

Dying Cat Comforts Rest Home Residents

The formerly undernourished feline, who wandered into a rest home about a year ago, serves as therapy for residents.

A stray cat that was taken in after wandering into a Massachusetts rest home during mid-winter over a year ago has been a source of comfort for residents, even though he himself may not have long to live.

Tommy, an unknown breed, lives at Whittaker Rest Home in Weymouth, Mass., and is a therapy cat due to his ability to sooth the 36 residents, many of whom suffer from bipolar disorder and schizophrenia.

But now Tommy himself is seriously ill he's dying of kidney failure. And though still friendly, he's fairly scrawny. A turning point came during two weeks in December, when Tommy disappeared from the home for two weeks. Eventually the homes activities director and her husband recovered the cat via an ad in the paper, but Tommy was again scrawny and malnourished, just like when he first showed up at the rest home. He wasn't eating because his kidneys were failing.

But now, Tommy is receiving daily intravenous feedings thanks to a couple who works with stray cats for the South Shore Humane Society.

On Friday, April 7, one of the rest home residents taking care of the cat said Tommy was holding his own, although he still needs the IV every day.

The resident, who didn't want to be identified, said that theres no prognosis on how much time Tommy has left. As long as he maintains, they really don't know how long hell live, he said.

Posted: April 10, 2006, 5:00 a.m. EST