



SPHYNX AND HIS HUMAN, EARNESTINE HAASTRUP

OSU-OKC Paint This Town Orange
2018 PET HERO WINNER

HOW SPHYNX THE CAT SAVED THE NIGHT

Emily Haastrup, 23, a nurse science major at OSU-OKC, recalls the blisteringly hot summer day in 2012 when she and her mother, Earnestine, were driving home from lunch and sweating even though the air conditioning was blasting away on high. Haastrup saw what looked like a black lump in the road tilt and fall over, and told her mother to stop the car. The black lump turned out to be a tiny black kitten in distress, but when Haastrup tried to approach, the kitten hissed weakly.

“It was so hot, we thought the kitten probably had heat exhaustion. He was really skinny and so small. He was panting and didn’t have much energy. If we’d left him out there, he probably would have died,” said Haastrup. “When he hissed, I backed up and just waited. In a few seconds he got up and wobbled toward me, so I put my hands down and he walked right into them. He was so cute and tiny, he fit in the palm of your hand. He was like a puff ball with huge eyes. I think my mother fell in love with him first, before I did, but the whole family grew to love him,” said Haastrup.

Haastrup’s mother suffered from frequent nightmares that disturbed her sleep and at times left her feeling unsettled the following day. Haastrup had learned that waking her mother up as soon as she heard her whimpering helped calm her down enough to offset the worst of the nightmares and any lingering effects.

About a year after the Haastrups adopted Sphynx, Haastrup graduated from high school, and was concerned about what would happen when she went to college. Who would wake up Earnestine from her nightmares?

Earnestine called Haastrup about a month after she left for college to report Sphynx was waking her up when she had nightmares and keeping watch over her by sleeping at the corner of her bed with the family dogs. Sphynx had grown considerably by this time and was heavy enough that when he crawled onto Earnestine’s chest and put his nose to her face, he woke her up.

“I was immediately relieved knowing Sphynx was watching over my mom,” said Haastrup. “Some people are superstitious and don’t understand why we chose to keep a black cat because they think he’s bad luck. I tell them what Sphynx does for my mom. You know I used to think we saved Sphynx but turns out, Sphynx saved us.”