MEN WHO LOVE THEIR CATS:
Celebrating Our Cat Dads
LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Tree House Friends:

Decision fatigue is real. Right now, for many of us, every small decision feels like it carries the weight of the world.

Throughout my career, I have had the joy and seen the value of learning from mentors and at the same time, learning from my staff. As I was wrestling with difficult scenarios in response to this pandemic, a staff member gave me thoughtful advice: “Let our values and our principles guide you.”

Compassion, respect, teamwork, excellence, and innovation. Our values have been and will continue to be our North Star.

During our closure, we made the decision to pay our staff and keep them whole. We re-worked work and pivoted. We learned new skills, added professional certifications, and dreamt up innovations to serve our animal and human communities in this new world.

Our teams worked on cross-functional projects. One team jumped out of the gate with curbside Pet Food Pantry and virtual adoptions, resulting in media attention, happy cats in loving homes, and peer accolades. A second team transferred all our cats to foster homes and onboarded more than 500 new foster volunteers; and a third team focused on connecting with our communities in unique ways, bringing stories of hope while raising $10,000 in a matter of weeks.

As we begin our process of reopening, we believe in doing the right things. Our Tree House culture prompts us. We strongly believe in the idea of taking care of each other as best as we can -- both in good times and in bad.

From our family to yours, we are sending you our best wishes of hope, good health, and positivity. May we all see each other soon.

Warmly,

Raissa Allaire
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

P.S. If there is anything we can do to make quarantine life a little brighter for you, please let us know.
This quarter, we’re celebrating fellows who love their cats. Please meet a few of our kitties who are living happy lives, adored by the men who are proud to be cat dads.

**Helo**
Jeremy tells us: “Would you believe that Helo (the laaaaarrrrggge cat) spent most of his time hiding under the couch when we first brought him home? It didn’t take long for him to realize that we were alright. Now he frequently wakes us up around 4 am to remind us that he loves us, demanding forehead kisses and cuddles. Our other two younger (waaaayy smaller) cats, Nox and Nola, adore their big brother and think we are okay too. We couldn’t be happier with our family and I wouldn’t trade being a dad to these three cats for anything.”

**Lou Malnati**
Zack adopted Mr. Lou Malnati, a big orange cuddler. “I adopted Lou Malnati the day before my birthday in January. Little did I know just how much time we’d be spending together every day. When the pandemic began, I shifted to working from home and now Lou can get fed easier – which he loves. When I am working at my makeshift office desk in the middle of the living room, he loves to take my normal couch spot, like in the picture here. Lou is a super sweet guy, and he doesn’t leave me alone all too often. He’s a great lockdown bud.”

**Ferris and Bueller**
Doug updated us on a pair he adopted from Tree House. “I adopted Ferris and Bueller in June of 2014 from Tree House Bucktown, well more accurately is Bueller adopted me and he convinced his brother to come with us. These boys are my life. Ferris and I snuggle each night as we fall asleep, he purrs so loud. Bueller is my shadow, I’ve never had a pet so attached to me as he is. My life is better because of them. I love my boys.”

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**Bobson**
Dylan adopted Bobson a few years ago. “We adopted Bobson (aka Magic Man) from Tree House’s previous Bucktown location in January 2013. My bond with him was instantaneous. We enjoy spending time together on the couch playing video games, napping, and most recently, working from home. Bobson routinely demands to drape his whole body around my shoulders, and having grown to a tidy 16lbs, this is truly a labor of love. Bobson will be 9 years old this year and continues to live his best life with our family.”

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**Brisbane (now Simone)**
Dan tells us all about his special kitty. “Simone was originally in a friend’s Cats at Work colony, but it turns out she was actually very social. My friend thought she’d be a good candidate for adoption so off she went to the adoption floor at Tree House. When my friend saw Simone at the shelter, she gave me a call. I had recently lost my dear Hank, and his sister Scout was now alone so I said bring Simone home! Simone has been with me now for almost three years, and she’s part of the family. She is the sweetest kitty. She loves to sit on my lap and sleep with me. She truly is an amazing girl!”

**Fox (now Chimichanga) & Pan (now Reginald)**
John & Jessica wrote in to update us about their two Tree House kitties. “Chimi (Fox) and Reggie (Pan) joined our family in October 2019. We believe they have acclimated well and have proven to be very helpful... especially when working from home. John wakes every morning at 6am to feed them and plays a game of chase which usually lasts about 30 minutes every day. Everyone is getting their daily steps in. Reggie enjoys watching golf on tv and always knows where the ball is. Chimi is a wonderful lap warmer. Both enjoy charming visitors on Zoom calls.”
See the progress on our Veterinary Wellness Center!

