

Featured Felines: Escapes & Rescues 10 (2020)

(page checked June 2026)

Five rescues of street cats

Maximus, Harrow, Mr Willis, Khy Shadowstryder, Padou

Maximus

Great Barr,
Birmingham,
England

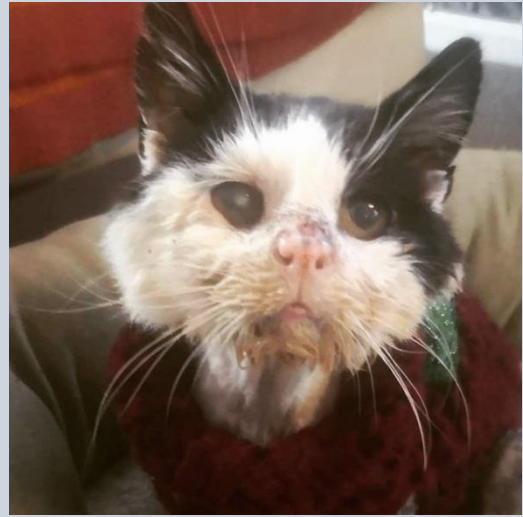


In November 2016 Street Cat Rescue Team West Midlands (SCRT) took in a dishevelled stray cat off the streets in Great Barr, a district of Birmingham. He had FIV (feline immunodeficiency virus) as well as a number of other infections, a severely matted coat, and claws grown so much as to curl under his paws, which must have caused great discomfort. He had probably been on the streets for at least ten years, and was given the name **Maximus**.

Treatment of Maximus' various health issues began, at White Cross vets in Wolverhampton, and his story caught the public imagination, so that some £10,000 was raised to help pay for his vet fees. In addition, treats and toys began to arrive from around the world as his story became known. He had many ups and downs, but throughout showed his amazing character, never failing to put a smile on his carers' faces. The SCRT founder, Lucy Strickland, described him as 'the funniest, strongest, most amazing cat to ever grace this Earth'.

Sadly, after he'd been cared for for just eight weeks, Maximus died in late January 2020. The vets called to say that despite being on oxygen he was struggling with his breathing, Although medically there seemed to be nothing wrong, he just had no fight left in him and died a couple of hours later; the vet nurses held him and comforted him until he passed away. Everyone who had known him was heartbroken. It wasn't for lack of care; no stone had been left unturned in his treatment and everything that could have been done had been done, but his body just couldn't cope any longer. He was thought to have been about 12 years old.





[Express & Star](#) (March 2019 – archived copy) | [BBC](#) (Jan. 2020) | [Metro](#) (Jan. 2020 – archived copy: a touching tribute)

* * * * *

Harrow **Los Angeles, California, USA**



During 2019 Alley Cat rescue of Los Angeles took in an elderly tabby cat who'd been living on the streets alone for a while; his owner had died and the cat had kept returning to his old home to no avail, until the rescuers picked him up. He had matted fur and a number of health issues, as well as battle scars and a mangled ear. He was very thankful to be safe, kept purring all through the vet's examination and 'talked' to the staff. Named **Harrow**, he started to regain his health, including recovering from an upper respiratory infection, put on weight and his fur began to grow back well.

In order to keep him happy and help him to heal, he was introduced to a couple of foster kittens. He took to them straight away – and that was the start of a new lease of life for the old boy! He purred continually with the little ones around him and has helped a succession of them; he likes to be near them, gives them plenty of love and seems to know what they need in order to thrive. The kittens, in turn, find comfort in having a warm, purring cat to snuggle up to; they clamber all over him and run around his feet when he eats.



With Stella, another street cat found all alone



Cuddling with Eevie, who had an eye injury

Sadly 'Grandpaw Harrow', as he became known, didn't have all that long to enjoy his new and happy life, as he died in Septembner 2020 – but he did have over a year of being loved and cared for.

| [LoveMeow](#) (July 2019)

* * * * *

Mr Willis, 'the saddest cat'

Minnesota, USA



A very sad-looking ginger cat was taken in off the streets in 2019 by the Animal Humane Society in Minnesota in the USA. Estimated to be about six years old, he was in quite a sorry state, with scars, an eye injury and chipped teeth, and he tested positive for FIV. He also picked up an infection at the shelter. All in all he didn't look like a good prospect for rehoming – although he proved to be one of the sweetest and most friendly and affectionate cats at the shelter, purring loudly when anyone approached and loving attention. They named him **Mr Willis**.

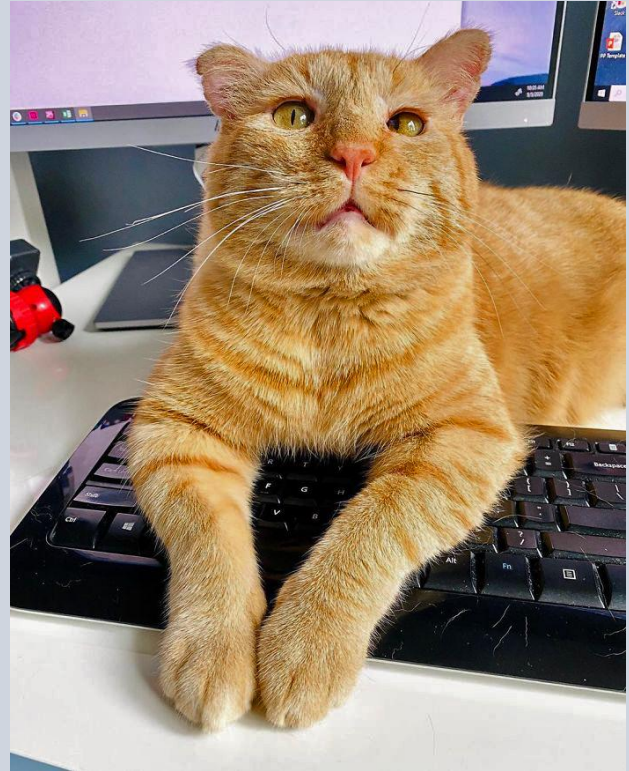
But one day some weeks later – on International Cat Day, as it happened – a lady called Sandra saw his details online and her heart went out to him. She hadn't been thinking of acquiring a cat, and the landlord of her property had a 'no pets' policy, but she knew she had to visit Mr Willis. He loved her attention and cuddles, purring all the while, but with the 'no pets' rule she felt she couldn't take him, and left feeling very sad. She followed his progress on social media, and when she learned he had an infection, she visited again. After that she made regular visits to see him, falling more in love with him each time – and decided she had to approach her landlord. She sent him a photo of Mr Willis, explaining the situation, and with some persuasion he agreed to make an exception to the rule!

