

FALL 2020



**TREE HOUSE**  
HUMANE SOCIETY

# THE **CAT**alyst

TREEHOUSEANIMALS.ORG

A ginger and white cat is lying on its side on the rim of a dark, weathered wooden barrel. The cat is looking towards the camera with a calm expression. Its fur is a mix of orange and white, with white patches on its chest and paws. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an outdoor setting with some structures.

**Partnering  
with Purpose**



# THE CATalyst

Tree House Humane Society Magazine  
Fall 2020

## EDITORS:

Shannon Gonzalez  
Chris Thoren

## CONTRIBUTORS:

Amber Gibson  
Caryn Tomasiewicz  
Sarah Vetrano  
Chloe Waryan  
Jan Willer

## DESIGN:

Lauren Monaco

Pictured front cover:  
Bacon, Kaiser Tiger working cat

Let us know what you think!  
Email your comments to  
[marketing@treehouseanimals.org](mailto:marketing@treehouseanimals.org)



7225 N. WESTERN AVE.  
CHICAGO, IL 60645

773-262-4000

[TREEHOUSEANIMALS.ORG](https://treehouseanimals.org)

[INFO@TREEHOUSEANIMALS.ORG](mailto:info@treehouseanimals.org)

## CONTENTS

- 2 Letter from the Executive Director
- 3 Adoption Successes
- 5 Cat'baret Preview
- 6 Q&A With Planned Giving Participant Wally Lindberg
- 7 Meet Tree House – Board Member Kat Hindmand
- 8 Opening Homes through Open Adoptions
- 9 Choosing Our Partners with Purpose
- 11 Featured Animal Welfare Partners
- 14 Ask the Expert with Dr. Emma Klein

## CALENDAR

### Cat'baret

October 21-23, see page 5  
for details

### Veterinary Wellness Center Grand Opening

April 10, 2021

## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*Dear Tree House Friends:*

*Cats make our lives happier  
and healthier. Our pets  
have the power to connect  
us across age, community,  
and culture.*

In a time of social distancing, our pets have been a lifeline. Our community has shared with us how grateful they are to have a Tree House kitty in their life – easing loneliness and isolation and even brightening their Zoom calls with surprise appearances. One Tree House kitty made employee of the month at their pet guardian's workplace!

There's a lot of research showing how our pets strengthen neighborhood ties and help build social capital. At our events in the pre-COVID era and now virtually through our online communities, we have had strangers forge new connections over stories about the joy and companionship of having a cat. Neighbors become friends as they share their favorite cat pictures and cat tales of mischief.

Tree House has been connecting felines, people, and organizations for almost 50 years. How do we continue to help our communities through our love for animals? In this issue, you'll read about some of our partnerships. This year and next, we will continue to grow and nurture our network of partners to have greater impact – ensuring every cat



thrives and, in the process, strengthening our ties with each other.

Thank you for continuing to support Tree House. Our promise is to provide model cat care by empowering our communities of caregivers. Your generosity helps to ensure this promise and your partnership is vital to Tree House's commitment to finding innovative solutions. 2021 marks our 50th year, and we're looking forward. We can't wait to make new connections together.

**Raissa Allaire**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



# ADOPTION SUCCESSES: SPOTLIGHT ON CATS AT WORK

BY CHLOE WARYAN

*Walking down an alley in Chicago, perhaps you’ve noticed a tail darting behind a dumpster or posters on your neighbor’s fence sporting photos of “working” cats. These are most likely signs of Cats at Work, a program here at Tree House.*

*Cats at Work takes vaccinated, neutered kitties and places them into a residential or commercial setting in order to provide “green” rodent control. Residents of these buildings provide shelter, food, and water for the cats, and the neighbors appreciate them. Here are some of their stories, told by the folks who love them.*

