

FROM CRISIS TO CARE

LifeLine Crisis Relief Grants help grassroots organizations help animals in need

Once upon a time there were two wild-born cougar cubs who were illegally taken from their home in the wilderness of California. Many people and organizations came together to help these confused and frightened cubs. Vista, a female, had a significant neurological problem that affected her ability to walk and caused her muscles to atrophy. Her brother, Castle, was feisty and healthy. He watched over his sister and guarded her. The incredible bond they shared was no surprise given all they'd been through in their short lives. The Wildcat Sanctuary was to be their final stop. Here they were provided an environment that allowed Vista to thrive, despite her disability. She and her brother finally felt safe and secure to live out their lives—wild at heart.

—Tammy Quist, *The Wildcat Sanctuary in Sandstone, Minnesota*

Castle and Vista are just two of the animals who have received a second chance thanks to UAN's LifeLine Crisis Relief Grant Program for Organizations. Crisis Relief Grants are designed to help non-profit organizations that are working to care for a group of animals in crisis. In Castle and Vista's case, the grant covered costs to transport the cubs from a holding facility within the California Department of Fish and Game to their new home at The Wildcat Sanctuary. Because the cubs were taken from the wild and exposed

to people, they could not safely be reintroduced to their natural habitat. But today they are living in a large enclosure that closely mirrors that environment with wooden platforms, trees and grass.

Castle and Vista aren't the only "big cats" to end up at The Wildcat Sanctuary thanks to a recent UAN Crisis Relief Grant. In October, Wildlife Watch, Inc. in New Paltz, New York took in three African lions, three mountain lions and one black leopard when a nearby private game park shut down. Wildlife Watch typically



Helping Wild Cats Of Another Kind

Without a UAN Crisis Relief Grant, dozens of feral cats at a colony in Stockton, California would have been wiped out by a developer's bulldozer. Cindy Minghelli, president of Agee Memorial Wildlife Fund, had been trapping and altering feral cats at a tourist destination called Pollardville Ghost Town since 2003. But late last year she learned that the property was sold and the new owners intended to bulldoze all the buildings, cats and all.

Cindy began contacting area organizations to get help relocating



operates educational campaigns about the humane treatment of wildlife and exotic animals; its annual budget is less than the projected cost to relocate the seven cats to a new home and build an enclosure for them. With a \$2,500 Crisis Relief Grant, Wildlife Watch was able to meet its fundraising goal and transport the cats safely to their new home.

"The grant was tremendously helpful in getting the cats to the sanctuary in Minnesota and in helping with the construction of the enclosure for the African lions," said Wildlife Watch president Anne Muller. "We are very, very grateful to UAN."

the cats, but only UAN answered the call with a \$2,500 Crisis Relief Grant to pay for spaying, neutering, vaccinations and traps. Today, Cindy and her husband are building a cat enclosure on their own property and slowly transferring the cats there.

"We couldn't have started this effort without the grant from UAN," Cindy said. "I applied to three different organizations for financial assistance and only UAN came through."

Cindy has adopted out six cats already and believes that about one-third of the 40 cats in the colony will ultimately be adoptable. "Some ferals, once you get them in an enclosed house, really turn around," she explained. "I got one neutered last week, and I can pet him already. It's really exciting to make such progress with them."

Rabbits, Rabbits Everywhere

While Cindy and her husband were building their cat enclosure, Marie Morris and her husband were taking a second mortgage on their house in rural Bishop, California so they could rescue 113 rabbits after a breeder had a heart attack and could no longer care for them.

"The rabbits were running loose on the property," explained Marie, who runs The Bunny Castle Rabbit Rescue. "They were starving and thirsty. One had been caught by a dog and had huge wounds on his side. Another was missing an ear."

Marie and her husband and daughter trapped all of the rabbits themselves and brought them home. But half of the rabbits Marie rescued were pregnant, and the Morrises soon found themselves caring for

Photo captions:

Page 6, left to right: Cougar cub Castle, safe at home; volunteers unload Castle and Vista at The Wildcat Sanctuary in Minnesota after a 2,000-mile road trip; Shazam, a black leopard rescued by Wildlife Watch, gets playful at The Wildcat Sanctuary; cougar cub Vista enjoys her new toys. Page 7: Former feral cat Tigger is now ready to be adopted.

Learn more about UAN's LifeLine Crisis Relief Grants for Organizations and how to apply at www.uan.org.

more than 200 rabbits—many of whom have ongoing medical needs, such as respiratory infections, lameness and tooth problems.

"This is the biggest thing I've ever done," said Marie. "Before this we had 20 to 30 rabbits at most."

With a Crisis Relief Grant, Marie was able to continue buying the ten 50-pound bags of rabbit pellets she needs every week, plus pay for some of the rabbits' ongoing medical needs.

When asked why she would tap into her personal finances and dedicate all of her free time to caring for so many rabbits, Marie was quick to respond. "I love animals, and I like helping them," she said. "It's amazing what just a little bit of tender loving care can do for animals. It gives me joy to see them thrive." 🐰

