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ATTENTION EDITORS: On Friday, June 15 at 1:10 p.m., Tigger, a long-lost cat from Hurricane Katrina, will return home to the waiting arms of nine-year-old Taylor Morales. The long-delayed reunion will take place when American Airlines Flight 664 lands at Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport. For a photo following the event, contact Laura Allen, lauraa@bestfriends.org

Homecoming for Tigger: Microchip Identifies Katrina Cat's Nine-Year-Old Owner

KANAB, Utah (June 14, 2007)—When Hurricane Katrina battered the Gulf Coast in 2005, Best Friends Animal Society rescued more than 4,000 animals from the breaking levees and massive flooding that devastated the city of New Orleans.

Two years later, yet another Best Friends-rescued animal will be reunited with his own best friend, nine-year-old Taylor Morales, and it's all because of a tiny microchip. The homecoming will take place Friday at the Louis Armstrong New Orleans international Airport.

Though Tigger the cat was one of the first animals rescued by Best Friends, he could not be screened for an identifying microchip because the rescue center in Mississippi was without a scanner. In the chaos of post-Katrina, some animals—Tigger among them—were sent to foster care. Finally, after all this time, a microchip the size of a grain of rice will bring a young girl and her kitty together again.

Before Katrina, Tigger went everywhere with Taylor; but right before the hurricane hit, the two were separated. The family hurriedly drove to Delacroix Island where fisherman David Morales, Taylor's father, could secure his boat. All along Morales felt Tigger would be safe because their house was outside the flood plain.

But this storm was different. Extensive flooding destroyed the Morales home and everything in it. Amidst the disorder, however, there were clear signs of life—paw prints on a water-logged sofa. Proof finally came when a scanner read the chip that revealed Tigger's identity.

Placed under an animal's skin, a microchip is regarded as the most effective way to identify a lost dog or cat. But according to Russ Mead, Best Friends' general counsel who helped organize the organization's Katrina rescue center in Tylertown, Miss., very few of those rescued animals had been microchipped by their owners.

"It's good that Taylor had Tigger chipped, because once we scanned him, we knew right where he belonged."

Young Taylor has been waiting a long time for her Tigger to return, but she never stopped thinking about him. Once she heard the good news, she began cleaning her room and getting ready to welcome her best friend home.

About Best Friends Animal Society

Located on 33,000 acres in Kanab, Utah, Best Friends Animal Society operates the country's largest sanctuary for homeless animals and is home, on any given day, to about 1,500 dogs, cats, horses, rabbits, birds, and other animals. Best Friends works globally with animal shelters and rescue groups to bring about a time when there will be no more homeless pets. Best Friends advances initiatives nationwide that promote community approaches to make the world a better place through kindness to animals, including adoption, spay-neuter, and humane education programs.

"Kindness to animals builds a better world for all of us"