

## Cases From Our Clinic: The Cat in the Wall

*Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff*



stories  
from our  
clinic



One afternoon, our clinic received one of our strangest calls - a family had found a lost cat. While we typically examine dozens of strays a month, what made this truly a case for the books was where this brave cat was found.

Anita and her daughter had moved into their new house only a month earlier. On moving day, the former residents stopped by with a frantic request: their housecat, a 6-year-old brown tabby named Princess, had run away during the commotion of boxes and packing.

Would they please keep a lookout and call immediately if they found her? The heartsick family was moving to Arizona, and leaving their lost cat behind.

It was not long after settling in to their new place that Anita started hearing faint meowing at night. As weeks passed, they began to notice an ammonia-like smell of cat urine lingering in the bathroom. Anita and her daughter examined the room more thoroughly. Looking in the cabinet under the sink where the smell was strongest, they heard a muffled, plaintive meowing. They also noticed that a piece of drywall in the back of the cabinet had recently been patched over.

Anita and her daughter removed the drywall and a bone-thin, moist and matted Princess emerged. They dried her off, gave her some water, offered food, and called the previous owners in Arizona. The shy tabby must have climbed into the tempting recesses of the bathroom plumbing while the wall was briefly open for repairs, becoming trapped there during the last hectic hours before moving. Princess' relieved but anxious owners advised Anita to bring the cat to our clinic; they would be booking the earliest flight back.

Princess was indeed in rough shape after a month trapped in the wall. She was frail and severely dehydrated. We ran blood work on her, set up IV fluids, and fed small, frequent amounts of a bland, easily digestible diet. Other than elevated liver enzymes from malnutrition and weight loss, she was surprisingly healthy considering the trauma she had been through.

Though her liver problems would take some time to recover, within a week at our clinic, Princess was stable enough to return with her owners to Phoenix. She further convalesced at an animal hospital for another month, battling digestive problems on

and off for quite some time. But the last we heard, the lucky-to-be-found feline was living quite a pampered life with her family under the Arizona sun.