



NINE LIVES ΕΠΤΑΨΥΧΕΣ

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Photo courtesy of Yiorgos Karahalios

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Welcome to the world of Nine Lives

Nine Lives society has been working systematically for the last two years for the relief of stray cats that have almost run out of nine lives.

Most of us had been working independently or in animal welfare societies, and in 2006 we decided to join forces and work decisively for the cats in Athens and elsewhere in Greece.

Our original brief was the care of the 80-90 abandoned cats in the Zappeion and National Gardens in central Athens, feeding them daily and taking them to the vet for medical care when necessary. However, since then, our programme has expanded to include feeding and neutering in Plaka-Acropolis and Peristeri areas, as well as helping indi-

viduals and societies financially and practically to accomplish neutering of stray cats in areas throughout Greece.

Neutering is the most crucial task for us, because it is the only proven, humane way to tackle the stray overpopulation problem.

Wherever possible given our limited resources (there are only a few of us, with jobs and families, working for the cats in our spare time), we try to help people who feed strays in their neighbourhoods to get these cats neutered, by lending them traps or even going and trapping the cats ourselves and taking them to and from the vets. We also often pay part or all of the neutering costs.

In 2008, with the generous help of the Greek Cat Welfare Society, the Greek Animal Welfare Fund and the World Society for the Protection of Animals, we neutered 1,040 cats throughout Greece and over 300 in Athens – largely thanks to our tireless vet Popi Marouli.

Financially, we are dependent on donations and the proceeds from our car-boot sales and other special events. We receive no subsidies or support from local or central government. (NB Although municipalities are – on paper at least – required to carry out neutering programmes for stray dogs, no such legislation exists for cats.)

Since becoming a legally recognised charity in autumn 2008,

we are asking kind individuals who would like to support our work to pay an annual subscription to Nine Lives.

The fee is 25 euros – which works out at just 2 euros per month, the cost of the food for the cats of the National Gardens for one day.

The members of our society council are Evgenia Mataranga, Carol Spanou, Cordelia Madden, Eleni Kefalopoulou and Magda Panoutsopoulou. Nine Lives is a member society of the World Society for the Protection of Animals.

These wonderful creatures need us and we need you. Join us and let's help give the street cats of Greece a better life. They deserve it.



PURR-FECT ENDINGS!



Leo

It's a long way from their days in the park, where the only place to curl up was a branch of a tree, and where they had to be on constant alert for packs of dogs intent on a kill



Emily



Carlos

During 2008, we were lucky enough to find excellent homes for nearly 40 former stray cats and kittens – mostly, it must be confessed, through constant badgering of our friends and acquaintances, but also through adverts kindly placed by Adespotologio internet group, through our website and newspaper listings and through Angela Collins at the Greek Cat Welfare Society in the UK.

The most heartfelt thanks go to faithful volunteer feeder Jim, who not only himself took in three former Zappeio Gardens cats (silver-grey Emily, an elderly lady who was the last survivor at an insalubrious feeding spot targeted by passing packs of dogs; our mascot Carlos: a 10kg black ruffian with a heart of pure gold; and handsome Manos, the only survivor of a formerly large, but ageing, colony) but also persuaded friends to offer a home to Litsa, a 13-year-old who can now live the rest of her days in warmth and security.

It was thanks to the determined efforts of Rachel – who spent her spare time during a stay in Athens feeding the Zappeio cats, baking cakes to sell at fundraising events, making Christmas cards and getting an article in her local newspaper back home – that three more of our Zappeio Gardens cats found wonderful homes with families in England. Eileen and Anne responded immediately, opening their houses and hearts (not to



Gigi at Rachel's home in England

mention wallets) to the Athenian felines featured in the article.

Months later, following microchips, rabies jabs, passports, blood-tests and the obligatory six-month indoor quarantine in the homes of kind Athens fosters Irene and Ada, the three cats were boxed up and on their way. Thanks to a BA bungle, Gigi (a 3-year-old silver-tabby with a wonky jaw, dumped two years ago in the park) arrived without her passport and had to stay overnight at Heathrow, with poor Eileen having to do two taxi trips from Poole and back, first with Mimi (a pretty tabby-and-white 4-year-old, abandoned in the traditional summer exodus from Athens) and then with Gigi, once her passport had been found on the runway (or stuck to someone else's luggage, or goodness only knows where else).

