



JJ, a black Lab mix, was lost for four months before being found through the work of Lynn Miraglia and her network. Owner Bridget Conde was grateful. RIK JESSE/FLORIDA TODAY

GO, FETCH

Hundreds follow woman's website that chronicles lost (and found) pets

By Britt Kennerly
FLORIDA TODAY

Bridget Conde's eyes shine with tears when she recalls the agonizing months she spent looking for her much-loved dog, JJ.

"I was so upset. I didn't want to go to work. I didn't want to be around people," the Melbourne woman said. "I just wanted to be left alone."

But because of people who wouldn't leave her alone and couldn't forget about JJ, Conde is once more cavorting with her canine on the lawn of her family's Melbourne home.

Their happy ending and those celebrated by many other Space Coast pet owners and "anipals" come in no small part through the efforts of Lynn Miraglia and her brainchild, BrevardLostPets.com.

Since 2008, Miraglia and BLP have helped with the return of hundreds of furry and feathered creatures to frantic human families. Reunions, called "reunites," most often involve cats or dogs, along with the occasional bird, turtle or ferret.

Miraglia, 62, a Melbourne Vil-

REUNITING PETS AND THEIR FAMILIES

BrevardLostPets.com is a free clearinghouse-style service with tips on what to do when a pet is lost and lists of animals listed locally as lost or found. On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/brevard.lostpets>

SEE IT ONLINE

Scan the code to see a video on Lynn Miraglia and her brainchild, BrevardLostPets.com at floridatoday.com



During the past few years, Lynn Miraglia has helped more than 1,500 lost pets be reunited with their families through her network and community outreach.

lage resident and former IBM systems engineer, has long been an animal lover. She knows of "great lost-and-found pet sites, most of them national," she said.

But on the Space Coast, she sensed the need for "one common place where everyone knew to go to for lost and found pets" — a free service, with updates and uplifting words.

The result? "A localized site

for Brevard County residents, so they can be looking at just this area," Miraglia said.

When she added a Facebook page, replete with photos, "things really picked up," Miraglia said.

"I didn't know how much I would like the people part of it until I started doing this," Mira-

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Lynn Miraglia, left, is the founder of Brevard Lost Pets.com. She chats with Hye Suk and Bridget Conde, a mother and daughter who lost, then found, JJ, a black Lab mix. RIK JESSE/FLORIDA TODAY

Pets

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glia said.

There's big support for BLP from local shelters and Brevard County Animal Services. More than 2,500 people are "friends" of the Facebook page, sharing news of runaways and reunites. Some fans hit the streets, side roads and woods to search for lost animals, hundreds of whom may be listed at any given time.

Central Brevard Humane Society staff and volunteers list pets found and brought to their facility on Miraglia's website.

The Internet and social media are "a great support system for those who've lost their pets," said Eileen Cole, CBHS media relations manager.

"We have a beautiful relationship with BrevardLostPets."

Just recently, Miraglia and CBHS were able to reunite an

English bulldog and its owner as the result of a shared listing.

"The 'friends' and 'fans' of the pages have really impressed me with how consistent they are with spreading the word," Miraglia said.

Conde's impressed, too. Her JJ, a black Lab mix, was gone for four months after slipping out of the family's back yard in October.

Conde's mother, Hye Suk Conde, who was home when JJ escaped, was so distraught she peppered the neighborhood with signs and prayed with the pastor from Korean Central Baptist Church.

Once word traveled via BLP's pages, JJ got his own Facebook page. Sightings were reported. Cameras and traps were set up; a diligent neighbor spotted JJ near John Rodes and Eau Gallie boulevards, not far from home. In late February, JJ, thin and with an abscessed paw, was captured, along with the help of Melbourne

trapper James Dean.

"So many people, and my family and Lynn, helped me get through it," Conde said.

While not every story has a positive outcome, many do.

On March 6, the disappearance of Tigger, a tabby cat belonging to Melbourne resident Hertha Spix, was reported to local shelters by Spix's daughter, Patricia Brubaker.

Miraglia was seeking a photo of Tigger when word came that the feline was home.

"I was so happy to see him. He's my buddy," Spix said. "My daughter went all out to find him."

Miraglia loves that part of her role, the joy of seeing a community of people rallying for each other and their animals.

"It is all a very uplifting experience — and I get to have those many times a week," she said.

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