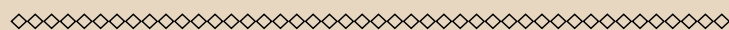


Sadie's story



In April, 2004, Sadie, her mate, and two other boys were abandoned in an empty apartment. On May 8, they were turned over to a shelter. The volunteer shelter staff were not equipped to recognize and treat their malnutrition. Sadie was so thin and desperate for human attention that she often squeezed out of her cage to seek it – they thought the cage was too big for her, but she weighed half of what she should have. The four languished for a week before someone familiar with rats took them in. This was a chance encounter, and they were lucky to be rescued. Even so, only one survived.

Sadie's last days at home were filled with baby food, quiet comfort, and medication to help her breathe. She rewarded her caregiver with kisses and bruxes (a rat's version of purring). Despite her love of life, her body was too weak and her lungs were too filled with fluid for her to heal. She was gently, and all too soon, put to sleep under anaesthetic. She was dearly missed by her mate.



On moving day, too many pets are abandoned just like unwanted furniture. Some don't even have voices to call out their distress. If they are found and turned in to the shelter, care is in short supply. If you cannot take your pet with you to your new home, it is your responsibility to find them one – either before or after you move. **Place ads, talk to people,** and above all, **give it time.** If you want a pet, or can foster one from time to time, look for ads and call your local shelter. Read up on their care. Be prepared. A pet is a friend only you can protect from harm.

Your pet needs a home, too. Don't abandon them when you leave yours.