Handsome ginger boy Leo, meanwhile, arrived at Anne's home almost in one piece (he'd lost his voice through distress calls throughout the journey)

and settled in very quickly, living a princely life with Anne, who sends us photos of him reclining in his basket and striding around the garden - he prefers the radiator though, being an Athens hothouse boy.

Gigi soon established herself as queen of the realm at Eileen's house, to the distress of her original cat, while Mimi took longer to emerge from the sofa – and then, when she did, promptly disappeared, setting off an extensive search -and-rescue mission. In the end, she was found, at the house next door, enjoying the Gigi-free environment. After months of effort by Eileen to persuade the cats to live peacefully together, fate stepped in. Rachel, returned from Greece and currently cat-less, offered to take Gigi. And so, a happy ending all around: Gigi enjoying the one-cat household she had craved; Mimi relishing the comfort of Eileen's house where peace reigns once more; and Leo happily snoozing in Anne's armchair.



Jess: Second time lucky

Some of you may remember the story of the cute black-and-white kitten on our website homepage, who was dumped in the National Gardens in central Athens just six weeks old, then enjoyed the loving care of our foster 'mum' Christina until she found a permanent home with elderly Mrs Mairi. Or what we hoped was a permanent home...

In the middle of August, Mrs Mairi rang Cordelia to say that she was going into hospital and could we

collect the cat as she had no-one to look after her and didn't think, even when she got out of hospital, that she would be well enough to look after a cat.

Hm. Mid-August, peak holiday season, all catteries full, all possible fosterers away: the situation looked hopeless.

But then, a miracle! Sue, our wonderful supporter who had already adopted the kitten Jasmine (read her story on the Cat Tails page of our website), offered to take the cat until a home

could be found. And then, even more of a miracle, Sue's best friend Amy fell in love with the cat! Named Jess, she now lives a blissfully happy life with Amy and her fiance, being spoiled rotten and enjoying all the luxuries that a cat can dream of.

Meanwhile Jasmine and Sue moved to England, taking the cross-country journey to avoid Jasmine having to suffer in the aeroplane hold, and she is now making faces at plump moggies in Milton Keynes!



Jess as a kitten (above) and a gorgeous adult cat



Magus: Home at last

Eleni found him in Plaka, part of a sickly colony she had recently discovered and added to her lengthy daily feeding round. A scrawny black kitten, one side of Magus' head was completely deformed by his infected eyeball having 'exploded'. Despite his abject condition, both Magus and his handsome tabby brother (who also had the infection, although to a much less serious degree) were heartbreakingly friendly.

Eleni rushed them to the vet, where Magus' eye was removed and the socket stitched up; they were both neutered at the same time and put on a course of antibiotics to fight the infection. Once they were healthy, Eleni released them back at their 'home', an abandoned building just below the Acropolis.

It may be a prime piece of real estate, but less than paradise for the cats. Within weeks, Magus' beautiful brother had disappeared, we fear killed by stray dogs. The younger kittens had also vanished. Only Magus was left.

Well, we couldn't leave him. And so began a seemingly endless succession of adverts, emails, phone calls, as we attempted to unite Magus with a loving owner. Foster homes were offered – Andrea sweetly kept him for over a month, and kind Stephanie had him for two weeks – but we just couldn't seem to find that perfect home for life. Maybe because of his colour, or his missing eye. Or maybe it was just bad timing.

And then a last desperate email hit home – with our lovely Greek-Australian

supporter Maria, who had already adopted one Nine Lives cat, little Cleo. A week after dropping him off, we went to visit. Cleo had overcome her initial dismay and, though they were not actually curled up together as Maria told us they love to sleep, they were obviously good friends. Magus looked gorgeous, black coat shining, an amber collar around his neck, matching his gleaming eye. Maria calls him her 'love-bug', because he's always up for a cuddle – even if he isn't, in her estimation, the brightest cat on the block.

Of all our adoptions so far, this one brings the biggest smile to our faces. With his poor vision and friendly nature, Magus was a walking victim on the streets. Thanks to Maria, his future is guaranteed.

Nine Lives is neutering cats in Zappeio & the National Gardens, Plaka-Acropolis, Kato Patissia-Peristeri and Mount Lycabettus



Magus on the streets of Plaka (above) and safely home





PLAKA-ACROPOLIS PROGRAMME



The Acropolis cats could become our ambassadors: they are so healthy now



Rasmigia

They live in one of the most beautiful parts of Athens. They can be found in the garden of the New Acropolis Museum, they run up and down the narrow streets that circle the Acropolis. They play at the



Hondrouli



A recently-spayed female

Dionysos theatre and bask at the base of the ancient columns. In winter they hide in a derelict taverna and sleep in the store-room with the marbles and statues. Tourists play with them and take home their photographs as souvenirs. They could become our best ambassadors because they are healthy, friendly and beautiful.

