

THE CATALYST

TREE HOUSE
HUMANE
SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

Summer
2019



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He's (Almost) Got It All

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COMMUNITY CATS: A FOCUS ON THE OUTDOORS

THE CATALYST

**TREE HOUSE HUMANE
SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
SUMMER 2019**

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CALENDAR

2019 Online Kitten Conference Group Viewing

June 22-23, 9 am to 5 pm

Join Tree House staff and volunteers for a group viewing of this online, virtual conference. Tickets and details at treehouseanimals.org/events

Cat Walk Pub Crawl July 27, 2 pm - 6 pm

Think: Cat-chella. Think: bar crawl meets fundraiser meets community engagement. You'll get an exclusive Cat Walk t-shirt and passport—your roadmap to the bar crawl and your ticket to access drink specials for Cat Walk participants! Get tickets at treehouseanimals.org/catwalk

Volunteer Orientations June 19, July 10, & August 14, 5:30 pm to 7 pm; Jun 22, July 20, August 24, 10:30 am -12 noon

Be a part of our life-saving success!

Apply at www.treehouseanimals.org/volunteer and then come to one of our orientation sessions to get started!



Letter from the Executive Director

HOW WE'RE SPEAKING UP FOR OUR COMMUNITY CATS

At Tree House, we believe that every cat deserves to thrive – indoors or outdoors. And we believe that the well-being of all cats can only happen by empowering people.

Dear Tree House Friends:

Last July, I shadowed Bob, our frontline staff. We visited an abandoned house on Chicago's West side. Neighbors reported that the house had 20 feral cats. Bob said, "Chances are, if you have an abandoned building, you'll find cats."

The house bordered a gas station and a busy road, and a few doors down was a daycare. Kayla, the next door neighbor, began feeding one cat and soon, more cats appeared. It was all manageable until spring's arrival, and the birth of two litters of kittens.

Kayla said, "I started feeding the cats, but then it just became overwhelming and I have been spending more than \$500 a month. I just wanted to help."

During our visit, Kayla fluctuated between feeling relieved and then expressing concern for the safety of the cats. Bob spent his time compassionately listening, educating, and easing her fears. He also talked with neighbors about our Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program and how it would lead to the cats having safer and healthier lives.

We were able to socialize and adopt out more than half of Kayla's colony (kittens) into good homes. We registered Kayla as a colony caretaker and returned the newly spayed/neutered adults for a more manageable colony. We partnered with her and her neighbors on how best to support the cats. Our TNR strategy is more than a way to reduce cat overpopulation; we focus on partnering with neighbors to be stronger feline advocates.

We're speaking up for this important work by:

- Partnering with a film group to document our outdoor cat colonies and raise awareness about how community cats are a lens to Chicago's neighborhoods.
- Using data to concentrate our community outreach on neighborhood blocks with proven need.
- Developing new tools and sharing resources with peers nationally and in our backyard, including hosting a Community Cats Festival in October.

What will you speak up for? Let us know @TreeHouseCats. We're all #InItTogether.

Raissa Allaire, Executive Director

ADOPTION SUCCESSES!

So far in 2019, Tree House has placed 264 cats into homes. Here are some of our recent success stories.



AMBERLY

“We knew we wanted a cat and just fell in love with Amberley (now Zigzag),” says her adopter Tiffanie T. “She was the sweetest girl and connected with our 4-year-old son immediately. Knowing she was FeLV+ was not really even in the equation. We know she needs more frequent vet visits but, since adopting her, there’s no difference between her and any typically healthy cat. We love her personality and her lust for life (and canned food!!). She’s a wonderful addition to our family and we love her dearly.”



DABBLE

It has been over a year since Dabble, now Toby, was adopted wearing a diaper and riding in a small, wheeled cart. His adopter, Meredith W., says he is “completely in love with our dog, following him around...and taking interest in everything he does.” In his spare time, Toby loves “capturing and eating insects,” and when food is approaching, he moves “like lightning.” Meredith says she hopes her story will inspire others to adopt cats with special needs. “He does require more care than a cat without special needs, but he’s also a joy to have around. He has limitations, but he never lets anything bother him. He’s always cheerful and affectionate and interested in everything around him. Thanks for letting us have him!”

We love to keep up with our kitties in their new homes! Send a photo and a few sentences with your cat’s name and when s/he was adopted to marketing@treehouseanimals.org or tag us [@treehousehumansociety](https://www.instagram.com/treehousehumansociety) on Instagram after your new sidekick comes home for a chance to appear in our next newsletter.