Our new Veterinary Wellness Center is coming along nicely and we wanted to give our supporters a sneak peek! It will soon be outfitted as a brand new spay/neuter and basic wellness clinic that will offer affordable care for the cats and dogs of our community. Pets are important parts of families, and we want to make wellness available to everyone in our community, regardless of income. The changing economy makes this goal even more imperative and we are staying on track to open the clinic in spring of 2021.

The first phase of the build out was completed when the shelter opened in 2017 and we are now in phase 2, which we expect to be completed in July. Here you can see some of the new flooring, walls, and cabinets being put in and the spaces starting to fill out into what they will eventually become. We are very excited and hope you’ll follow along as the project progresses!

Due to the kindness of our Tree House friends and partners, the majority of the funding is in place for this much-needed community support project. Some final donations are still needed in order to close the gap. If 25 people can each give $100 and 10 people can each give $500, we will be much closer to completion. All donors are invited to join us at a future date for an “unveiling” of the Veterinary Wellness Center!

You can help:
• Stem the influx of kittens with 7,000 life-saving surgeries.
• Provide support for 4,000+ outdoor cats.
• Rehome up to 1,500 cats.

Tree House covers cats in all stages of life, in any season, in any place.
Sterling Davis, AKA Trapping
Sterling Davis is well known for his work in TNR through his non-profit organization “TrapKing Humane Cat Solutions,” spreading the message that “You don’t lose cool points for compassion!” Davis has occasionally encountered some opposition to his intense love for cats. “I’ve been asked so many times, why do I have cats instead of dogs,” he said. “I remember being out doing some TNR in an apartment complex one afternoon and some guys that were out on their porch... They kept telling me that usually women have cats. I kindly explained to them that a lion is the king of the jungle and it’s a cat. What is tougher or cooler than that??” His own kitty is named Damita Jo, who he describes as his “heart.” She was bottle-raised by Acrocats founder Samantha Martin. “She travels with me everywhere,” Davis said. “She walks on her leash ... and she helps me demonstrate how traps work when I visit schools or have TNR events.” If Davis could teach the world one thing about animals, besides how to TNR, it’s that “we live in a world where people aren’t always compassionate and not only can we learn from watching how animals can love and help one another but they also can help us.” You can find out more about Sterling on Instagram @the_original_trapping.

Paul Klusman
Paul is one half of the popular team The Cat Engineers, two of the earliest cat video stars who popularized the concept of Cat Yodeling. We asked Paul to describe himself and his cat Oscar. He said, “the man is tall, furry, and filled with peanut butter.” The cat is short, furry, and filled with tuna.” When asked about his relationship with Oscar, he said, “Oscar is a very important part of my life. I’m more attached to him than just about any other living creature, human or otherwise.” The Cat Engineers are considering making some new videos, but they have no timeline. “I’ve been trying to think of something but my creativity has always been super unreliable,” Klusman says. “It often doesn’t work if I just decide I want to make a video. It seems like the ideas just show up when they want...” Currently, he and Oscar are secretly planning to take over the universe with cat yodeling. “This takes longer than you might expect,” says Klusman. Until then, he reminds us that “animals love unconditionally better than just about any human you will ever meet.” You can find their work on YouTube @klusmanp.

Mark Allred
Mark is more of a behind-the-scenes cat guy as husband to Kate Benjamin, the well-known founder of Hauspanther.com and co-author of Catification and Catify to Satisfy with Jackson Galaxy. Mark himself is a luthier, making guitars full-time. He lives with fourteen cats but doesn’t like to play favorites. “...but I do kinda have ones I am more fond of than others,” says Allred. Allred says he’s never been teased for being such a big cat lover. “I get the occasional joke but it’s ordinarily light hearted,” he says. “Luthiers tend to be cat folks more than not.” And how does he feel about his wife’s career? “Being married to a celebrity cat lady is great! It is so much fun when somebody references some cat stuff and I’m like yeah my wife did that.” He met her at shows I was playing so music is what brought us together. I wasn’t really a cat guy before. I just liked animals. But then I met Ando and was an instant cat guy!” Allred feels pretty content with his lifestyle. “[My] life revolves around cats and guitars and it’s great!” You can see his work at allredguitars.com.