In 2008, we neutered 47 of them: the cats at the Vakhou tavern, those on Vakhos and Vyronos streets, from the abandoned houses towards Anafiotika district, at the New Acropolis Museum, the Acropolis primary school and on Filoppapou hill. In 2009, with your help, we hope to neuter many more, extending the scheme further into Plaka and Anafiotika, where endless litters of sickly kittens are born and die.

The gorgeous cats around the Acropolis, in the National Gardens and Zappeion are an example of how healthy and happy cats can be if neutering programmes are followed, in conjunction with proper food and medical treatment when they are ill or injured. No more starving, sick kittens on the brink of death.

The Mayor of Athens and the local authorities could take a wander around these areas to see for themselves how a humane programme for stray animals can work successfully – with hard work, dedication and funding.

When you come to visit the Acropolis, spare a thought for Rasmigia, Flouflis, Koutsonouris and the rest of their gang hanging out around the columns. They would love a stroke, not to mention some cat-treats!

THANK YOU!

A huge thank you to the societies:

The Greek Animal Welfare Fund and Carol McBeth, for the generous grant, continuous support and assistance. The Greek Cat Welfare Fund and Angela Collins for all the help, practical & financial. The World Society for the Protection of Animals for the generous grant. SNIP International & Voice of the Animals, USA, for the traps. Strays of Greece, UK, for their generous donations of cat food. SPAZ Glyfada for support, not least giving us a spot at their car-boot sale every month! Nestle Purina for an extremely generous donation of Friskies cat food.

And most heartfelt thanks to all our friends who have helped us in every way:

Cassie Wagstaffe and Mimis Manolakis at Cafe Boheme for enthusiastically hosting our fundraising parties. Ashlee Benis and Paul Gripari for their fabulous donation of 500 euros. Marcy and Rick Klein in Rochester, NY, for their generous monthly donations. Meredith Pavlidi for the fantastic website. Barbara from Munich for her continued support. Lucille for always helping in emergencies. Heather Biggs for her wonderful handmade cat greetings cards. Joanne in New York for her generous donations and cat traps. Ada, Andrea, Christina, Liz and Stephanie for fostering kittens and ill cats.

We are especially grateful to Yvette Berkley, Alan Jamieson, Jan Barr, Tom Coleman, Tim White, Margaret Walsh, Claire McMeekin, Nicki Bell and Nicola Maughn Brown



IN LOVING MEMORY 2007-2008

Of **Fiddler** on the roof, a crossed-eyed tabby kitten and his little companions that took refuge on a roof, one by one killed by dogs. Darling moon-faced **Natalie**, so quiet and scared and who had been with us for years. A **long-haired calico** beauty queen and a **small black kitten** both found dead on a Sunday feeding session.

Stavros, a handsome black-and-white boy so irresponsibly abandoned next to a place where packs of dogs sleep. Poor old **Achilleas**, a ginger cat that had recovered from mouth problems. A big **ginger-white** boy who spent his mornings with the Zappeio gardeners. **Gogo** a black- and-white cat with skin problems who had been a long-term resident. A huge **tabby-and-white** boy that had boldly started wandering off from his 'safe' feeding spot and who reportedly suffered a miserable death.

All of these cats were mauled to death by the packs of bored and forsaken dogs.

Tumbles - so named because he always fell onto the ground or the feet of his feeders. We had taken care of him for 10+ years and named a special cat-food soup after him, made for a terrible mouth problem he had. We, fortunately, managed to cure him of that. We even tried to home him with a lovely Italian girl who called him *Mio amore* but he couldn't settle inside a home and was thrilled to return to the park to his loving friends. What happened on that spring day, Tumbles? After all those years of managing to evade danger... We suspect you were going a bit deaf as you had started turning up last at feeding sessions after a lot of calling from us, maybe that's the reason you didn't hear the dogs roaming the park and looking for fun. Tumbles had a long life



Our dear ginger-white boy



Darling Tumbles



Beautiful loner Sandy

and I hope we made it special for him. We cannot begin to say how much we miss you.