MAX

After trying out a few homes, Max seems to have finally hit the jackpot! His adopter, Paul H., says “Max is adjusting phenomenally! He loves hanging out in our living room where the action is and sleeping inside my box spring when he needs alone time. I’m absolutely smitten and grateful for Tree House for taking such good care of him before I found him.” Congrats, Max! We knew you could do it!



EDDIE

One of our FIV+ stars, Eddie, went home a year ago with Becca W. “I cannot be more grateful to have him in my life,” she said. “Eddie is my best friend and follows me everywhere. This past year, he has really come out of his shell; he loves to be in the same room as everyone and loves to play with his toys, even though he is picky and his favorite toy changes every other week...I couldn’t be happier with this cuddly, raccoon-sized cat!”



TYGRA

Tygra met his new best friend Mike H. in February. This charming, confident boy began exploring the apartment the second his carrier opened. Now known as Ty, Mr T. or Teddy Turkey, this sweet old man hates when play time is over. His favorite hobbies include bird watching, helping cook, checking the HVAC, and cuddling with dad. “My Tree House experience was purrfect. I was impressed by how well they knew the personalities of the cats and they made it really simple to find my new buddy.”

AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION



LEONARDO PESCATORE

He's (almost) got it all

Orange fur, an expressive face, FIV, FeLV, a penchant to lick the air when he's being scratched, a bit of a runny eye, and even some lumps- Leonardo Pescatore truly has it all. In fact, it might be easier for us to tell you what Leonardo doesn't have. The list would be shorter. Ready? A home.

Leonardo Pescatore doesn't have a real home.

Sure, he has a safe place to stay here at Tree House until he finds one, but we want to see him in a happy, comfy home of his own, with floors on which he can sit and the right person to understand his needs. Some might call him "rough looking." We call him "charmingly rugged." We believe wholeheartedly that you or someone you know will understand him and want to see him happy just as much as we do. He's not a very complicated cat and he doesn't want much; he's really into food and he loves getting gentle scratches on the back. He wants a cozy place to curl up, somewhere quiet, without too many distractions or too much noise. That's about it.

We don't know much about Leo's background. He's been with us for over a year and a half - the longest of any of our present residents- and before that, he was with another rescue organization. He was admitted to Tree House because we have the facilities to care for FeLV positive cats, a rarity in shelter work. He's around six years old and, because he has FeLV, we don't know how many years he has left. It could be several - he's trucking along ok thus far - and we want him to spend those years in a loving home of his very own. When asked for a comment on his

situation, Leonardo said, "I have plenty to offer. I will wait until someone finally sees the gem that I am."

If you're interested in meeting this incredibly special fellow, come by and ask to see him in Colony 10. Help us spread the word. Leonardo has been staging a quiet movement under the hashtag #ChickenHatProtest. Look him up online and share him with your community. Help us find the one thing he doesn't have: a home.



#ChickenHatProtest

FIRST MIDWEST BANK IS PROUD TO SUPPORT

TREE HOUSE HUMANE SOCIETY'S CAT WALK



FirstMidwest.com

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TRANSFORMATIONAL GIFT SEEDS PUBLIC CLINIC



In early 2019, Tree House received a significant bequest from the estate of long-time volunteers and partners in our mission, the Davidsons. We are so proud and honored to be the recipients of this transformational gift, which will allow us to pay down a significant portion of our building debt ahead of schedule. It will also allow us to seed half of the costs needed for our public clinic, which is expected to

open in 2021 to serve our community of both dog and cat lovers who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford medical care for their beloved pets.

We are beyond grateful to the Davidson family for their extraordinary generosity. Their legacy ensures that the love they had for animals can continue for countless generations to come. While this gift is transformational - and we are incredibly thankful to the Davidson family - it does not replace the important annual support that we receive from hundreds of Tree House supporters and partners. The Davidson gift has pushed us well ahead of where we thought we'd be today, and now we can plan for tomorrow.

PLANNED GIVING

Planned giving is a rewarding way to combine charitable giving with your financial plans.

Planned gifts ensure that Tree House can continue to save the lives of Chicago's most vulnerable cats for years to come. By including Tree House in your estate planning, you will become a valuable partner in animal welfare.

To find out more, contact:

Christine Holt at
cholt@treehouseanimals.org
or 773-262-4000 (ext. 105).

MEET TREE HOUSE

BOB AND PAUL, COMMUNITY CATS TEAM



Bob and Paul, also known collectively as “ZZTrap”

Do you know about our Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program? What about our Cats At Work program, which is helping businesses and homes all across Chicago solve their rat problems in an ecologically sound manner? If you’ve heard of either, then you are already familiar with the work of Bob and Paul, the core members of Tree House’s Community Cats team!

