

Timing is Everything

Many of the rescues we get involved with are high pressure: the animals might survive IF we get immediate medical help for them, and their chances of survival if we don't do anything are very poor.

The story of a white cat we named Ziggy illustrates that point quite dramatically. Ziggy was a stray observed for months, living in a barn area. Ziggy started to appear to have a problem with his face/ear area.



Months went by, and nothing was done to help the cat. Finally, a local person decided to take the cat to a vet, assuming that it had an ear infection. This person didn't want to incur medical bills for anything serious, which is understandable from a financial perspective. However, the vet diagnosed the problem as much more than a simple ear infection and recommended surgery to try to fix the problem. We agreed to assume responsibility for the cat from that point forward, to see if we could help this sweet soul survive.

Imagine our horror when the vet called us, while Ziggy was still on the operating table, to report that the infection had eaten away at the cat's sinuses, roof of mouth, gums, etc. In other words, this cat had been enduring indescribable pain and agony for a very long time. And sadly, now that there was someone willing to help it, time had run out. There was no way to give this Ziggy any quality of life because so much of her mouth and skull area had been destroyed.

This kind of story makes us think hard about how important it is to rescue animals and get them help as soon as possible. Waiting too long often means it is impossible to save an animal, impossible to reverse the damage that is done. Impossible to undo the months of fear, pain, and suffering.

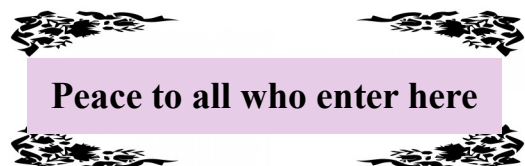
At such times, all we can do is weep privately for that poor animal, We console ourselves by thinking that we tried to do something, we didn't just walk away. Ziggy died without pain and fear, and was loved and cared for until her last breath—if only for a short time.

If only we had gotten her sooner. If only...if only....

However, in most cases, the animals we rescue can be helped. That's reflected in the huge medical bills we have to pay every month. Those with diabetes, or wounds, or broken bones, or special needs like being FIV or feline leukemia positive...the list goes on and on. These animals usually can be saved and given a quality of life. We believe that every life deserves a chance to live, despite all the harshness and cruelty and neglect it has endured.

We have to remember that we cannot change the past. We can't erase the neglect and cruelty and misery that happened. BUT from the time that animal is safe at Animals in Distress, from that moment forward, each animal will be treated with kindness and given every opportunity to survive—and thrive.

A carved wooden plaque is exhibited in the foyer to our Hospitality Center. It reads: "Peace to all who enter here." That message is at the heart of who we are and what we do. Every animal (and person) who enters our shelter will be treated with kindness and respect, with compassion and understanding. And if the animal cannot be saved, at least its last moments will full of love and compassion.



Peace to all who enter here