Sandra brought him out of the shelter the next day. Mr Willis had a home at last.



He spent his whole first night cuddling with her and purring; he followed her everywhere and wanted to be on her lap whenever she sat down. It wasn't all plain sailing; Mr Willis was quite sick for a while, had to fight off the infections he'd picked up, and there were a number of vet visits – but eventually he became a happy and healthy cat, a far cry from the sad-looking animal rescued from the streets. In 2023 he'd been with Sandra for four years, making him around ten years old, so he should still have a number of good years ahead. He has pages on [Facebook](#) and on [Instagram](#).

[Bored Panda](#) (Aug. 2020 – *archived copy*) | [Pupperish](#) (undated) | [Heart](#) (Aug. 2020) | [Cole & Marmalade](#) (Aug. 2023)



During 2025 Mr Willis suffered some heart problems, but with love, care and patience he recovered, and in mid-2026 was still living his best life.



* * * * *

Khy Shadowstryder
Los Angeles, California, USA



In March 2021 a kind couple found a cat abandoned in a northern California neighbourhood and started to feed him. They noticed that his nose was beginning to swell; his condition became worse, he stopped eating and obviously needed medical attention. Rushed to a vet, he was found to have cryptococcus, a fungal infection picked up outdoors by inhalation. The couple realised they'd be unable to provide the specialised care he'd need, so they reached out to Milo's Sanctuary, a shelter caring for cats with special needs located in Burbank, Los Angeles, where **Khy Shadowstryder**, as he was named, was taken in.

When he arrived at Miio's Khy was emaciated and very sick. The left side of his face was severely swollen and he just lay curled up. Treatment was begun immediately, and Khy showed that he had determination and the will to live; he seemed grateful for the attention he was receiving. With plenty of love and care he began to gain strength, and as soon as he was strong enough he was given surgery to properly treat the face wound. As he began to feel better his personality started to shine through, and he turned out to be quite a love-bug! He loved to cuddle with people, with other cats or even a pillow



Khy will need lifelong care and attention and is in Milo's Lifetime Care Program. It's unknown whether his nose will return to normal size, but it doesn't matter as he's loved just as he is. He's befriended other long-term residents, gives them face-rubs when he meets them, and comes running when his caretaker calls. He loves his food and treats, and was slowly learning to play with toys. And he loves his tummy rubs and kisses! 'We can't describe how loving, sweet and gentle he is,' said one of the sanctuary staff. [Love Meow](#) (March 2021 – archived copy)



Khy remains at the sanctuary and in August 2025 was named their 'cat of the week'! .

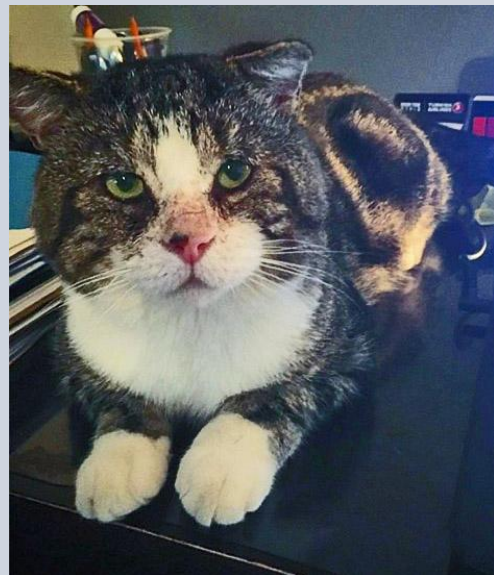
* * * * *

Padou

Montreal, Canada



When he was roaming the streets of Montreal in Canada with battle scars, hanging around in courtyards, under cars and on pavements even in the coldest weather, no one paid attention to street cat **Padou** – until Aya of Chatons Orphelins Montréal saw him during 2021 and wanted to help. She started to feed him, and slowly he began to become used to her. She thought that his health was deteriorating, and so wanted to take further action to help him. Traps were set out, but Padou was too wary of them and they didn't succeed in catching him. Eventually, by finger-feeding him over a period of time so that he became used to physical contact, it was possible to take him in.



He was found to be positive for FIV (feline immuno-deficiency virus), so medication for that began straight away, as well as treatment for his worms and fleas. Slowly he started to trust people and interact with them, although new people and even other cats scared him. But gradually he overcame his fears and was on his way to being a happy and healthy cat. By the end of 2018 he was enjoying cuddles and liked to follow his foster-mum around. He was warm and safe, and hopefully would find his forever home before long.

[Newssolor](#) (Dec. 2022, many photos) | [LoveMeow](#) (Dec. 2018) | [Just Something](#) (undated: many photos)



In February 2019 it was announced that Padou had been adopted and had found his forever home.

*** * * * ***