

Virginia Beach SPCA Wins AHA Essay Contest

The story of Smokey, a stray cat that finally found a home, captures the prize: a screening of Garfield: A Tail of Two Kitties."

In *Garfield: A Tail of Two Kitties*, Garfield gets a taste of life as a pampered prince. As part of National Adopt-A-Cat Month, the American Humane Association (AHA) invited animal shelter professionals to submit essays describing how real-life cats went from being paupers to princes. This week AHA announced the winner of the contest: the Virginia Beach Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA).

Heidi Giroux, events director for the Virginia Beach SPCA, told the story of Smokey, a gray tabby brought to the shelter by a neighbor who witnessed the cat being abused by people who rescued him from the streets. Smokey endured a cat's nightmare of torture, and recuperated at the shelter for six months.

Smokey's story has a happy ending. He was adopted into a loving home where he is now pampered and indulged. As for his tormentors, they were found guilty of felony animal cruelty and sentenced to 12 months in jail.

For submitting the winning essay, the Virginia Beach SPCA will receive a free theater screening of the movie *Garfield: A Tail of Two Kitties*, a selection of 20th Century Fox DVD movies, Garfield autographed memorabilia and a one-year professional membership in the AHA.

Posted: July 31, 2006, 5 a.m., EST