Tumbles' friends: **the old calico** who had suffered for years with a mouth disorder and who had developed kidney disease, and her friend **the ginger-and-white**, a shy boy who had recently discovered a great love of being brushed, also with kidney disease. Darling **Oscar**, who loved to be picked up and carried from one feeding station to the next, and who suddenly disappeared.

Sandy the petite, tabby primadonna and who had spent years on the roof that had been 'taken over' by Fiddler and his gang. She decided to take up residence with a small group of friendly males and even though she was a bit of a loner, she had remarkably settled in well with the boys. Sandy cut her leg and started limping. Despite our efforts to catch and treat her, she met her fate on Christmas Eve of 2008. Sandy was 13 years old and beginning to look frail. Her death was painful for us all.

The sense of loss of one of our cats is sometimes overpowering whether we have taken care of them for a short time or for years, whether it be from illness or a tragic death.

Sleep soundly little ones, and remember you were truly loved. We miss you.



Sweet moon-faced Natalie



Oscar loved to be carried



Achilleas the friendly ginger



Stavros, also known as Tom



Fiddler the roof kitten



SPONSOR A NINE LIVES CAT

Would you like to sponsor one of our abandoned cats or kittens?

As you know we look after large colonies of cats around the centre of Athens. We feed them every day and make sure they are all neutered so that no new kittens are born and they receive any medical attention they require. Unfortunately, the dumping of cats and kittens goes on and on so our work seems never to end.

Our food bills are around 400 euros per month and then there are the vet bills and medicines we have to buy. We pay for these bills by doing monthly car boot sales and from fundraising events like book sales, buffet dinner parties etc.

We know that many of you would like to help our cats but live far away. For 10 euros per month you can sponsor one of our sweethearts and this way you will contribute to a cat's well being and have a special place in our cats'

lives and in our team.

For 10 euros per month you will receive:

- 🐾 A sponsorship certificate with a close-up photo of your chosen cat
- 🐾 Your cat's story
- 🐾 A two-monthly update on your cat's progress

Please go to our photo gallery page on our website to choose your feline friend!

A few of our cats are:

Natalie the torty: We once homed her but she just wouldn't settle indoors so we had to return her to the gardens where she has lived for many years. Unfortunately, she is going a little deaf so she is under constant observation in case the situation gets worse. Natalie is a beautiful chubby tortoiseshell who loves poking her head into the food bag as she can't wait for it to be spooned out!

Puncho: A companion of Natalie, tabby-and-white

Puncho was skin-and-bone when he was dumped about 3 years ago. It was shocking to see how undernourished and neglected he was. Now he is a furry, plump, handsome darling who loves a lot of stroking and cuddling.

Gorgeous Grace. We are desperate to find a home for beautiful Gracie. She is a light-coloured grey puss with a white chest and white socks. She is very loving to her feeders but doesn't get on with the other cats. Gracie is about 3 years old.

Ouranouli: A handsome long-haired black-and-white love mush who loves everyone and is loved by all. He has been with us for several years and would make the most perfect companion.

Please contact Carol at www.ninelivesgreece.com or ninelivesgreece@gmail.com for further information about our cats and how to sponsor. Thank you!



Shy tortoiseshell Natalie



Handsome Puncho



Gorgeous Gracie

What is a cat?

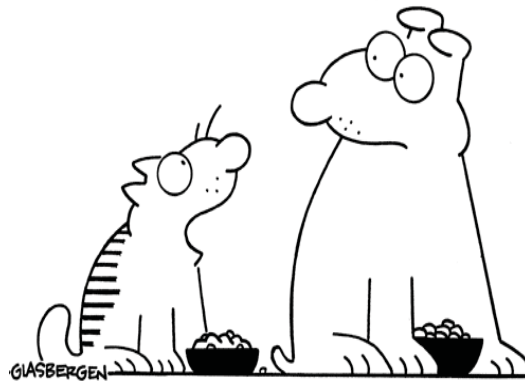
Philosophical definition:

A being that embarrasses other beings because it does not work and it's not edible.

Poetic definition:

Abysmal personality; four-legged; most pretty; nine-lived being.

Psychoanalytic definition: Personification of a general guilt (at home) or a definite tail panic (on the streets).



"The vet says i need a hobby. I thought eating and sleeping were my hobbies!"

WSPA member society Nine Lives - Επταψυχες is registered charity number 18938. For more information email ninelivesgreece@gmail.com

We're on the web! See www.ninelivesgreece.com