

Cat Wins Pet Idol Contest

Willow the cat receives the most votes in The Toledo Blade's 2008 Pet Idol contest.

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Valerie Murphy knew her 5-year-old cat, Willow, had a good chance of winning this year's Pet Idol contest. Murphy described her tabby and white cat as keen, spirited and affectionate, the perfect qualities for a Pet Idol, The Toledo (Ohio) Blade reports.

Readers of the Blade agreed with Murphy, as they cast more than a million votes in the contest. Willow made it through a field of 350 contestants to come out as top cat. "I was surprised and excited about her winning," Murphy said. "And I was happy that a cat won this year, because a dog won last year."

As the winner, Willow will receive a basket of organic cat food and treats, a collar, grooming comb and cat toys. Murphy will enjoy gift certificates to Toledo-area restaurants and a pet portrait painted by artist Lily Spang.

The Pet Idol contest — sponsored by The Toledo Blade, WTVG-TV, Channel 13 and the Toledo Area Metroparks' MetroBarks membership program — also raised money for Planned Pethood Inc. and The Blade's Newspaper in Education program. Contest voters were offered the option to donate to these causes, and contributed more than \$19,000.