TJ Wingard
TJ is the other half of the The Cat Engineers, along with Paul Klusman. His cat Sweet William, who is no longer with him, appeared in some of the videos and has left a distinct mark on Wingard’s heart. “Sweet William was the best friend/family a guy could ask for,” Wingard says. “He lived up to his namesake and stuck with me through thick and thin and tornadoes and hurricanes and moving 7 times... I loved him dearly and miss him daily.” Although Sweet William was hard to top, Wingard opened his home to new kitties. “We couldn’t let our house be empty, so my wife and I decided to adopt not one, but two, FIV boys, from two different shelters, and lo and behold they even snuggle together now!” Wingard is a big believer in adopting pets. “The wonderful thing that sets [people] apart is human compassion. When you show that and give it freely to shelter animals, they will give it right back, in scads. Oftentimes you will find [that] you are not only rescuing them, but they are rescuing you too!”

Some men love cats, and some men love cats so much they make them part of their home life and work life. Meet a few Tree House supporters that you may have seen before. Some are famous for their cat videos, some for their work in TNR, and at least one is married to a well-known cat woman.
Meet Sarah Liss, Program Manager, Operations & Community Cats. If you have questions about TNR, she’s one of the people who will answer them. Her primary role at Tree house is to manage our Community Cats Program, which involves managing both the TNR and Cats at Work Programs. She also regularly keeps in touch with our network of over 1,000 Colony Caretakers, a huge part of our mission who augment our reach tremendously. “I love getting to work with our Colony Caretakers on a daily basis,” Sarah told us. “They are truly an inspiring, selfless group of people who go above and beyond for the cats they care for.”

Sarah comes from a long background of animal education and care. “I studied Animal Science at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign while volunteering at Champaign County Humane Society caring for cats and other small animals,” she said. “I went on to receive my Master’s degree in Anthrozoology while simultaneously working my first shelter job as an animal care technician at Upper Valley Humane Society in New Hampshire. This is where I truly learned how much I love working with cats, particularly feral cats! After moving home to Chicago 5 years ago, I was lucky enough to nab a job at Tree House.”

Sarah says she loves that Tree House is always looking for new, innovative, and progressive ways to help both cats and the folks who care for them. If she had a wish for her job, it would be to expand the capacity of care for the Community Cats Program. “I would love for our readers and community to know how much love and passion there is on Tree House’s Community Cats Team!” Sarah said.

“While we may not be able to create more time in a day or be in more than one place at a time, we are always working on and brainstorming new ways to more creatively serve and provide help to our community and the cats of Chicago.”

Outside of work, Sarah loves to cook and do crossword puzzles. She also says she has a “bit of an obsession” with interior design. She also enjoys spending time with her husband Brian, her dog Maggie, and her cat, named Little Wayne, who she adopted from Tree House. She’s most pleased about how he’s come out of his shell since adoption. “After adopting him as a very overstimulated, not very tolerant of pets or cuddles kind of cat, I’ve somehow convinced him to be the neediest, most attention seeking cat we’ve ever had. He now follows us down the hall meowing for pets, lays in our laps, and sleeps under my arm at night! He still has his spicy moments, though.”

Tree House is very pleased to have Sarah as a part of our team!

DILLON: CAT OF WONDER

ENERGY, VIGOR, POWER: THESE ARE THE THINGS THAT COME TO MIND WHEN WE THINK OF DILLON. In fact, he’s aptly named, you see, because he’s often on everything he can find: DILLON the counter, DILLON the shelf, DILLON the couch. Really, you’ll be calling him DILLOFF more than anything else if you’re not into that sort of thing.

But if you ARE into that sort of thing, then Dillon is the cat for you.

At Tree House, Dillon is known as the “Professional Hype Man.” If you need some energy at your party, this is the guy to invite. In fact, his resume describes him as “a supportive and energetic figure who prides himself on his ability to raise the crowd’s energy through well-timed interjections and exclamations.” It seems to us like you’d probably want to have a party just to introduce your friends to Dillon, a soiree with a wide dance floor so Dillon can show off his moves. He’s hip to the latest dances but he will absolutely tango or waltz with you, if that’s what you’d prefer.

Dillon is more interested in playtime than in snuggles, but his penchant for nose kisses will leave you breathless, as will his fantastical bursts of energy as you chase after him looking for that rhumba lesson he promised you. He would do very well in a house with lots of places to run and climb, and he’d appreciate a high-energy friend with whom he may spend his days, leaping over your couches in tandem. This could be another cat, or it could also be you. Your choice.

