



2007 Christmas Newsletter

During the Holiday Season it becomes imperative to thank those who have given tirelessly throughout the past year. All year long you give the gift of yourself. Without you CARE would not be. We would like to take a few minutes to thank all of you. This newsletter is dedicated to you! The stories that follow were written by a few CARE volunteers about the cats we all love.

Eerie chooses a Mom



I've been a perfectionist for as long as I can remember; to the point that if a sheet of paper had a bent corner or a piece of furniture had a single scratch on it, I just couldn't use it. But the first time Eerie, probably the least physically perfect cat at CARE, glared at me with those beautiful green eyes and jumped down from his perch to greet me, my heart was taken.

Its an incredible thing to find a new love in your life, especially when it is returned by a leopard. I became Eerie's adoptive parent to ensure that this perfectly imperfect and majestic creature will always have a safe haven at CARE and that his every need will be taken care of; whether it be love or the medication he needs everyday to keep him comfortable and happy. I've been questioned by many asking why I don't donate to other causes, why these cats, and it is this very reason- humans have a voice and animals don't. So I chose to be the voice of the voiceless and help the ones who don't have the choice or the voice to help themselves. Consider being the voice of a Big Cat, its such a rewarding feeling to know you are truly making a

difference and improving the life of an animal who can not do it on their own. -Danielle Aguillard

Tragedy and Triumph

Savanna and Lacy are two Bengal Tigers that just could not get along with others. After arguing with their cage mates one too many times, they were both separated from their respected groups, doomed to live a lonely existence. Both were moved to "the alley," an area built for solitary cats. A miracle then occurred. Savanna 6 years old and Lacy 15 years old became best friends. They will never live together, but they can share chuffs and love through their adjoining fence. The two of them never seemed so happy.



Thank You *Build-a-Bear Workshop* for your generous support of CARE. Adoptive parents all received donated plush White Tigers.



A Roommate for Tabby

CARE is my second home. Whenever I have a number of days off, I'll spend them at CARE. It's kind of like a big sleepover with good friends. Now, dear reader, please understand that the available space in our vet center can only accommodate so many guests, interns, and volunteers. That being said, I wish to tell an interesting story that took place many moons ago when we had a good number of people staying the evening. Space became tight, and I asked Heidi, our executive director, where I could sleep. She suggested that I pull out an extra mattress that we had in the back of our vet center and sleep next to Tabby's (elderly Bengal Tiger) indoor enclosure. Oh boy. I had never slept next to a tiger before, and I was a bit apprehensive as to



what I was getting myself into. When I was ready to bed down for the night, I walked to the back room of the vet center with pillow and blanket in-tow. Once in the room, I cautiously surveyed my snooze grounds. Tabby was already lying down inside her enclosure; staring at me with a look that seemed to say, "What do you want?"

For a suspended moment, as we looked into each other's eyes, I pondered whether or not it would be a good idea for me to just sleep in the bathroom and then try to explain myself to everyone in the morning. Tabby broke the silence by saying, "Snuffle!" *What's up?*

To which I replied, "Snuffle-chuff!" *Not much, how are you?*

"Chuff-snuffle-snuffle?" *Hey, you're that guy who

sometimes feeds me, aren't you?*

"Snuffle-snuffle" *Yeah, sometimes*

"Chuff-snuffle-chuff!" *Cool, you're neat! Well, goodnight!*

With our little ice-breaker out of the way, I felt a lot more comfortable, and we both went to sleep. Over the course of the next few months, I started sleeping next to Tabby more and more; even when there was ample space available for me to bed down elsewhere. I started spending more time with her at different spots during the day as well; sometimes spending hours looking into each other's eyes as we lay with our heads on our pillows. We became very close. It got to the point where Tabby would light up like a little cub whenever I would walk into the room, and her eyes would remain fixed on my every move until I would come over to her enclosure and give her some snuffles and lovin'. It didn't matter who else was in the room- if I was there, then no one else seemed to exist to her. Nowadays, I feel awkward if I don't sleep next to her.

