

Welcome to the latest newsletter from VOCAL (Η Φωνή της γάτας). VOCAL has continued to work hard for the cause of cats since we last sent you news in the summer of 2010. During what is usually our quieter winter period we had to deal with a lot of sickness and injury in adult cats from towns and villages in the area. This period moved almost seamlessly into the kitten season. As a result, foster homes remain full and volunteers have had little chance to recoup energy levels as cats and kittens have continued to need our help and support.

I hope you will enjoy looking at the pictures and reading the stories, news and updates. Remember, even the sad stories or photos have a positive message, it means that VOCAL was there, VOCAL intervened and VOCAL relieved suffering. This is our purpose and will continue to be so during the coming year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our many friends and supporters who have supported us during the past year and I hope you will continue to follow and support our work in the months ahead. From all of the VOCAL volunteers we send you our best wishes and hope you have an enjoyable summer.

Virginia Swain-Dixon

President

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visit us on the web:

www.miaow.info

or email:

vswain@miaow.info



Devoted to the cause of cats

Committed to improving their welfare and treatment

VOCAL is always grateful for donations of worm/flea medications or money donations towards our many expenses. For example, we use over 30kg of dry food per week and have to travel 80km each way to visit a vet. If you can help, in anyway, please contact vswain@miaow.info or click on the donate button on our website www.miaow.info to pay through Paypal.

The Seasick Moggy



We live on a sailing boat and one day we found a small kitten looking rather hungry and lost on the marina pontoon, so we fed him and kept an eye on him for a few days, but on New Year's day 2010 we found him in a very distressed state. This was diagnosed as poisoning. It was touch and go but with the help of a local vet he recovered fully. He moved aboard our boat and made himself at home. We named him Pita. Unfortunately when the Spring came and we started sailing again we discovered that Pita didn't have sea legs. He hated sailing and

would regularly be seasick. When we moored up in a harbour he would rush off the boat and miaow with joy to be on the land again. Then while on the island of Leros, Pita got run over by a car. He was unable to use his back legs for three weeks but slowly and miraculously recovered. He would regularly fall in the harbour but always managed to survive – he became a very good swimmer! His first year of life was a tough one to say the least.

We sailed on and fell in love with our purry, furry boy, but it was obvious that Pita would never adapt to the sailing lifestyle. We arrived in Agios Nikolaos on the island of Crete to stay for the winter and decided that the best thing for him was to be taken to France to live with a relative. We would miss him terribly but knew that he would be much happier with French soil beneath his paws. We contacted Vocal who were extremely helpful, providing us

with lots of advice regarding how to obtain a pet passport. They even drove us and Pita to the vet for all the necessary inoculations. Thanks to the help from Vocal Pita now lives in central France in a large house with a big garden along with three other cats, a dog and lots of chickens.

Claire and Chris

VONASI
V-oyaging ON A S-mall
I-ncome



Updates From Last Year's Initiatives

Two of the new VOCAL initiatives that were launched last year are proving very successful.

The "CHANGE FOR CATS APPEAL", the small change box has raised a surprising amount of money - over 230€! Participants collect their change and when the box is full, pay it into in the VOCAL bank account. Some small businesses have taken them on and many individual supporters too.

If you're interested in receiving a box, email:
vswain@miaow.info



The Amazon.co.uk partnership is also a simple but effective way of VOCAL raising funds; the best part is, it doesn't cost the buyer a thing. VOCAL receives a small percentage of purchases from Amazon when they log on through our website:

www.miaow.info



PHOTOS FROM THIS YEAR



VOCAL Volunteer Profile - Lynn and John Duncan

My name is Lynn. I came to Crete five years ago to retire, together with my husband John, and our seven year old Gordon Setter, Baxter. Sadly Baxter died not long after we arrived in Crete. Our home was so quiet, and for the first time in my life I had no animals around me. Both John & I wanted another pet but were so upset after losing Baxter that we felt it was too soon to have another dog. Many years before in England I had worked with the Cats Protection League fostering cats and kittens, with a capacity for forty cats! Plus at that time I had twelve cats of my own....So we decided that the time was right and that we should take a cat into our family. One day we walked past a fund raising bazaar for VOCAL. At that time we didn't even know that VOCAL existed. I expect you can guess the rest!!! We asked if they had any cats needing a home,and Ruben entered our home.

Immediately our lives were turned around, we found ourselves laughing again. Ruben had an injury to a back leg and at eighteen months old we thought he would be a sweet and quiet little cat. How wrong can you be!!!!

We live on the side of a mountain, and our dear little cat has grown into a big, strong boy, who regularly leaves presents for us.... rats, mice, lizards, birds, frogs and snakes!!! A year later we felt ready to have another dog, and a Boxer, Alsatian cross puppy joined the family, we called her Gypsy. Around this time I was suffering with back problems and could not get out much. I thought perhaps fostering the occasional kitten would give me an interest. So, I volunteered my services to VOCAL. Well, three years later, our house is never without foster kittens and cats. Our own cats now number six, and both Gypsy and John help me to care for them!!! We also help with fund raising and trips to the vet which is an hour car journey away. There never seems to be enough hours in the day any more. I seem to remember that we came to Crete with the intention of taking it easy.... Must go now and set the alarm clock, I have a tiny, sick kitten who will need to be fed every two hours through the night.