Dear Dillon has been with Tree House for over 10 months at the time of publication. We expect that once he’s discovered in this magazine, he’ll find his home in no time, so hurry! Call Tree House and make an appointment to meet him. He’s currently living in a foster home improving his bachata moves and waiting just for you, so get (Dill)on it!

PS. Don’t forget the party snacks. Dillon needs to keep up his energy.
This quarter, as members of the team finish their terms, we’re pleased to welcome new Officers to our Board of Directors. We’re proud to have their support and would like to introduce them.

DR. ROSS MAHOWOLD

is stepping into the role of Board President. He has worked as a veterinarian since 1994 at two practices, both of which were American Animal Hospital Association Certified and Cat Friendly Certified. A year ago, Dr. Ross decided to open his own practice, My Neighborhood Vet, in Lincolnwood to “bring this high-quality, progressive model of practice to the area,” he told us. Previously, he worked as a relief veterinarian at Tree House’s old location on Carmen. “I found Tree House’s mission to fit well with my goals as a clinician and their level of care and community involvement align well with my philosophies,” he said.

We asked Dr. Ross what skills he most wishes to utilize to further Tree House’s mission. “The primary skill I bring to Tree House is that of practicing veterinary medicine and the unique challenges that brings for cat and dog care,” Dr. Ross said. “Opening my own business has also taught me a lot about that side of veterinary medicine, and I’m hoping to help apply my veterinary skills and business skills to making the Veterinary Wellness Center a success!” The center opens in spring of 2021.

Dr. Ross says he is in between kitties right now, focusing on his dogs at the moment, but he used to have a cat named Calbert. He told us about a very special event when Calbert was only eight months old and Dr. Ross himself performed surgery on the kitten. “I’ve been there 20 years and have focused my career in healthcare consulting,” she told us. “This means I work with healthcare clients to drive improvements, technology projects, and cost and revenue projects,” she said. The skills that she specifically brings to Tree House include contract negotiation, looking at projects from a business lens, and bringing expertise from her network to assist in Tree House programs. We asked Ginger to share why she wanted to join the Board of Tree House. She told us she has “a love for cats and people, and organizations that advocate for them. I learned about Tree House from a work colleague and wanted to work with an organization who has a local flair and a comprehensive program around cat health, adoption, and the feral cat community.”

Ginger has two cats currently, named Paddington and Sissy. “They were found by a neighbor seven years ago who fostered them as newborns and connected me with them after I had lost my last loved cat Dudley of 20 years,” Ginger said. “They saved me, and I thank my lucky stars every day for having them.” She admitted to us that she makes up songs about them and sings them at the top of her lungs. “They look at me like I’m crazy!” she said.

The thing Ginger wants Tree House supporters to know most about the organization is that “Tree House is more than a place to adopt cats. It’s an organization that builds strong cat communities of humans and animals, and one that has tremendous passion for allowing all cats to thrive. The love and passion for cats is infectious at all levels of the organization. And the facility is amazing. I encourage everyone to visit.”

We are also welcoming GINGER DUSEK, who is taking on the role of Vice President & Secretary of our Board. She currently works for Accenture, a global management consulting firm.

1. KEEP YOUR PET AT HOME. This is where they will be safest and most comfortable. However, because of the possibility of transmitting COVID-19 to your pet, you should isolate yourself from them and find a backup caregiver within your household. If you live alone, see step 2 below. If you cannot isolate yourself from them, wash your hands before feeding and petting them and keep your distance. This includes not sharing food, hugs, or kisses during this time.

2. SECURE AN EMERGENCY CAREGIVER AND A BACKUP CAREGIVER IN CASE OF A HOSPITAL STAY.

3. PREPARE AN EMERGENCY KIT.

If may seem like a lot to gather, but preparing for emergency situations is an important part of your pet’s care. This plan will help keep your friend protected whether the emergency is COVID-19 or anything else.
CAT WALK 2020: Virtual Connections, Real Fun!

WHAT:
Your Cat Walk ticket purchase helps support Tree House & entitles you to a Cat Walk Swag Bag:
- Tree House face mask
- Cat Walk Passport — Your guide to carry-out specials at our partner pubs. Have a great party at home for TWO days!
- Access to our Cat Walk Videos: Cat fun, contests, prizes, and our Final Toast Live Stream!

