

Darla's Success Story

By Jed & Brenda DuVall

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It was early February of 2017 and we were not really looking for another cat. We had three, Tybee and Loma (from KSC) and Grady (from AWLA). My wife Brenda was on the KSC website and saw Darla and mentioned her to me. I reached out to Jacky who had worked with us to adopt Tybee and Loma. She arranged to meet me at the shelter on a weekday to meet Darla since she was very afraid of people due to her previous living conditions. I could not get very close to her, but I knew if she had the right people, other cats, and living conditions that she would be a great cat.

Brenda and I stopped by together the following Saturday to see her during visiting hours. Darla was up on top of post near the wall and you could see in her eyes that she was very afraid with all the normal activity of a busy Saturday. Brenda said she thought Darla would go through the wall if she could to get away from the people. We decided right there that we wanted to adopt her and see if we could work with her to have a peaceful and fun life. We thought she would enjoy being in a home with other cats and that was confirmed by Jacky and Vivien the KSC brain trust.

We completed the paperwork and sent it in and on February 18, 2017 we came to the shelter at Noon to pick her up. Helen was able to get her in a carrier before we arrived, although she pooped in the carrier as usual because she was afraid. We brought her home and kept her isolated for a few days until we could have her stool checked before we introduced her to our other cats. We would sit with her in the basement and she would fall asleep with us there as long as we did not get too close. She had a new home and it looked like she was feeling more comfortable and she picked out a favorite sleeping spot

We introduced her to the other cats and Grady, the senior cat, kind of took her under his wing and looked out for her. Tybee and Loma were also very welcoming and I think she was happy to have some new friends to help her adjust. At this point we could not get close to her and she spent most of her time in her basement room. As the days went by, she would venture to the top of the basement stairs and then run back down. After a few weeks, she made it up to the main floor and became more playful with our other cats.

As the volunteers at KSC know, Darla loves to eat and she would let us get close to her when we were feeding her. After a few more weeks, she would let us touch her while we were putting her food on the dish and if she had her back turned. Eventually, we could give her a good rub at feeding time. She began sleeping upstairs on the couch after about two months' time. She became close buddies with Loma our female Norwegian Forest Cat and Tybee and Grady as well.

Just last week she approached me as I sat on the stairs and let me give her a good rub down without any food to entice her. Brenda is also no able to pick her up for a very short time, also with no food present. She has become a real player and loves to romp with her new friends and chase anything that moves. Tybee has asthma and get a breathing treatment every morning after which he gets deli mesquite smoked turkey as his reward. Darla quickly learned this routine and would very nicely try to steal his turkey; she now gets some of her own and loves it.

We think the key to this success story was taking our time and letting her come to us, although we did try to show her she was safe and let her see us interact with our other cats. This story shows that all cats have the potential to be great pets given the right circumstances and surrounding. Thank you to all the KSC volunteers, especially Jacky, Helen and Vivien for making this possible.

