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Spirit Cats

by Shelley Berger

If you read the bios of any of the cats at Safe Haven, you will discover one thing. No two are alike. There are cats who've never understood the term "personal space." There are cats who are your best friend at breakfast but take a swipe at you if you interrupt their nap. There are silly cats, bossy cats, and crazy cats. Don't even get me started on kittens. We're sure most cats will find the perfect home despite, or maybe because of their quirks.

Sometimes, a cat arrives at the haven that seems to want nothing to do with people. Many times, we know their back story of neglect or abuse, or even lack of human contact, and we proceed slowly and give lots of positive interaction. Once these cats add up tasty squeeze treats, a warm safe bed, and scritchies in all the right spots which are delivered by our loving, patient volunteers, they warm up to people pretty quickly. Then they find their furever home and another quirky cat takes their place.

Other times a cat arrives and never budges in their distrust or dislike of humans. Some volunteers may remember a big tabby named Jack that resided on the top shelf in one of the cat rooms when Safe Haven was at the Divine farm by Little Amana about 15 years ago. Jack got along fine with his roommates but never left the top shelf when people were in the room. He was labeled unsociable and was deemed unlikely to be adopted. *(Eventually he was adopted by someone who understood him) (needs fact checked)*

Cat psychology has come a long way since then. We know more about their small physical cues and what helps ease their fearful mannerisms. We have diagnosis' for certain behaviors and medications that can help ease symptoms. One term that is being used for cats who have a hard time with human interaction is Spirit Cat. It is a good descriptive term for cats who like to hide under beds...or on the top shelf, just out of reach of humans.

Spirit Cats can be great companions for a resident cat, but people are not their choice for companionship. They are cats who live with you, and who may sometimes grant you the opportunity to touch them. Or, they may not. Patience and understanding is the key to their game.

I have owned two spirit cats. Or rather, I have resided with two. The first came to our house as a kitten who had been teased by the neighborhood kids near my cousin's house. She was an adorable orange and white little ball of fluff we named Penny (...Penny...Penny.) She was just the kind of kitten you'd love to hug and smooch. Penny made it clear we were not her choice for snuggling. Rather, she followed our orange and white cat, Mac, around like the sun rose and set because he said so. I have dozens of pictures of them curled up like a little Yin & yang symbol or giving each other a bath. It just melted your heart. I tried so many times to sneak into their little happy space, but as soon as I got within petting distance, she was off like a shot! After a few months, I noticed that she was hanging around me more. Then, late one night, as I stumbled half asleep to the bathroom, Penny followed me and started rubbing up against my leg and actually let me pet her. I was elated. I thought this cat had finally figured out that I was a bonafide cat person and was ready to be friends. Nope. The next day she was scooting away just out of reach. This scene played out a few times before I figured out that it was the groggy, half awake human that she responded to. So, we moved slowly and in 3 or 4 years, we were the best of friends. Yep, years.

Now, the universe has gifted us a new spirit cat. To be fair, I did say out loud that our cat, Neville, needed a buddy. He was lonely after our cat, Gabby, had to be euthanized. I failed to mention that it would be nice to have a friendly snuggly cat. We certainly did get a friend for Neville. A new little grey and white kitten showed up on our porch with the chickens and was soon named Junie B. She follows Neville around like he's the best thing since catnip. She is just cute as a button and I would love to just snuggle with her. Nope. She's not having it. Yet.

Always rule out health problems with your veterinarian before assuming you have a spirit cat. Painful problems like tooth abscesses or a condition called Feline hyperplasia, can cause similar symptoms.

Here's what to expect with these special cats.

These cats WILL...

- Make great companions for other cats! They are used to living with many cats.
- Most likely get used to one or two people who will be allowed to touch them over time. They may choose to hang out near you, or sleep on the bed with you at night.
- Be a great choice for patient, kind people with a quiet household, who want to make a difference for an individual cat – one that few people have the patience to help.
- Be a fine choice for adopters who don't have a lot of time to devote to a pet – most of these kitties do not need or want much attention from people.

These cats WILL NOT...

