

Mother and Daughter Team Use Creative Efforts to Facilitate Care For Three Wild Kittens

By Jai Johnson

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A mother and daughter team use their art, design, and photography talents to find a unique solution to feed and care for three wild kittens.

Jackson, Tennessee (JAICARDS.COM) -- On a quiet July morning, artist Jai Johnson stepped outside with her morning cup of coffee to find three wild kittens scampering across her porch. The mother, a stray that had come and gone since mid-December, lay nearby with a satisfied look on her face. Jai - a mother of two, and caretaker to a pair of dogs, one indoor cat, and two birds - realized her family had just increased in size, and at a very unfortunate financial time for the family. Despite tight finances, she was unwilling to take the kittens to an over-capacitated shelter or give them away while they were so young. Instead, Jai and her 15 year old daughter Allyson worked on taming the kittens and used their creative design and photography skills to come up with a solution to raise necessary funds for their care.

"It never fails," says Ms. Johnson. "When things are the worst is when a stray animal shows up on your doorstep. What makes it even more exciting is when three strays show up, all at once. And these kittens are just babies...cute, fuzzy little furballs that put smiles on our faces and add some joy to tough days. At first it's really sweet...but when you're struggling just to keep utilities on and food on the table during difficult economic times, suddenly you realize the cost of cat food can mount up. And vet bills...they're just not affordable for that many animals at once." Ms. Johnson knew the three kittens and their mother would need vaccines, worming, and eventually spaying and neutering. All of which costs money the family didn't have to spare.

Jai, an artist and designer, and her daughter Allyson, a young photographer, decided to include photos of the kittens in a 365 day photography and publishing project they had started just before the kittens arrived. "The response to the kitten photos has been phenomenal," says Ms. Johnson. "By publishing the photos on cards and products, we're now earning funds to help feed and care for them. It's just amazing!"

The team has spent hours outside over the past two months, setting up props, positioning the kittens, and photographing them - after chasing and catching them, of course. "It's a ball to photograph our little models," says Jai. "Even one of our neighbors has jumped in on the fun. He came over a couple of nights with his camera and got some wonderful action shots we couldn't achieve with our set-up."

Soon Jai began adding verses and quotes to the images, which blossomed into a full line of photographic greeting cards, t-shirts, and other gift items. The mother and daughter team produces their line of cards and gifts through Cafepress.Com, one of the top websites artists and photographers use to self-publish their creative designs. "Unlike the traditional card publishers I've worked with before, publishing through Cafepress.Com enables an artist to see financial profit from their work much sooner," says Ms. Johnson. "And that really helps when you've got three hungry kittens staring at you every night."

Certainly taking the kittens to the Humane Society would have been the easiest choice for someone who didn't want, or couldn't afford, another pet. "Yes, it would have been easier," said Jai. "But I've never taken the easy road with anything in my life. And besides that, once we photographed the first kitten, the choice was made for us. There was no other choice at that point. Then the only question was how are we going to feed and get vet care for these babies? I'm excited we've been able to figure out a way to do that ourselves."

The cards and other products featuring the three wild kittens - Oreo, Rowdy, and Niko - are selling more and more copies each week. Which is wonderful news for Ms. Johnson, who says the cost of cat food at her local grocery store has risen substantially over the last two months. The Johnson ladies take new photos and create new card and product designs weekly. The latest release is a 12-month calendar featuring images of each in the wild kitten trio, along with porcelain ornaments...just in time for Christmas. "We hope we'll make enough funds so we can get each of them spayed or neutered before Christmas," says Jai, adding that all proceeds from the sale of the products from JaiCards.Com are going to the care and welfare of the wild kittens.

About JaiCards.Com:

Jai and her 15 year old daughter teamed up in the field of photography while working on a 365 Day photo project. With their eye for color and design, and a love of inspirational quotes, verses and words of encouragement, the two have created a special line of fine art greeting cards, prints, and other products for those special people in your life. Jai and Allyson currently make their home in Jackson, TN.

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About CafePress.Com

Launched in 1999, CafePress.com has empowered individuals, organizations and businesses to create, buy and sell customized merchandise online using the company's unique print-on-demand and e-commerce services. Today, CafePress.com is a growing network of over 6.5 million members who have unleashed their creativity to transform their artwork and ideas into unique gifts and new revenue streams.
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