HOW:
Using your TH mask & Passport (and your perfectly-honed social distancing techniques), enjoy Cat Walk carry-out specials from our partners! Each pub will have a Tree House table with staff and volunteers stamping passports and sharing table prizes.
Then, enjoy your tasty beverages and food at your own Cat Walk experience in your home!

WHEN?
2020 Cat Walk is a virtual event flowing Friday to Saturday, August 21-22. Your ticket enables you to visit one or two bars for specials, or any of our partnered pubs and breweries!
- $15 Early Bird tickets available online July 1-July 31
- $20 Regular Tickets available online July 25 - August 22.
- $10 Optional Add-On: Tree House-themed Home Scavenger Hunt game!

WHAT ELSE?
Buy your tickets online beginning July 1 to help "Every Cat Thrive!" Your ticket and donation support socially conscious sheltering & animal welfare in Chicago.

KITTEN HEALTH

Ask the Expert, with Dr. Emma Klein

This quarter, we’re welcoming our new Director of Veterinary Services Dr. Emma Klein. Dr. Klein graduated from Purdue University’s College of Veterinary Medicine in 2014. Following graduation, she completed a one-year rotating internship at the ASPCA Animal Hospital in New York that offered her graduate training in shelter medicine. In 2017, Dr. Klein joined the ASPCA’s Community Medicine department where she practiced high-volume, high-quality spay/neuter surgery and provided basic veterinary care to underserved communities. Originally hailing from the Midwest, Dr. Klein is thrilled to return to the Chicago area where she can raise her young son closer to family. She also has a cat named Busy, a foster fail from the Bronx.

Will my cat catch COVID-19 from guests?
There is still much to learn about COVID-19, but it appears possible for humans to infect other animals, including cats. In the few cases of COVID-19-positive pets, it is assumed they were infected by their caretaker. Typically, these cases were mild. Because people can spread the virus without showing symptoms, pets should be treated as the rest of the family and distanced from anyone outside of the home.

If someone in the home is diagnosed with COVID-19, they should isolate themselves from everyone, including pets. It is recommended everyone have a plan in case they become too ill to care for their pets. Ideally, someone else in the home would care for them. If this is not an option, wear a face mask and wash your hands often to protect your cat.

Can I catch COVID-19 from my cat?
This risk is considered very low as there is no evidence to support the spread of COVID-19 from animal to human. If your cat is showing signs of a respiratory illness, please call your veterinarian. Most likely, it is the result of common feline respiratory pathogens. Currently, routine testing of pets for COVID-19 is not recommended.

One study suggests that cats can spread COVID-19 to other cats. This was determined in a laboratory setting and has not been confirmed in a natural environment. These cats did not develop symptoms. Overall, it is not believed that animals are playing a role in the spread of COVID-19. If healthy, owners are encouraged to interact with their pets as they can provide immeasurable comfort during times of stress.

Is this the same coronavirus that cats have had for years? Does this cause FIP?
No. COVID-19 is caused by a novel, or new, coronavirus. Coronavirus have been around for a very long time and there are many species-specific coronaviruses, including a Feline Coronavirus (FCoV). FCoV is common among cats and usually does not cause disease.

Feline infectious peritonitis, or FIP, is caused by certain strains of FCoV. It is believed that FIP is the result of a mutation of FCoV after it has infected a cat. This occurs in about 5-10% of infections, but sadly is fatal. Although FCoV can spread from cat to cat, the disease FIP is not considered directly infectious. Promising new treatments for FIP are being researched.

Will my cat catch FIP from a guest?
FIP is the result of a mutation of FCoV after it has infected a cat. There is no evidence of FIP being caused by a human. Cats can catch FIP from another cat and spread it to other cats. This occurs in about 5-10% of infections, but sadly is fatal. Cats can catch FIP from another cat and spread it to other cats. This occurs in about 5-10% of infections, but sadly is fatal.
PET FOOD PANTRY IMPROVEMENTS

For many years, Tree House’s Pet Food Pantry has served Chicagoland pet owners needing assistance to feed and care for their pets. We want to improve that program to serve those in need where they are, so they may safely stay at home and have supplies shipped right to their door. To launch this program successfully, we need financial support.

If you have been donating pet food through our Amazon Wish List for this program, please consider redirecting your donation to our Pet Food Pantry Fund.

Visit treehouseanimals.org/petfoodpantry for more information.