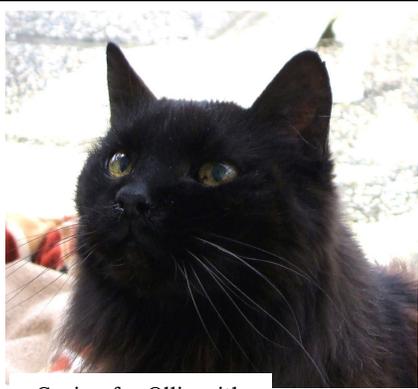
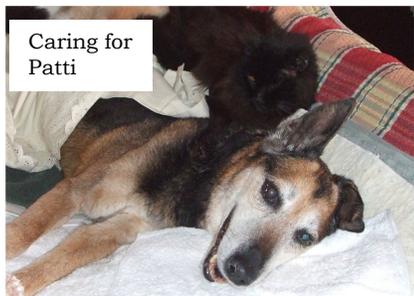


In honor of Charlie's last days

8/14/2008



Caring for Ollie with Beau & Barney



Caring for Patti



There for Dafne-Ann



Sushi's last day



Holding Ollie's paw

Almost six weeks ago I wrote Charlie's story, which ended with the words.....

"Two short days ago Charlie started to have serious seizures and, although responding well to remedies, I feel the time has finally come when I need to share the beautiful story of her BrightHaven journey with others so that you, in turn, can experience the magic of how animals care for, and can help each other through transition and the beauty of the end of life".

At that time I had no thought that it would be another six weeks before I would write to give news of her death, which I did, sadly, this very morning.

Her story told almost all, and this piece, which I am impelled to write in her memory, will be given mostly to pictures which will show you the love she gave as nurse Charlie as well as the love given to her by others in her last days, most notably from nurse Lucy Nightingale, as we now think of her!!

Charlie's last days were spent in love. She was surrounded – by her human family of Richard, Fray, my Mum, Blanca, Jessica, Melissa, Elvia, volunteers too numerous to mention, and animals; again too many to be able to mention everyone, but Lucy must take precedence as she only left Charlie's side for moments at a time. We started to envision her wearing a starched white nurse's hat, as she would lean in close to watch us ministering to Charlie – We felt certain she was ensuring we were doing our job right and her patient's comfort was of tantamount importance!!

Of all the photographs we have, I regret not taking those of our night-time vigils, when the blow-up bed would lie beside Charlie's own and Richard, Fray and I would share the night in shifts beside the girls. Of course we were joined by cats-a-plenty and always attentive Joey, who would never be left out!!

In the last month Charlie again responded so unbelievably well to homeopathic care that we almost wondered if she would astonish everyone and recover, but deep down we knew this to be indeed her time and saw her as happy and savoring every last moment.

And, so my friends, that is exactly what she did. For the last month Charlie smiled as she sat up to request a drink or more food – generally the case! This girl ate her way through veritable mountains of food – brought lovingly by the attentive humans in her service. She ate well until the last week, when her abilities slowed down daily, and we realized time to be running short.

During the last days the weather gradually grew hotter and with it came the flies.....OK by us generally, but attracted to our girl - NO!! we said.

Blanca came to the rescue and, soon Charlie and Lucy were cocooned in pink pretty netting – fit for the princesses they were!



At first we thought they may be a-fearred of the swathed material, but no – they seemed to know it was there for their comfort and this picture shows you how beautiful they looked! I wanted to show you this as there are many ways to be inventive in the care of our loved ones – and this is an extra special one!!

For the last couple of days most cats stayed away – their farewells said, leaving Lucy with her charge. The journey became more obvious as Charlie became unable to eat or drink more than a sip or two. A caring nurse to the end, there was Lucy always happy to oblige by finishing any leftovers for her friend – especially the pureed natural diet mixed with baby food that has now become her own special treat!!!

Last evening Charlie simply called me with an unusual, sweet but loud, meow.....I went to give her a drinkand gave her a couple of drops – but she wanted just to hold my hands – tightly – and then I realized.....I carried her with me, as I telephoned Fray to come quickly – and we all lay together on the couch.

Charlie left in just a few minutes – the most peaceful and gentle passing anyone could ever wish for. Lucy was with us on the couch to say farewell – and we all sat together a while.

I will forever be grateful that she called me to be with her as she sped from my arms to those of the angels, or maybe those of innumerable BH animals before her!

Today Lucy lies alone in the bed they shared for so long. She is OK and so well loved that we know she will bounce back – most probably into the arms of her previous love – or husband perhaps – the tubby Mr. Woody, who is waiting patiently in the wings for her return to my office. We will see.

For now our memories are sweet, treasures to be shared and we will be talking of this most sweet and selfless lady for a long time.

Please enjoy her pictures and join us in thanks to her wonderful vet and friend, Dr. Adriana, who helped us both through many days, night-times too. She is indeed a bright light in BrightHaven’s sky.

*To die proudly when it is no longer possible to live proudly,
Death of one's own free choice, death at the proper time,
with a clear head and with joyfulness,
consummated in the midst of children and witnesses:
so that an actual leave-taking is possible
while he who is leaving is still there.
~Friedrich Nietzsche, Expeditions of an Untimely Man*