Bob has been with Tree House for almost a year and is the one most seen hiding in the bushes waiting for cats. His role is an important one, because trapping is the very foundation of our TNR program.

If a cat is living outside with no one to care for it, it can fall prey to a number of dangers including illness, hunger, and procreation. What happens when cats have kittens? Those kittens have more kittens. And then what? Overcrowding happens, and that leads to more illness and more hunger. Therefore, TNR is the solution for a more humane future.

If you identify a cat living outside, Bob is the person at Tree House who can help assess the situation and assist with trapping. Once the cat is trapped,

s/he’ll be brought to Tree House for neuter or spay surgery, microchipping, and medical assessment, and if the cat prefers to live outside based on our team’s evaluation, he will be returned by Bob to where he was initially trapped. Bob will also coach you in how to trap and return so you can continue being part of the solution after he leaves, but he’ll leave the neutering up to our resident vet Dr. Emily, so no worries there.

Moving on to our Cats At Work program! The best choice is to always return community cats to where they were trapped, but that may not be an option. When they cannot be returned, such as when an abandoned building they are living in is going to be demolished, Tree House places them into the Cats At Work program and that’s where Paul, who has been with Tree House for three and a half years, comes in. Tree House, and Paul, will take those cats and re-home them to your location through an acclimation process following their trapping and neuter or spay.

Whether it’s a working cat or a community cat, someone near the colony of cats will become a caretaker and be able to feed and care for the cats legally, with support from Tree House.

Thanks to Bob, 139 cats have been trapped, neutered or spayed, and given medical attention and vaccines thus far in 2019. Paul has already placed 73 cats this year, and we want to stress how truly life-saving these placements are; without our Cats at Work program, these cats would have no other option besides euthanasia.

If you happen to meet them, please don’t forget to thank these awesome Community Cats team members for doing their part to save cats’ lives and making sure that all cats, indoor and outdoor, thrive.

Need TNR?

Call us! We’re happy to counsel you.



Bob checking on a newly trapped cat

#ZZTrap



Paul setting a trap

TNR TUESDAYS!

For \$50, cats brought in by registered colony caretakers will receive:

- Spay/Neuter Surgery
- FVRCP and Rabies Vaccines
- Microchip
- Revolution
- Ear Tip of Left Ear



For more information, contact Tree House at:

773-262-4000 or info@treehouseanimals.org

THE FERAL & FRIENDLY CONTINUUM

HOW TREE HOUSE DETERMINES A PATH FOR CARE

by Darlene Duggan, Director of Operations

Most of Tree House's cat population comes to us from the outdoors, but not all outdoor cats are the same. Some may be lost or abandoned pets, some may have been born outdoors, while others may be indoor cats allowed to roam outside from time to time. Regardless of how a cat came to be outdoors, they all have different levels of social skills.

Some cats are fearful and cautious of humans, wanting limited to no interaction with us—these are feral cats - while others may display signs of friendliness and sociability—these we call friendly cats. Tree House's various programs can accommodate the care of most cats no matter where they land on the feral or friendly continuum. Here are some ways in which we distinguish between ferals and friendlies.



FERAL

- Makes no eye contact with people; runs away when approached
- Likely belongs to a colony of cats—you may see several of them hanging out together
- Body language: ferals will use their tail to protect their body and will be protective of their space
- Will not vocalize
- Unlikely to be seen during the day - mostly nocturnal
- Will have a clean, well-kept coat and decent body condition (they know how to find food and take care of themselves outdoors)
- Will have an eartip if already TNR'd

FRIENDLY

- Solicits attention: might approach people, houses, cars, etc; may make eye contact
- Likely lives alone; not part of a cat colony
- Body language: friendly cats will have a softer body posture
- Likely to vocalize (meows, grunts, purrs, etc)
- Will see them out and about during daylight hours
- Likely to have an untidy appearance (they may be missing meals and they do not have a honed skill set for finding food and grooming for the outdoors)

When feral cats arrive at Tree House, their most likely path for care is our Trap Neuter Return (TNR) program. Our Community Cats staff works with residents in the neighborhood where the cat came from to establish a volunteer caregiver, ensure all other community cats are TNR'd, and monitor the cat's well-being for the long term.

If friendly cats arrive at Tree House, they are added to our adoption pathway—they receive the required veterinary care including spay/neuter surgery, and are then acclimated in our adoption rooms. Should they require additional or extended care (maybe they are sick, too young, or need to work on social skills) we have a foster program to accommodate the extra time they need getting adoption-ready.