- Magically turn into people-loving cats. What you see is what they will be like for a long time, maybe always. Some will change more than others, but be prepared for what you see now.
- Be a good choice for busy homes.
- Be a good choice for homes with young children.

How to help make your spirit cat feel comfortable:

- Provide hiding spaces – enclosed cat beds, hidey holes, even cardboard boxes can all give your cat a sense of safety, and provide enrichment.
- Attempt to play, in short spurts, with your friend – e.g. using laser pointers or wand toys, or throwing jingle or crinkle balls.
- Continue to use treats and tasty food to draw your spirit cat closer to you.
- Consider a Feliway diffuser (a pheromone diffuser which helps calm cats), available at most pet stores.
- Most important of all - BE PATIENT. Give your cat space and time to come to you. He/she WILL become more comfortable over time. This could take weeks, or even months. In the meantime, simply enjoy knowing that you're giving a special cat the home he or she needs!



Mac & Penny

Neville & Junie B



February Adoptions



MISA



NOODLES



BERNIE



SIBERIA



GEMMA



AVERY



TIGER



BARTHOLOMEOW



MISSY



MABEL



WINTER



SNICKERS



So far, activities will include

- **Live and silent auctions**
- **A catered meal**
- **Live music**

Also in the works

- **a trivia game**
- **a walk down memory lane with a slide show**

But we need photos and stories!

**Please share any stories or photos with Shelley
at updates@wesavepets.com**



www.wesavepets.com

319-622-7387

Safe Haven

Soup Supper Fundraiser
March 8th
4:00 PM - 6:30 PM



St. Paul's
United Methodist Church
803 Clearview Drive
Williamsburg, Iowa

\$10 for Soup w/ toppings, bread & dessert
\$7 for soup to go \$5 for desserts

Volunteer Sign Up Links

Workers: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090D49AAA82FA3FB6-47669354-2024#/>

Food: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090D49AAA82FA3FB6-54501306-2025>

NEW KIDS



AVERY



SIBERIA



GEMMA



BERNIE



BULL



BABY



JINX



SALEM



LOUIE



SASSY



PENNY



BEAINE

MORE NEW KIDS



GUS



SWEETS



WITTEN



MEREDITH



SNICKERS



DOZER



RIBSY



MILA



SHEILA



Thank you!



We are blessed with special souls like Annie-lie and Sarah Johnson, who have provided a wonderful home to Bella while she receives hospice care. Bella is thriving and spends her days watching over foster kittens, snoozing with house buddies, or making batch after batch of kitty biscuits.



Abbey Rabe has also provided a loving hospice home and is helping JJ spend lots of time in the warm sun and giving him all the love he deserves.



Many thanks to Suzanne Witte, LMSW, and everyone in her department at the Organ Transplant Center at University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics who participated in a Winter Project and collected donations for Safe Haven of Iowa County.

We want to send out a HUGE thank you to everyone who took part in our Winter Barn Project to help rehome 30 barn cats, including Iowa Humane Alliance, Carnsforth Veterinary Clinic, Dr. Taylor, and our very own Dr. Barbara Roland - who helped with spay/neuter surgeries. We would not have been able to do it without the number of you who reached out to take these cats to your property to care for and provide a warm place to call home.



Gearing up for Snow!

We are so lucky to have Reggie, who always goes the extra mile, rain or snow, to make life easier at Safe Haven!

Alumni



It took Posey just 4 hours to get situated in her new home. Looks like she found a home with a perfect lap for snuggling.

Kate has taken on a rigid schedule as 5am workout coach and then moves on to overseeing coffee production and other family activities from her favorite perch. It's a tough job, but she's up to the task.



"I want to let you know how delightful this cat has been, and that we enjoy her company very much. Today she turns 12. Thank you for taking such good care of her while she was in your shelter. We love Sweetie (and Betty too)!"



Harry, and his best buddy, Godfrey, are recharging for the next playtime.



Look at how big Honey Bun, one of the Great Pyrenees/Shepherd pups has gotten. She now goes by Gertrude and is the 1st of the pups to come back for their spay or neuter surgery.



Tiger found the perfect fit for his forever home complete with comfy rocking chair and lots of love.

