



# KITTEN'S TALE OF WOE ENDS IN ADOPTION BY NEW OWNER

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*Montgomery County, Virginia* – Cats may not truly have nine lives but for one lucky gray tabby named “Cecil” a life of tragic neglect has turned into a new beginning in a loving home.

A calico, mixed Siamese and tortoiseshell named Bonnibell, Conway and Jamielynn, respectively, among dozens of others, are still looking for that special home.



The journey that took Cecil and the others this far only took five veterinary students, three animal welfare groups, two animal control officers, one veterinarian, one veterinary technician, one police officer, shelter volunteers, assorted other good people and more than a whisker’s hair of good luck.

The chain of events leading to the cats’ rescue began after an anonymous citizen reported seeing dead and neglected cats in a trailer home in Christiansburg. When officers arrived to investigate, 44 hungry cats and kittens – alive but in poor condition – were found living in the home. None of the cats had been vaccinated for rabies, as required by County law, and it was determined that the animals were in need of immediate care.

The 25 adult cats and 19 kittens were rounded up and Virginia Tech officials sprang into action when called to help examine the animals. A team from Virginia Tech’s Veterinary Teaching Hospital was assembled, including support from the pharmacy, vehicle transport and supply areas. The team included a senior faculty clinician, a licensed veterinary technician and three veterinary students. In addition, two animal shelter volunteers (one is a veterinary student) also assisted with the medical evaluations. Of the 44 felines, all but three needed medical attention.

The next day, a second year veterinary student adopted Cecil. Katrina Waisanen could not resist the blue-eyed, longhair kitten that caught her eye because he was the only gray one in the bunch, she said.

“Why did we go?” asked Rick Hiller, hospital administrator for Tech’s Veterinary Teaching Hospital. “It was an opportunity to help while providing a hands-on teaching experience for several students. This is not a typical situation for the hospital, nor is the ‘eviction’ of 44 cats from a single dwelling. Those involved have shared with me a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction in being able to help out.”

Since the County’s Animal Shelter only takes dogs at this time, the felines are currently cared for by the Animal Hope Alliance and Angels of Assisi. Anyone wishing to adopt Conway, Bonnibell or the others may go to [www.petfinder.com](http://www.petfinder.com) to find these organizations. Meanwhile, Cecil is adjusting in his new home with his new siblings, another kitten and two dogs.

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