TREE HOUSE CAT CAFE OPENS



We're pleased to let everyone know that our kitty-filled, in-house-barista cafe has officially opened!

Thanks to Alderman Debra Silverstein, a new ordinance allowing a cat cafe in a shelter was written and approved, and our coffee and cats experience has arrived. On-site baristas prepare your drink hot and fresh, or cold and fresh, as you like it. We have coffee, tea, and special cats - Feline Leukemia (FeLV+) cats. Because FeLV is often misunderstood, these special cats are often difficult to adopt.

Every time you book with us or buy a coffee (or tea) from us, you give these cats a second chance. Please stop by for a visit. We look forward to seeing you.

BOOK YOUR RESERVATION AT:
treehouseanimals.org/cafe

HOURS:
Thursday to Sunday, 12 pm to 6 pm





I HAVE TO EAT.

BUT I DON'T HAVE POCKETS IN WHICH TO CARRY A WALLET.

Please donate to our Pet Food Pantry
treehouseanimals.org/feedthepets

TIPS FROM THE COMMUNITY CATS TEAM



SUMMER CARE FOR YOUR

Colony

by Sarah Liss,
Community Cats Manager

There are some easy things you can do to make life more comfortable for your outdoor community cats.

Summer is coming! Because feral cats do not typically appreciate being brought indoors (even if there is glorious air conditioning), it is important to protect your colony cats from the hazards that hot weather can bring, including more indoor cats being let outside, bug issues, and of course, teeny tiny kittens that can be found unexpectedly. In order to keep you and your feral kitties feeling cool and prepared, we're here to provide you with some pro tips to ensure that your colony is kept in tip top shape all summer long.

1. Keep an eye out for kittens and leave them with mom until they're about 6 weeks old. Tree House is happy to help you figure out how old they are and what the next steps are - call us!
2. Female cats are a trapping priority! It's imperative to get her TNR'd as soon as possible because she can quickly become pregnant.
3. Provide extra bowls of water and, if possible, increase the amount of times per day that you provide it. Use narrow, deep bowls in a shady area to help prevent the water from evaporating. You can even throw in a few ice cubes!
4. Pick up food after 30 minutes. In hot weather, canned food can quickly spoil and is susceptible to bugs. Removing it (wet or dry) will help prevent bugs or other animals from snacking on your colony's meals. Create an ant-deterring moat by putting the bowl inside a shallow dish filled with water. Cats can still eat but ants can't!
5. Provide extra shelter. Cats need shade! Winter shelters can be used in summer and you can also provide places to get comfy under a deck or shaded area. Possums can also make use of your cats' shelters when they get too warm, so it never hurts to provide an extra one so everyone has a place.
6. Check friendly cats for microchips. If you think one may be a lost pet, take them to any vet clinic or shelter to have them scanned for a microchip. This service is typically free.

Contact Tree House to get TNR counseling or to become a registered Colony Caretaker!

OUR VOLUNTEERS:

GAINING CATS' TRUST AT TREE HOUSE

by Shannon Gonzalez, Volunteer Coordinator

Much like people, cats have varied personalities. At Tree House, our residents run the gamut from confident and easy-going to fearful and unsure. Luckily, there are some pretty awesome members of the Tree House team who take the extra time to help our especially timid feline friends adjust.

Socialization Assistants are the cat gurus of the volunteer team, focused on aiding unsure kitties as they acclimate to the shelter environment. Vanda, a Socialization Assistant since November of 2017, has helped countless Tree House residents come out of their shell. Feeling naturally drawn to the cats in need of extra love and care, she patiently works to gain a nervous cat's trust through the use of treats, gentle guitar music, a soothing voice, and allowing the cats to set the pace of their interactions. Vanda describes those breakthrough moments where a cat first allows her touch or finally gives her the big belly-flop she's been waiting for as "absolutely fantastic."

Occasionally, a particularly apprehensive cat will not be able to thrive in the shelter environment, and in those situations, we are fortunate to be able to send them into a loving foster home. Arianna, a Foster since August of 2018, worked with Tree House cat Dexter for almost four months. When he arrived at her home, he was far too frightened and stressed to allow her to approach him, and Arianna said it was a long run before she earned Dexter's trust. With patience, Arianna saw Dexter progress into a confident, affectionate cat, and she now receives regular updates from his family showing just how happy he is!

The behavioral transformations we have seen in cats with the help of our volunteers are inspiring reminders of why our work matters - why every cat deserves the opportunity to thrive - even if they need a little extra help getting there!

