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4th Grade

What changes do cats and dogs have to make to live and survive as homeless pets?

True Survival Testimony

Baby Boss is my male miniature Chihuahua and was just over a year old when he was able to jump from the parked vehicle and run away. He is a runner! And he ran so fast, we didn't even know he was gone, less than 5 minutes later. What makes this such a drastic event is he was in an unfamiliar neighborhood, in a 'not so nice' area of Dallas. We searched the area for hours. My mom printed out flyers and they were posted all over the area and given door-to-door to all the homes. We went back there every evening and every morning and searched both by car and by foot for over a week. I cried every day and lost hope as the days passed by.

On the following Sunday, after leaving church, we went to search again. There was a neighborhood elementary school that was fenced in and my heart leaped when I saw him running towards the car from inside the fence. My mom climbed the fence and got him out. He was filthy dirty and very scared. He shook all the way home in my arms.

I thought, over and over, about how Baby Boss survived living as homeless in the streets for that length of time. As homeless, he had to adapt. Aside from God taking care of Baby Boss for me and answering my prayers, the following ideas are some of the survival strategies he might have used. Homeless pets need to:

- Stay away from highways, busy streets and all cars.
- Not play in the street as they normally would play in the backyard at home.
- Protect themselves from predators and all danger by remaining very aware of their surroundings and 'not so nice' people or insects.
- Find a food source. Unfortunately, this may lead to garbage in the area and they can easily become sick.
- Find water which is definitely a challenge. Creeks are not always clean and carry disease. Finding pet friendly yards whereas food and water are supplied to their pets is definitely a survival tool.
- Stay away from aggressive animals.
- Find shelter from the weather conditions when necessary such as rain and hot or cold temperatures.
- Stay away from construction areas and forest like areas where danger may exist.
- Try to stay clean.

Baby Boss obviously had good survival instincts because the vet found only minor cuts and bruises. He suffered no diseases afterward. However, Baby Boss was a very hungry, thirsty, and dirty pet. He remained 'skittish' and very aggressive for quite a while. Baby Boss still, after several months, remains very aware and doesn't run away the minute a door is opened. It was lesson learned, but a very scary one for both him and ME!