

Chiquita's History and Testimonial

Last night Chiquita slept in our bed. To many pet owners that might not sound unusual. However, this has been a huge life journey for Chiquita, certainly a new life amidst her nine.

From a child of five when I picked out my first kitten I have always lived with a cat. When Merlin died I soon wanted another companion. One morning a friend told me she needed someone to adopt her daughters' cat. she sent me a picture and I was hooked by Chiquita's beauty and easily convinced Wes.

We all agreed to make the transfer after the Holidays. I was naive enough to somehow not consider the trauma of this for Chiquita.

As a baby she had been first adopted off the streets of the Dominican Republic. Sometime later she was brought to the U.S. Her human parents soon had their own baby and Chiquita had to learn to share them.

Before long Chiquita had to bear another move when her "mother" decided to divorce. In her new home she was not wanted and so she came to Wes and me. At least, we so imagined for we did not see her for almost two months.

When she arrived in her carrier she slithered out and hid under a dresser. At her first opportunity unbeknownst to anyone she slinked off to safety in a more secure hiding place. We eventually discovered her going into the space above the cellar ceiling tiles where she would stay all day. It was a very gradual process to get her to come out and eat while we were around vs in the dark of night. Wes' office was downstairs so now and then Chiquita would summon up her courage and curiosity to peek around the corner at him. Little by little, much too slowly for me, she started trusting us. **I needed lots of supportive strategies and Karen patiently encouraged me. Chiquita might have had to endure another move if it were not for Karen's kind support.** I would feed, clean the litter box and pay for the care of an invisible cat when we traveled, which was not what I had originally envisioned in my desire for a new companion.

Now, in what seems like six short months we now have our new companion. In fact, a sometimes quite attention demanding companion. Chiquita follows Wes like a puppy dog, looks adoringly at her life rescuer and clearly likes to be with us----even sleeps with us in trust. Thanks to Karens' support we have our new life companion.

*Judith, Falls Church, VA
July 2, 2011*