To date Lynn and John have fostered 75 kittens!



Hallie



In January while feeding a local dog in Nikithiano I saw what I thought was a cat that was pulling itself along – I thought it had been knocked down.

Following it around the building, I saw it was a cat but it seemed to be waddling. I saw the greek guy from the house & asked him if he knew anything about it – he said it was one of the kittens that was born the previous summer and that it had disappeared quite a few months ago. Then in December it had reappeared, with both its back legs cut off at the thigh. He said it was too nervous to get to. But I persevered – within a week I managed to stroke her. See was walking on her two front legs.

As I am a foster carer and volunteer for VOCAL, Virginia and I talked and she agreed that VOCAL would sponsor her and try to find her a home. I decided to take her on & hopefully we would find a permanent home for her.

Slowly, slowly I gained her trust. At first, at every noise she was petrified and my other cats & dogs did not amuse her – she hid in her cage for weeks. But now, five months on she is fantastic – how do animals adapt so well?! She keeps herself so clean and she loves being combed & scratched. She plays with her toys & hits balls back to you when you throw them to her. In the house she prefers walking on the rugs, but charges round the house on her 2 legs. My back garden is enclosed & she ventures up the step into the garden & loves sunbathing. She has a great quality of life.

The latest good news is that a couple living in Mulheim, in the Ruhr region of Germany have adopted her, they already have disabled cats. She has a nice house and an enclosed garden where she can play. Hallie, is now known as Emma and is settling into her new life very well!

Julie Malone



Izzy



Izzy is a young female cat who was picked up from a street in Agios Nikolaos by VOCAL volunteer Hanne during one of her feeding rounds. Both eyes were blind from infection. She was neutered and one eye had to be removed. The other eye is almost blind too, but allows a little light to come in. Unfortunately Izzy is extremely timid and wary of human contact so she is a difficult cat to find a home for, especially as she will go to any lengths to get outside of a house. She needs an interesting but totally secure garden. So, she is currently living with VOCAL President Virginia and spends most of her time exploring and playing in the fields and undergrowth outside the home. She has been vaccinated and Virginia can stroke her whilst she is being fed. We continue to seek a suitable home for her but in the meantime she seems to enjoy her freedom, is safe from busy roads and fed regularly.

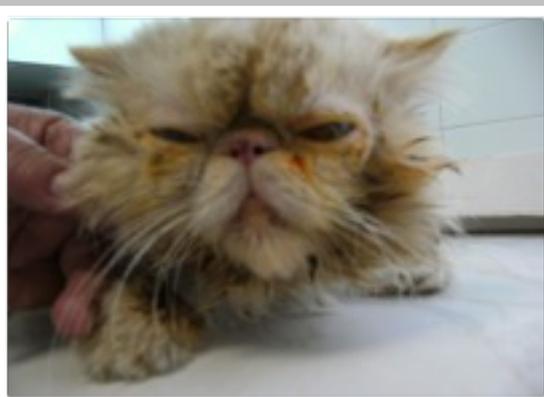


Challenges of 2010-2011

Picadilly was rehomed after being found with acid/hot water burns.

Hero was rehomed in Germany after coming in with an abscess, dehydration and malnutrition.

The Persian was found abandoned and very neglected in Agios Nikolaos, has been adopted by a Greek lady and VOCAL has supported his treatments and neutering.



The work of VOCAL was recently featured by the Best Friends Animal Association, in an article spotlighting animal welfare issues in Greece. A copy of the article can be found at this web address: <http://network.bestfriends.org/golocal/international/16849/news.aspx>

Other News!

In May, we enjoyed a five day visit from Patricia and Carmen, from the group "Tierschutzverein Santorini". This group has helped VOCAL enormously during the last five years. They came to see the work of VOCAL, to help us, and to take back four kittens, Lenny, Benny, Penny and Roxanna for Carmen to foster. They were able to see the daily ongoing feeding and health care programmes as we shadowed Hanne on her rounds, as well seeing the cats and kittens currently in our care. They were also able to witness some of the emergencies that arise, such as, a phone call from a distraught German couple who were staying in a hotel in Agios Nikolaos, who experienced a mother abandoning its kitten, on their balcony! On the way to the airport for Pat and Carmen's return to Frankfurt, we had to detour via the hotel to pick up the kitten. We also tried to fit in some fun things too, such as a boat trip to see Spinalongha island.



VOCAL recently took over a large feeding station in Agios Nikolaos. An English lady and her friends had maintained it for many years but due to ill health, she could not continue. VOCAL has supported the station through neutering and health care for the last five years, but now is also responsible for feeding up to 30 cats every day.



VOCAL gives grateful thanks to Christine, Mike, Dan and Andrea Tolfree who hosted an Indian lunch for us at their Elounda taverna, The Lotus Eaters, in May. Over 30 people supported the event and enjoyed a delicious selection of Indian dishes as well as several hours of good company. VOCAL raised over 300 euros due to their hard work and generosity.



COMING SOON...

2012 Calendars

**Printed on high
quality paper.**

To see a preview, email:
claire.matthews@mac.com