

Rescued Katrina Cat Thrives in New Home

Emory the tabby cat's survival tale to be featured on reality TV series.

By Soraya Gutierrez

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Emory the cat will be featured on the reality TV show "Housecat Housecall." Gary Smith didn't think that adopting a homeless cat would make for good reality TV. The New Orleans resident was more concerned about providing food and shelter for a cat that was left to roam the flood-ravaged streets after Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast in 2005.

When Smith first saw the stray tabby cat, it was trotting along behind the armed soldiers that patrolled the city streets. He figured that they were probably the cat's main food suppliers, so when he later adopted the stray cat, he chose the name Emory, for the MRE (Meal, Ready to Eat) rations the cat likely was fed.

Once Smith took the cat in, the surprises began. A visit to the veterinarian revealed that the cat was not a female, as Smith originally had believed. The cat also had several quirky qualities, including an affinity for jumping into a running shower.

Smith shared his experiences on a cat website, and his posts were discovered by a casting director for a production company. The director convinced Smith that a story about a cat surviving Hurricane Katrina was worth sharing. After weeks of consideration with his partner Brenda, the couple decided to allow a film crew into their home for a weekend of filming the show "Housecat Housecall."

Gary Smith (fifth from left) and his partner Brenda (sixth from left) welcomed the "Housecat Housecall" crew into their New Orleans home.

"I just thought it would be interesting," he said. "In our case, the production company loved the idea of a cat having survived Hurricane Katrina and being adopted, and that the owners were trying to help him assimilate into a new, domestic environment."

In each episode of the reality show "Housecat Housecall," a doctor comes into a household that is experiencing issues with a pet and helps the owners overcome any challenges. In addition to Emory's habit of jumping in the shower, Smith said the cat also had problems using the litterbox correctly and that he had a tendency to bite if his paws were touched or if he felt otherwise threatened.

For two days, the TV crew gathered footage of the cat with his owners and of the doctor working with the couple to resolve the varied issues with the cat. The first episode of "Housecat Housecall," featuring Emory the Katrina survivor, is scheduled to air Saturday, June 7, on the Animal Planet network.