Keizer 351016*:* What to Expect

Keizer is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Keizer is a playful, goofy, and sensitive boy who is ready to find his forever home. He would thrive with a patient, experienced owner who understands feline body language and is willing to give him the time and space he needs to adjust at his own pace. While he may never be a social butterfly with everyone he meets, he will form meaningful bonds with those who take the time to earn his trust. His chatty nature and entertaining antics are sure to make him a sweet and delightful companion.

Keizer came to OH from the home of an overwhelmed cat caregiver that was unable to provide proper care for him. When he arrived at the shelter, he displayed fearful, shy behaviors that presented as hiding, hissing, lunging, and swatting when the staff attempted to engage with him. Due to the level of stress he was displaying and the impact it had on his ability to comfortably interact with staff, he was enrolled in our Behavior Modification Program. The BMOD environment offers a more supportive setting for cats who struggle with the stress of a traditional shelter environment. With the larger kennel space, access to windows, increased enrichment, and dedicated one-on-one time with our team, we were able to help him decompress and learn more about his personality.

Over the past several months, we have worked diligently with Keizer to build trust and help him feel more comfortable around people. We quickly learned that he is sensitive to sudden movements and loud noises but responds well to calm environments, predictable routines, gentle encouragement, and slow, deliberate movements. By consistently approaching him with patience, reassurance, and positive reinforcement, we have helped Keizer make significant progress over time.

Initially, Keizer was extremely fearful of human interaction. For several months, he would tuck himself beneath blankets and refuse to come out when people were nearby. If staff gently lifted his blanket to engage with him, he would hiss, lunge, swat, and even attempt to bite. Recognizing how stressful these interactions were for him, we adjusted our approach and began building his trust from outside his kennel, giving him the opportunity to become comfortable with our presence without feeling pressured to interact. When entering his kennel, we kept our visits brief, speaking softly, moving slowly, and leaving tasty treats for him to discover. This allowed him to gradually associate our presence with positive experiences.

As Keizer began settling into his new environment, we noticed little glimpses of his curious personality, particularly when the other cats in the program came out to play. He would scoot around beneath his blanket like a little turtle, with just his eyes and nose peeking out as he watched the activity in the cattery. When he thought no one was watching, he would scoot his way toward his kennel door, softly meowing and trilling to the other kitties. Wanting to encourage this interest, we began hosting playdates with some of the more confident cats in the program in the open space outside his kennel. We would engage the other cats in play with wand toys, allowing Keizer to observe from the safety of his hiding

spot. Gradually, his curiosity got the best of him, and he began venturing out from beneath his blanket to interact with the cats through his kennel door. He also started engaging with staff, eagerly reaching for wand toys swished beneath his door and pouncing on crunchy treats as we slid them his way. Eventually, he traded his hiding spot beneath his security blanket for a cozy perch on his cat tower, where he could safely peek out and observe from behind a privacy curtain.

Once Keizer was regularly engaging with us through the safety of his kennel door, we began gradually spending short periods of time inside his kennel with him. We started by simply sitting nearby, speaking softly, and offering tasty treats. It didn't take long to discover that treats, especially Churu, were among his absolute favorite things! By incorporating two things Keizer loves most, playtime and treats, we continued building positive associations with our presence.

We maintained a predictable routine focused on patience, reassurance, and positive reinforcement, and Keizer gradually began to blossom. One especially sweet and remarkable turning point came when a litter of shy, fearful kittens joined the program. Whenever we played with the kittens outside his kennel, Keizer would perk up, march to the front of his kennel, and enthusiastically trill and call out to them. Recognizing his interest, we arranged slow, gradual introductions and quickly discovered Keizer's incredibly sweet and nurturing side. He immediately took to snuggling with and grooming the kittens, and their companionship seemed to give him the extra boost of confidence he needed to venture beyond his kennel. With his new kitten posse by his side, Keizer began exploring more of his surroundings and eventually became comfortable playing and exploring even with familiar staff members nearby.

Keizer has also had the opportunity to socialize with other adult cats in the BMOD program. While he can initially be cautious or a little overenthusiastic when meeting new feline friends, he has shown us that he simply needs time and gradual introductions to feel comfortable. Once he gets to know them, he genuinely enjoys their company and loves snuggling, grooming, and playing with his friends. He often happily trills to them and greets them with affectionate enthusiasm.

Keizer will need a feline companion in his new home, but finding the right match will be especially important. Although he genuinely enjoys the company of other cats, his enthusiastic approach to new friendships can sometimes be a little overwhelming. He may initially stalk or chase new cats when excited and especially enjoys rough-and-tumble wrestling. Even with familiar friends, he can occasionally get carried away and need a little help taking a break. His ideal companion will be confident, playful, and socially comfortable, with an appreciation for energetic play and wrestling. They should be able to hold their own without being overly confrontational, as Keizer may not do well with a cat who frequently challenges him or with whom he tends to butt heads. More reserved cats, those easily intimidated, or kitties who prefer calmer, gentler interactions would likely not be a good match. With a compatible friend and slow, thoughtful introductions, Keizer has the potential to develop a wonderfully affectionate bond.

Keizer has a delightfully playful and endearing personality. He loves romping around with his feline friends, zooming through crinkly tunnels, leaping after feather wand toys, chasing ping pong balls, and bunny-kicking his favorite stuffies and anything he can grip his little paws on! He especially enjoys having the freedom to explore and play, and every now and then, he'll get the zoomies and race excitedly around the room, all while keeping us entertained with his delightful chatter. When he's ready to wind down, Keizer enjoys watching the wildlife outside his window and basking in the sunshine on his window-side cat tower.