Visit treehouseanimals.org/volunteer to apply





ASK THE EXPERT

WITH DR. EMILY

Dr. Emily Swinarski is Tree House's Director of Veterinary Services. She graduated from Iowa State University's College of Veterinary Medicine, did a specialty internship in Shelter Medicine at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, and has worked across the country in small to large shelter organizations. Her passions include infectious disease, care of community cats, and teaching.



QUESTION

How do I keep Community Cats healthy?

Community Cats should all receive Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR), which will spay and neuter them as well as provide vaccinations. Repeating vaccines 1 year after TNR, and then every 3 years after that, is really important to their health! Vaccines prevent many different illnesses. Also, community cats that are spayed and neutered live longer, healthier lives. FeLV and FIV testing is not recommended, as the test has inaccuracies that can lead to misdiagnosis without advanced testing; also, spay/neuter will prevent spread of FeLV and FIV, so there's no need to test. Monitor the cats, even if from a distance, for signs of illness or injury. This can include green discharge from the eyes or nose, limping, large patches of fur missing, or other changes such as dramatic weight loss or change in appetite.

QUESTION

What do I do if I notice a sick or injured community cat?

Seek veterinary care right away! Call your local veterinarian first to see if they are comfortable working with community cats. If the cat is social – meaning the cat approaches you often for affection and can be held – let the veterinary office know this, too. The veterinarian will assess the cat and discuss different treatment options. Most community cats require sedation, or medications to calm them down, since they are not used to being indoors. There are many creative ways for treating community cats, even feral (or unsocialized and wild) cats! If you are unable to bring the cat to a veterinarian, call your local animal shelter and ask for resources, such as low-cost clinics or organizations that can help.

TNR should be performed as soon as the cat is seen outside. Kittens should receive TNR as soon as they are 2 months old or at least 2 lbs.



Humane Society

Tree House Humane Society
7225 N. Western Ave.
Chicago, IL 60645

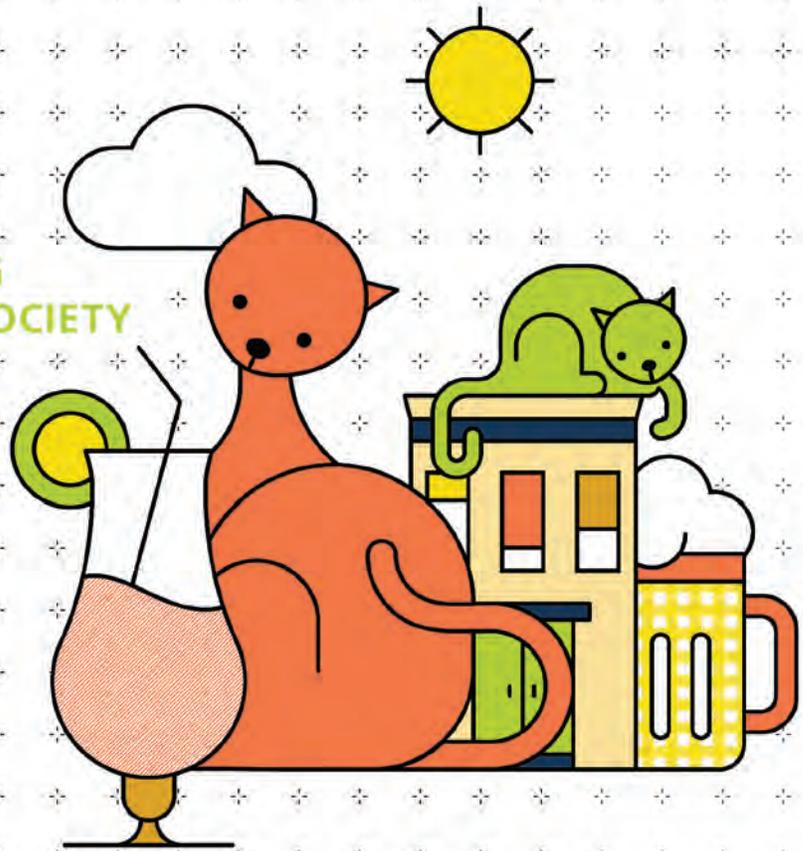
CAT WALK

A PUB WALK BENEFITING
TREE HOUSE HUMANE SOCIETY

**SATURDAY
JULY 27, 2019
2-6 PM**

TICKETS RANGE: \$25 - \$35

EMPIRICAL BREWERY
THE MEETING HOUSE TAVERN
THE SOFO TAP
FAT CAT



Get tickets at treehouseanimals.org/CatWalk