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Fate uncertain for dog rescued after Hurricane Sandy

By Michael Contino



Above, Midnight is a Labrador retriever mix who was found wandering the streets after Hurricane Sandy. Below, his temporary home is at Save-A-Pet, with Executive Director Lynne Schoepfer. Photos by Michael Contino

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Last week, it looked like Midnight the dog might find a new home on Long Island, but now that his owner has stepped forward, he may be heading back to Brooklyn instead.

Rob Misseri, president of Guardians of Rescue, a not-for-profit organization based in Smithtown that protects the well-being of animals, said Wednesday that after interviewing the owner and inspecting her property, he was still not sure where Midnight's home would be. Midnight, a Labrador retriever mix who has been homeless since Hurricane Sandy, is staying at Save-A-Pet Animal Rescue and Adoption Center in Port Jefferson Station until things are sorted out.

According to Misseri, there are two conditions under which Midnight would be released to Brooklyn: his owner would have to allow Guardians of Rescue to spay two female pitbulls also living at her house; and Midnight would have to be allowed in the house at night. Misseri said previously he was allowed in the house, but he preferred being outside a lot.

According to Misseri, the owner is thinking it over.

Even before the interview with the Brooklyn owner, Misseri had expressed reservations about releasing Midnight to her: "I don't think [the owner] made enough of an effort to find him, and I'm not sure the dog would be going home to ideal conditions."



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He had said in an interview last week that Midnight lived in the yard and the garage of his old home in Brooklyn and his owner says Midnight escaped three days before Hurricane Sandy hit New York. The gate to the yard had been left open while she was moving boxes.

Midnight has since been on quite a journey. He was found walking the streets of Brooklyn after the hurricane, at around midnight.

He had a bite wound on his paw, so he was taken to Central Veterinary Associates in Valley Stream. The veterinarians there had no information about Midnight's vaccination history because he isn't microchipped.

According to Greg Nelson, the animal hospital's senior vice president, the city's department of health had two options: order the animal quarantined for six months, due to concerns about rabies, or euthanize the animal. The former option is much more costly.

Fortunately, Best Friends Animal Society, a national animal welfare organization, stepped in to help Midnight.

"They offered to come up with the funding, at least enough to [feed] and house the pet, to avoid euthanasia of the pet," Nelson said.

The investment paid off.

"He spent the full six months, no neurological signs — he wasn't exposed to rabies or contracted it," Nelson said.

Last Wednesday, Guardians of Rescue took Midnight — with a clean bill of health — to its partner organization, Save-A-Pet. The dog's been an instant hit with the staff and people are already lining up to adopt him.

"We've gotten a lot of phone calls, several applications on him," according to Lynne Schoepfer, Save-A-Pet's executive director. "He's a really nice dog, a very sweet dog with a very sweet disposition."

Schoepfer said Midnight is between 5 and 8 years old and weighs about 40 pounds; he is slightly smaller than a standard Labrador retriever.

For now, Save-A-Pet is still taking adoption offers for Midnight and is waiting to hear back from Misseri about whether the dog will go back to Brooklyn.

He has been looking for a home for six months but at this point, it's not a matter of if Midnight will find a home, it's a matter of where the home will be.



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