

## Cruelty Disguised as Love

### Fat Cat Loses Weight, Finds a Home

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The moral of Alice the cat's story: Think twice before overfeeding your pet. When an 8-year-old, 24-pound cat named Alice was surrendered to the Rhode Island Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RISPCA), veterinary health care team members there knew they faced a big job.

"We felt so bad for Alice's condition and wanted to help get things turned around quickly," said Jacqueline Rose, an RISPCA spokeswoman. "Some [people] would walk by and feel bad, but others laughed like she was a sideshow attraction. That really upset us, because it was people who overfed her and discarded her to us in this state."

According to a release from the RISPCA, Alice had a loving demeanor, but she was so obese that she couldn't walk more than three feet at a time. Her lack of mobility made her fearful of other cats and left her unable to clean herself.

Amy Karls, DVM, a practice development veterinarian at Hill's Pet Nutrition Inc., joined the effort to get Alice in shape.

"We knew Alice's size was keeping her from having a normal quality of life," said Karls. "We decided to restrict her daily caloric intake and give her weekly weigh-ins with the goal of getting her down to 15 pounds."

While Alice was being cared for at the shelter, Nancy Vanasse began discussing the idea of adopting the cat with her husband, Arthur "Skip" Vanasse.

"My husband and I had been going back and forth on whether we should get another cat," Nancy said. "I met Alice during her weight-loss celebration party and immediately fell in love with her. I talked with my husband and he got really excited about the idea of us potentially adopting her."

Nancy spoke to Jacqueline Rose, who recommended her as a good adoption candidate. Around this same time, Skip passed away unexpectedly. When she heard her application to foster Alice had gone through, Nancy made it a personal mission to take good care of Alice so she could keep her long term in memory of her husband.

"I went through a difficult time after Skip's passing and Alice has been a great comfort to me," Nancy said.

Through her treatment at the RISPCA and compliant home care from Nancy, Alice reached her goal weight and then some. She now weighs 14 pounds.

"We hope pet owners will see Alice's story and think before they overfeed their pets," said Rose. "Obesity like this is truly a long, drawn-out form of cruelty disguised as love."