the peacock feather. Failing that, I would try the net. I didn't hold out much hope for success with the net. My own cats fled in terror at the mere sight of it and I knew that any cat I caught would have to go COMPLETELY into the net before I closed the noose. If I closed it too soon, Porkchop would back out and never come near it or us again.

I arrived at Gerry's apartment. He took me out to his back yard. It was littered with open carriers and propped-up milk crates baited with countless cans of cat food. The yard buzzed with what seemed like every fly in the Tri-State area. My heart sank. We'd never catch Porkchop this way. However, I didn't hold out much hope for my methods either.

Gerry and I sat in silence for half an hour, waiting for Porkchop to appear. I heard a familiar meow. Porkchop entered the yard.

"Hello, you good girl," Gerry intoned in his cat-friendliest voice. He moved imperceptibly towards her, his every move forward matched by her retreat back. Clearly, Porkchop had no intention of ending her

Big Adventure. Gerry went into the apartment, probably for more cans of cat food. I remained in the yard, weakly waving the peacock feather. Porkchop was not amused. She exited the yard. Not knowing what else to do, I unfurled the net from the pole and placed it where she'd left the yard. To my surprise, Porkchop re-appeared. She sniffed at the net. I froze in disbelief as she moved her head, her shoulders and finally her flanks into the net. I yanked the lever and closed the noose. I had her!



**Home at last**

quiet too, stunned that we'd actually gotten her. Life has lots of Unhappy Endings but on this particular day and with this particular cat, Fate had given us a very Happy Ending. Porkchop was home, Applesauce had her sister and Gerry had his "Twins."

Three months later, Gerry has re-christened the girls in accordance with their rich Irish heritage. Porkchop is now Siobhan (pronounced She-VANN) and Applesauce is now Deirdre. I know all this because Gerry and I have struck up quite a friendship. Who would have guessed that two little kittens might change my life?



**A room with a view**

"Gerry! Gerry!" I yelled. He came running. "Don't panic," he shouted in a distinctly panicked voice. Porkchop was flailing like a Tasmanian Devil in the net. We took her inside and released her. Porkchop scooted under the bed. Her Big Adventure had ended; she seemed no worse for the wear.

Gerry and I, however, were DEFINITELY the worse for wear. He sat silently, dark circles under his eyes, smoking an endless succession of cigarettes. I was

## *AND THEN THERE'S BUTTON...*

Sarah is moving to Pittsburgh. She's fostered a lot of cats for us this year. Her sensitivity and problem-solving skills have transformed cats with special needs into adoptable cats. She helped conquer Porkchop's and Applesauce's fears. She turned Bear, a cat who became aggressive when he heard strange sounds, into a gentle giant who tolerates the dulcet sounds of the violin. She helped Naomi, a recent amputee, regain her sense of balance and her self-esteem. And then there's Button.

Button was brought in as a small kitten. The LSVH staff named her Button because she was as cute as one. However, there was something terribly wrong with this kitten. Button spent her days crouched in the litter pan at the back of her cage. Although the staff tried to pet and interact with her, she didn't respond. Little Button just hadn't come out quite right. She had a dent in her forehead, her neck muscles could barely support her head, her eyes didn't track right and walking seemed like a real effort. She wasn't growing. Button was slow.



**Something was wrong**

LSVH tested her for various developmental diseases. Everything came back negative. Then Button came down with a severe upper respiratory infection and chronic diarrhea. It took forever for her to finally beat the URI. The diarrhea persisted. She often didn't make the box.

I think most people would have euthanized her. Even my most ardent cat admirers told me she didn't have much quality of life. But there was something about Button. Underneath all her physical infirmities was a beautiful soul. Although I knew Sarah was leaving, I asked her to foster one more cat. She agreed. Button would be her hardest case.

Button went to Sarah's, still coughing and sneezing. Even with all the meds, her diarrhea was as bad as ever. Pooping in the litter box was the exception, not the rule. Sarah was patient and loving. She cleaned up after Button, bathed her twice a day and was ever-watchful to place her gently in the box whenever she seemed ready to go. Over time, Button made it more and more often. She began to understand that there was a place to poop, a place to play, a place to sleep and a place to be pet. Sarah worked to build up Button's muscles. Soon Button held her head erect and positively pranced with her new-found motor skills. Sarah devised eye exercises. She dragged ribbons across the floor. Button's field of vision expanded and her eyes began to work together.

Weeks later, Button was strutting her stuff in the LSVH waiting room. Everyone watched; Button had become a star. A long-time client with six cats of her own came in. We talked about Button's issues and how far she had come. It was obvious Gail was interested. However, I didn't push. Adopting a cat with so many special needs would be a big commitment. Gail left and I didn't think further about the matter.



**Button at war with a teddy bear**

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...And Then There's Button continued

Button went back to Sarah's one final time. Then she got a call from LSVH. Gail wanted to try introducing Button to her own cats. Sarah was in tears, both with pride Button had finally gotten a home and with sadness at losing her. "Button is the sweetest, most affectionate cat I've ever known," she says. "She has no fear. All she wants is to be loved."

Button has been at Gail's nearly two weeks now. She's made new friends. Although Sarah still tears up when she talks about her, she knows that Button will have the kind of life we always wanted for her. And she knows it was her work that made it possible.



**Button gains motor skills**

Seeing her pain, I asked Sarah, "Why do you foster animals you know will leave you?" She answered, "It's incredibly rewarding to conquer an animal's fear through simple love. I can't help all the animals in need but I can help the ones that cross my path." That's what we try to do at Artemis. Thank you, Sarah. We will miss you.

*Artemis needs foster homes! A good foster home can make all the difference for a hard-to-place animal. There is simply no substitute for personalized TLC. If you would like to volunteer as a foster home, please call Lizz at 212-712-9600 or Dorian at 212-877-9188.*

## *Adoptable Pets*



*Oliver is a very affectionate 1-year-old boy. He is big, beautiful, and orange. He is curious, playful, and athletic.*



*Ellen is a sassy lady. She needs a cat-savvy friend to keep her happy, healthy, and entertained.*

*We are always looking for the purrfect homes for our adoptable pets. To view all of our Artemis pets, please visit us at: [www.artemis.petfinder.com](http://www.artemis.petfinder.com). Please pass this along to a cat-loving friend. Thank you for everything you do for Artemis cats (and pups too!)*



*Toby is a gentle soul. He is not demanding and really is a calming presence. If you are looking for a cool, contented lap cat, then Toby is your guy.*



*Sophie is a staff favorite at LSVH. She may be a big girl, but she has moves! The belly flop is her cutest one. Despite her medical history, she is doing very well.*

...more pets for adoption on next pag

\$25 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ \$75 \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_\_\_ \$250 \_\_\_\_\_ \$500 \_\_\_\_\_ \$1000 \_\_\_\_\_ Other Amount \_\_\_\_\_.

Yes, I want to help abused and homeless animals. Enclosed is a check for:

THE ARTEMIS PROJECT  
318 W. 77th St. Suite 1B  
New York, NY 10024

These are a couple of the stories your contributions made possible. Please help us help other deserving animals find happy endings to their stories. Tax-deductible donations can be sent to:

*Smudge is very sweet, small, and spritely. She lost her tail after an accident in an auto body shop, but she doesn't seem to miss it one bit.*



*Bear is one of the cats Sarah fostered for Artemis (see previous story "And Then There's Button"). He is on medication, but is doing splendidly in foster care.*



*...Adoptable pets continued*



**The Artemis Project**  
318 West 77th Street, #1B • New York, NY 10024