She sometimes gets frustrated at the fact that there is cross-hatched metal separating us. She paws at it; wishing so desperately that she could actually hold me (and if I didn't think that she might accidentally hurt me, I'd let her). When this happens, I calm her down with a soothing voice by telling her, "I know how you feel, baby girl. I really do." and we have to make do with holding hands/paws.

It's alright though, because she knows that I'm not going anywhere any time soon. She's my girl, and I'm her man.

-Derek Krahn

Remember to see the new website www.bigcatcare.org. It is beautiful. Newsletters are posted under the news section. If you would like to receive newsletters by e-mail, and you do not already please send a request to heidi@bigcatcare.org.

CARE's Own Lion Whisperer



Sampson, Sprinkles and Layla are the wonderfully wild African Lions of CARE. During initial contemplation of a research program involving Vitamin A deficiencies in Lions, our own "*Lion Whisperer*", Curtis Hutson, stepped forward to start the training. Curtis has been a long term volunteer with 8 years experience at CARE. He, and his family, sacrifice many hours a week to prepare these three lions for this exciting project. Curtis says, "You have to start of slow and be patient. Feeding Sprinkle's bottle and brushing Sampson's mane are somewhat miracles in themselves".

Last year Curtis allocated initial resources in building specially designed enclosures which allow him to do his amazing work. "We hear about people being injured

and even killed by big cats. At CARE safety always comes first," says Curtis. He does not go into the enclosure, but is able to work with the Lions from the outside reaching in carefully, which reduces risk immensely.

"To complete this study we must determine Vitamin A levels through blood samples. Sedation is dangerous to the cats and must be minimized," he said. Curtis is hoping to train survivors, like Sampson, who has had vitamin A deficiencies as a cub, to give blood without being sedated. "I am so excited for the next couple of years at CARE. We will be making a difference in the future survival of Lions as a species." Keep an eye on CARE's web research section for updates on our "*Lion Whisperers*" progress.

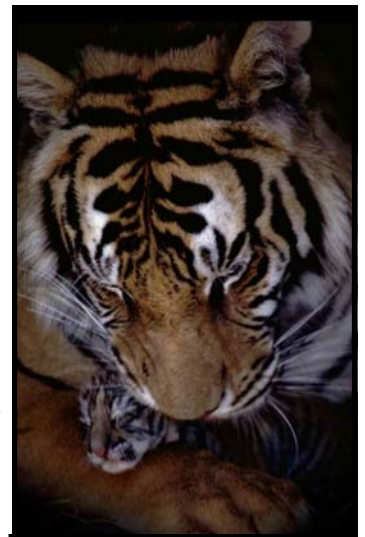
Remember the big cats of CARE this Holiday Season. Donations can be made on-line with any major credit card. Without you there is no CARE!

A Special Note from Heidi

Dear CARE Friends and Family,

I don't think it is possible to tell you all how much you mean in the world of CARE. I wish there was enough hours between now and Christmas to let you know how I truly feel. When CARE was established several years ago, it seemed impossible we would ever make it through the first year, let alone 5 years. As you all well know it has not been an easy road. All of you pooled your resources and created a wonderful home for the 54 cats who live here. I don't know why God blessed us with such a remarkable group of people, but I do know you are all truly remarkable heroes in my eyes. There is no possible arrangement of words that could convey what my heart would say to the people who have been here through the years. Some still close to CARE....some have walked away for lives elsewhere. I give to you all near and far....the deepest most heartfelt THANK YOU, for being there for me and the cats when it was needed. I also wish for you ALL to know CARE's doors are always open....where Love and Forgiveness are always unconditional and Thanks is eternal. I wish you all the most beautiful, peaceful year filled with the love you all deserve. God Bless you all!

-Heidi



Remembering those from years past. My favorite picture Katie and baby 1995.

Happy Holidays from your four legged friends!



Sprinkles



Tinkerbell



Tigger



Jezzabell



Arctic



Whitie



245 CR 3422

Bridgeport, TX 76426

TEL: 940-683-5034

FAX: 940-683-5062

<http://www.bigcatcare.org>

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