Although Keizer has grown to genuinely enjoy visits from familiar caregivers, he can still be a little unsure about being handled. When hands approach to pet him, he may move away or swat. To help him become more comfortable with touch, we introduced a touch tool, an object that acts as an extension of the hand. For Keizer, we used a back scratcher, gradually pairing brief cheek touches with tasty treats. Over time, he learned to relax and lean into the gentle contact, eventually allowing us to transition from the scratcher to our hands. Today, he enjoys chin and cheek scratches, head-butts for full-body pets, and even flopping over for more affection from people he knows and trusts. He prefers interactions on his terms and may still startle if approached too quickly, but typically recovers with soft voices, slow movements, gentle reassurance, and being told how handsome and cute he is.

Keizer has made tremendous progress over the past several months, and it has been such a joy to watch his personality emerge. He is often the first to greet familiar staff each morning, enthusiastically announcing himself with his signature melodic trills and meows. Although he has come a long way, unfamiliar people and busy environments can still feel overwhelming, and he will need continued patience and support as he adjusts to his new home. Keizer is looking for a feline-savvy adopter with experience working with shy or fearful cats who can provide a calm environment, establish a predictable routine, and give him the time and space he needs to settle in. He may not be ready for pets and snuggles right away, but as he becomes more comfortable, his playful, affectionate personality will continue to shine.

Keizer has so much love and personality to share, and watching him blossom in a home where he feels safe and understood will be an incredibly rewarding experience. If you're ready to welcome a sweet, affectionate, quirky, and playful miniature cougar with an overbite and the most adorable melodic meows, Keizer may just be the special boy you've been waiting for!

His new family should expect that he will hide for a few weeks, possibly longer. You'll need to introduce him to new things slowly. Keizer typically flees, hisses and swats when overwhelmed or scared. It's important to provide him with a small room with appropriate hiding spots for him to relax in, such as his own hidey bed. Hiding spots that are confined to a tight spot and out of reach from you will make it difficult to build a bond with him. The room you set him up in will be the catalyst for how quickly he acclimates. Start thinking now which room in your home would be best for Keizer to settle into. If it's a bedroom, can he get under the bed or dresser making it difficult to spend time with him? If it's a laundry room or bathroom will the constant in and out of people and noises associated with these rooms be too much for him? By having a room without a lot of foot traffic and with appropriate hiding spots, it will allow you to work on building a relationship. While in his hiding spot, use calm voices and offer tasty treats or toy to show you are not a threat. Place a small amount of wet food or a treat on a spoon and offer it to Keizer while in his hidey spot. Over time, by continuing to do this, Keizer will become more comfortable and recognize that yummy food/toys = people, therefore creating a positive association between the two.

Here's how to help Keizer during your first months together:

This step is crucial in helping Keizer acclimate to his new home. Confine Keizer to one cat-proof room in your house. Provide Keizer with a litter box, food, water, and a bed. Ensure he cannot get to *inappropriate* hiding spots (under the bed, in a closet, on top of a cabinet, etc.). Provide him with a safe, comfortable hiding place instead like his cat carrier, a hidey-bed, or a large dog crate covered with a blanket.

Spend time with Keizer in his room. Don't force him out of his hiding spot. Instead, encourage him to come out on his own using happy talk, offering a toy or treats. Once he is using the litter box, eating regularly, and coming out of hiding

to interact with you, you can start introducing him to the rest of your home. Start by propping the door open and allowing him to come out on his own. Don't force it! If you come across something that you can tell Keizer is worried about, allow him to hang back or hide if he chooses to do so.

Continue to provide a safe space. Even when Keizer has started exploring the rest of the house, give him a safe space that he can retreat to. When he is in his safe space, insist that guests leave him alone and try to ignore him yourself. That way, when he comes out, you can reward his bravery with your attention.

No visitors (at first). Allow Keizer time to adjust to your house, routine, and lifestyle before introducing him to new people. When you have visitors over, give Keizer the freedom to make the decision to interact (or not!). Ask new people to ignore him – or if Keizer seems curious or interested, have the new person toss him treats or offer a favorite toy. We want exciting, good things to come from new people.

Practice crate training. Leave his carrier out all the time, so it's just a part of his normal environment. Add a bed and keep the door securely propped open so he can go in and out on his own, making sure the door won't swing shut and frighten him. You can also clicker train him to run into the carrier on cue. Helping Keizer get comfortable with his carrier will make it easier when it's time to visit the vet.

Visiting the vet: Unless it's an emergency, give Keizer time to bond to you before taking him to the vet. Vet visits will more than likely be scary, but if he already trusts you, your presence may help him feel more comfortable.

Patience will come in handy for you. Keizer is a cat that needs an understanding owner who has the time and desire to allow him to adapt in his own time. He may never be a social butterfly, and that's okay! Getting to know him and watching him come out of his shell will be extremely rewarding. Celebrate those small victories.

We're here to help!

We want Keizer to be successful in his new home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. Call the Behavior helpline at (503)416-2983 or email the BMOD cat trainers at bmodcat@oregonhumane.org to connect with the Feline Behavior Modification department.

Please keep in touch so we can continue to help you and Keizer now and in the future. Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns – or just to give an update. We love to see photos and shear how our friends are doing!

Thank you for adopting from the Oregon Humane Society. Congratulations on your new cat!