

# Happy Tails

**W**ith their fabled nine lives, cats are pretty lucky animals. But a 12-year-old kitty named Ashes, who lives with his family in Victor, is even more fortunate than the average feline. After being lost for several weeks without an ID tag or microchip to identify him, he was recently reunited with his grateful family.

Ashes, an indoor/outdoor cat, didn't return home as usual on the night of Friday, November 15. Because he had occasionally strayed for a day or two, his family didn't grow worried until Sunday, when they alerted neighbors, called animal shelters, and searched the surrounding area.

After two weeks without any sign of their kitty friend, husband and wife Joel Sherman and Allison Leet sat down with their 11-year-old twins, Natasha and Slava, for a serious talk. Ashes had never stayed away for such a long time, temperatures had been quite low, and a significant snowstorm hit before Thanksgiving.

"We really felt that there was a good chance we wouldn't ever see Ashes again," says Allison. She and Joel told their children that their pet was getting old; maybe he had died somewhere outside and couldn't return. Ashes had already been through some rough spots; he was born to a feral mother, and an injury had led to the surgical removal of one of his eyes.

Natasha—on whose bed Ashes slept every night before he disappeared—took the news especially hard. "She was grief stricken," says Allison. "She

said her heart was never going to be the same—that now she knew what a broken heart is."

On January 9, Lollypop Farm received a call from Empire Treater Rolls, a manufacturing company in Victor. Dawn Freelove, longtime Lollypop Farm receptionist, took the call. Employees had found a one-eyed cat nearby and had been caring for him for about a week. A staff person named Kay Holt had posted flyers, contacted neighbors, and called vet offices to try to find the kitty's family, and in the meantime, the cat enjoyed a bed, food, and a warm lap. "She said that Ashes became the company mascot for [that] week," says Allison.

When the caller mentioned that the feline visitor only had one eye, Dawn remembered Allison's lost-pet report and made the connection: They had Ashes. Later that day, an Empire employee dropped Ashes off into the waiting arms of the Sherman family. He was dirty and skinny, says Allison, and seemed to have a healed leg injury, but soon he eased back into his normal routine.

When Allison and Natasha visited Kay to thank her, they discovered a remarkable coincidence: It wasn't the first time they met. Natasha had sold Girl Scout cookies to Kay just last fall.

With the national average only around two percent for cat owners achieving reunions with their lost pets, Ashes' return to his family is, if not quite a miracle, definitely rare. As Allison says, "We are all in a happy state of shock!" ●



"Ashes" gets a hug from Natasha after returning home.

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We receive so many Happy Tails stories from adopters that we have created a place to post them all online. Read more successful adoption stories from Lollypop Farm at <http://go.lollypop.org/happytails>.

Send us your Happy Tails! Email pictures of your Lollypop Farm alumni and a short update to [info@lollypop.org](mailto:info@lollypop.org).