We so appreciate and look forward to updates on our cats and dogs that are adopted from Safe Haven. It truly warms our hearts when we get to see and share happy endings for these critters. Past adoptive families, feel free to send us an email at adoptions@wesavepets.com with your pet's progress and updated pictures to be featured!

Out and About



Bull, Chihuahua mix, and Winter, beautiful kitten, went on a special trip to Walden Place Senior Living and purred or wiggled their way into everyone's hearts! Winter, a kitten who was one of 30 barn cats who were caught and expected to be spayed and rehomed to another barn home, required specialized surgery to removed a damaged and infected eye. She has gone from shy barn kitty to snuggly kitten with the help of our volunteers.



#1 FOR NEW COUNTRY
98.1 KHAK

Avery made a trip to visit Courtlin and Brain at KHAK on Furry Friday. The level of energy definitely increased upon Avery's arrival!

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Contributions

Safe Haven has recently received several donations from people taking advantage of the Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) plan available for those who have a 401K or tax qualified investments and are receiving Required Minimum Distributions (for those over 72 years of age). A donation given through this program can become tax free income and there by lower your federal taxes. There are a few rules as to how the money is given, so you should consult with your financial advisor and/or tax consultant. It is a great idea to give to the critters at Safe Haven and save money on your taxes at the same time!

Donate Redeemable Cans and Bottles



\$1,300 that was gathered from our community will be given directly back into the community to spay/neuter and vaccinate community cats - and hopefully help reduce the number of unwanted cats being born each year in Iowa County! So if you have donated your recycled cans/bottles to us, please know our volunteers that run this program appreciate your support, and are so happy to work together with you all to make a positive impact in our community!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Are you looking for a feel-good volunteer opportunity?? You love animals, you say? We may have the perfect gig for you!

We are looking for direct-care dog volunteers. Whether you're looking to snuggle with our dogs or you're looking for a few extra steps in your day and would enjoy taking dogs for a walk on our beautiful trails - we have it all!!

A volunteer application can be found on our website at www.wesavepets.com. Once an application is submitted, our volunteer coordinator will reach out to set up an orientation.

NEEDED:

Weekday mornings for both dogs and cats
weekends evenings for dogs

Taking Care of Business

Financial News:

December Expenses

Supplies	1,708.15
Payroll & Taxes	5,390.96
Spay/Neuter Program	3,167.41
Specialty Vet Services	1,154.68
Surgery Suite Supplies	1,595.17
Water	98.69
Electric	396.20
Internet/Phone	104.51
Website/Newsletter	28.36
Licensing	150.00
Garbage	40.00
Accounting Services	593.78
Office Supplies	58.84
Maintenance	278.99
Capital Equipment	570.00
TOTAL	\$15,335.74



Surgical Suite Update:

January

Cat surgical suite:

- 2 spays and 32neuters
- 10 rabies vaccines
- 15 distemper vaccines
- 18 doses of wormers
- 15 doses ear meds
- 15 doses of Revolution
- 2 nail trims
- 12 FIV/FelV tests
- 11 microchips
- 5 sub Q fluids
- 1 eye removal
- 1 ultrasound
- 1 jaw wire removal

Dog surgical suite

- 2 spays
- 1 neuter
- 2 distemper vaccines
- 5 Bordetella vaccines
- 2 nail trims
- 3 4DX heartworm tests
- 2 microchips
- 4 blood draws
- 1 dental cleaning
- 2 tooth extractions
- 1 urinalysis
- removal of staples
- 1 dose of wormer

Safe Haven Board Members



Courtney
Ralph



Amanda
Wiebold



Elly
Hoehnle



Kimberly
Buresh



Nancy
Kohrt



Susan
Shaull-
Scheer



Colleen
Bowers

Board Meetings

Safe Haven's Board of Directors meets on the **first Tuesday of every month via Zoom at 6:30pm**. If you ever have concerns or questions that you would like to discuss with the board, please feel free to attend the first half an hour of the board meeting. If you are unable to attend at that time, you can always email the shelter at adoptions@wesavepets.com, with your concerns.



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Building Location:
2783 Highway 6 Trail
South Amana, IA 52334
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Mailing Address:
P O Box 444
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