

Piper's Cold Winter Rescue

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Winter can be a beautiful time of year . . . snowmen, icicles, trees hanging heavy with piles of glittering snowflakes . . . But, along with all that beauty comes cold, sometimes frigid weather. The average temperature in Finlay, Ohio in January is about 25 degrees Fahrenheit. That may not seem like the coldest place to be in the winter but, when you are stuck in a wet, icy drainpipe with no blanket and no food for a few days . . . then it probably seems like the coldest place on earth.

Susan Orians was passing by Donnell Middle School in Finlay, Ohio on a Wednesday evening in January of 2014 when she heard a noise coming from the downspout on the school's wall. Upon closer inspection she realized it was the faint meowing of a cat. Susan went home and returned with tuna to try and coax the cat out. Other bystanders had gathered and they also tried to help free the crying cat. One helpful bystander even tried a cellphone app that meowed. But, nothing could lure the cold, scared little kitty out. Finally, the small group of would-be rescuers made the decision to contact the school first thing in the morning. The concerned group disbanded but not before vowing to return the next day and try and help with the rescue.

When the school received Susan's call early Thursday morning they quickly contacted the Hancock County Humane Society. Employees and volunteers of the humane society arrived on the scene and began working to save the cat.

A hole was cut in to the downspout then food and catnip were placed in to try and entice the cat out. After some time had passed with no sign of the cat, a camera was placed in to the downspout. They soon discovered that the cat was too big to fit through the downspout and gain freedom. After exhausting all their efforts, workers left the scene around 8:30pm on Thursday evening but vowed

to return the next morning with a solution to save the poor feline. Early Friday morning the workers returned to the school and began digging out the buried portion of the drainage pipe. By 10am on Thursday, the cat was finally freed from the pipe.

The orange male cat was very muddy and emaciated. He was quickly taken to the local veterinarian where he was found to be suffering from hypothermia. Upon further inspection, the poor cat was found to have a broken leg and other injuries that indicated more trauma than what the drainpipe could have done. Though he was battered and beaten, he was expected to make a full recovery.

The loyal group of volunteers who helped rescue the stranded cat decided to name him "Piper" in reference to his time spent stuck in the drainpipe. They learned that Piper most likely crawled into the pipe through a drainage basin located on a nearby street. Most likely hiding from whatever threat had injured him in the first place.

The positive side of Piper's story is that his rescue made headlines and garnered much attention. Many people came forward with requests to adopt the cat and give him a forever home. Happily, Piper won't need to worry about being caught out in the cold, harsh winter any more.