

Michigan Vet Helps Place Lebanese Cats in New Homes

Rescue project ties into global pet spay and neuter initiative.

By Soraya Gutierrez

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Cats Mombey and Azure traveled from Lebanon to the United States to find new homes. An animal welfare group in Lebanon helped find homes for seven cats in the United States after teaming up with a veterinarian in Michigan. Bruce Langlois, DVM, hospital director at Animal Hospital of Lowell, welcomed 14 cats and one dog to his clinic as part of a global initiative to spay and neuter 100,000 animals a year on a clinic-by-clinic basis.

Langlois visited Beirut in February as part of an outreach effort with Remote Area Medical, a volunteer organization that provides free health care and veterinary services in remote areas throughout the world. During his one-week stay in Beirut, he trained other veterinarians and a rescue group on how to operate high-volume spay/neuter programs in a sterile and humane way.

Rescue group members were interested in traveling to the United States to learn more about caring for pets. They arrived in Michigan in April, along with the 14 cats and one dog in need of homes.

The dog and seven cats were adopted, Langlois said. An adoption event is planned to find homes for the remaining cats.

Tabboush the cat was relocated from Lebanon to the United States. The cats were given names such as Tabboush, which means "chubby" in Arabic. Tabboush was abandoned by his owners on a street in Lebanon. Langlois said they were likely left to roam the streets when their owners fled Lebanon during a time of political unrest. The animals were rescued from the streets by volunteers; some were found next to garbage bins.

"This small group is the only animal rescue group in all of Lebanon," Langlois said. "They are doing a very good job."

Marguerite Shaarawi accompanied the cats on the flight from Lebanon. She said it's important to emphasize the need for spay/neuter programs to control the pet population. "Animals all over the world need help," she said.

Shaarawi will spend one more week in Michigan before returning to Lebanon. To learn more about Remote Area Medical, visit the organization's website.