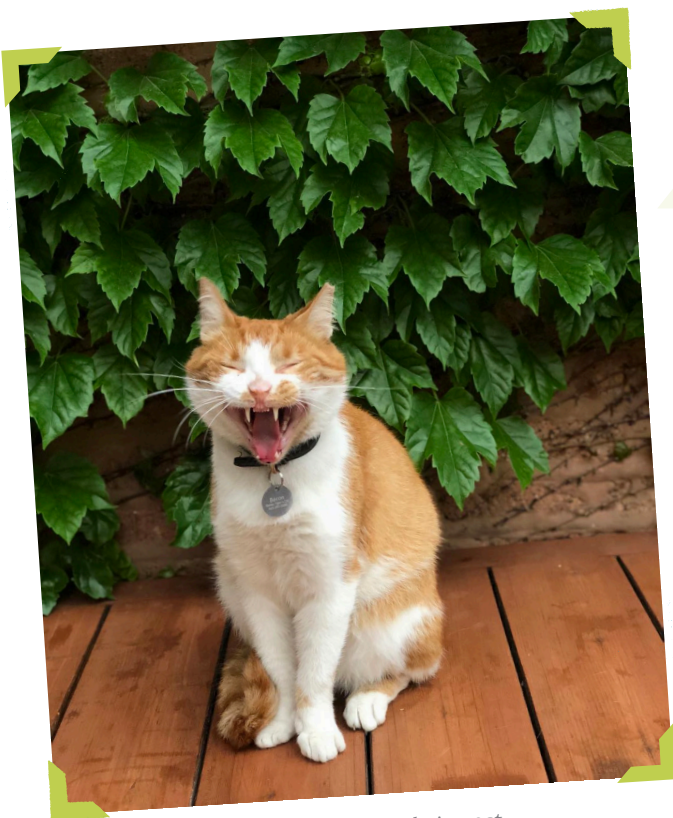


Photo credit: Instagram, @baconthekaisercat

**BACON THE CAT AT THE KAISER TIGER RESTAURANT AND BAR** is arguably our most popular working cat in the city. Why, might you ask?

He boasts his own Instagram (@baconthekaisercat) with over 900 followers at the time of publication! As industry boomed in the West Loop, rats also started hanging out near restaurants and bars like Kaiser Tiger. Assistant General Manager Ashley Heath recalls first getting Bacon, especially working the precarious balance between letting a feral cat work while also running a restaurant. “It can be very nerve wracking for a younger cat to adjust to so many people onsite at all times,” she said, “Though we read that most [working] cats won’t socialize, the staff didn’t give up hope.”

The Kaiser Tiger team worked together to make the restaurant a comfortable place for Bacon to live. “He started to let people come to him, pet him, give him snacks. It didn’t take long before he became the Prince of the Patio. The staff always jokes with one another that he has become a weird mix of a very feral, yet very domesticated cat.” Ashley has found love for cats through this process, as she “wasn’t a fan” of cats prior to getting Bacon and now has a cat of her own. “He warmed my cold dead heart!” she said.

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR CATS AT WORK PROGRAM, CONTACT TREE HOUSE AT 773-262-4000 OR EMAIL US AT [INFO@TREEHOUSEANIMALS.ORG](mailto:info@treehouseanimals.org)**

**AUDREY REYNOLDS, A RESIDENT OF THE WEST RIDGE COMMUNITY**, noticed that her neighborhood had a rat problem. “I had been aware that there were rat holes,” Audrey said, “and it was very, very frustrating. I noticed the rats were starting to leave droppings between the air conditioner and the house.” When other methods did not work, she was almost out of ideas until she saw her alderman on the news praising the Cats at Work program at Tree House. “I decided ‘this sounds perfect,’” she said and got in touch with us.

The result was immediate. Audrey remembers that the rats “vanished very quickly,” especially around the community garden area on her block. Four years later, she hasn’t seen a rat since. One of her cats, Mrs. Fields, has made a particular impression on the neighborhood. “[She’s] never tried to come in the house but she’s good company for me!” Audrey states, “She jumps up on the kitchen window in the morning, asking ‘where’s food?’ I’ve been quite happy with her.”



Photo credit: Audrey Reynolds



Photo Credit: Michelle Jenkins

**THE EDWARD HINES JR. VA HOSPITAL** got involved with the Cats at Work program when they started noticing mice around some of the buildings. But when the cats (Terminator and Egg Nog) got to work, the mouse complaints quickly ceased. “We set up their ‘house’ in a utility shed on the south side of our campus,” Assistant Director Jon Beidelschies said, “Our staff and the Cats at Work team put in a lot of time to make them feel comfortable, including setting up heated bedding areas and repurposing some old ladders into cat trees.”

The Veterans and staff are aware that feral cats aren’t always the most interactive, so it becomes extra special when they catch a glimpse of the kitties. “I have just been so impressed by the effectiveness of the cats as well as how much our staff and Veterans responded positively to their arrival,” Jon said, “We weren’t sure how well things were going to work but we have been very happy with the results.”





**OUR ONLINE EVENT WILL FEATURE THREE DAYS OF FUN THAT YOU CAN ENJOY FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN HOME!**

#### Day 1: October 21, 2020

##### Behind-the-scenes at Treehouse

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, or both, and enjoy fun, informational sneak peeks into our life-saving work!

#### Day 2: October 22, 2020

##### Virtual Wine Tasting

Join us for our online wine tasting featuring sommelier Kiva Wenig from Il Porcellino, who will be sharing with us tips and tricks to enjoying “drinks on a dime!”

#### Day 3: October 23, 2020

##### Come to the Cat'bareT

Tune in to our free virtual gala performance, a sparkling show featuring the return of Emmy-winning cabaret artist Scott Gryder as our Emcee and musical guest.

**TICKETS AT [TREEHOUSEANIMALS.ORG/CATBARET](https://treehouseanimals.org/catbaret)**

**General:** Free — RSVP to Cat'bareT Online Show

**Wine:** \$100 — Four (4) assorted wines for sommelier-hosted online tasting + Unlimited access to Cat'bareT Show

**Dine:** \$125 — One (1) Three-course City Winery dinner for home + Unlimited access to Cat'bareT Show

**VIP:** \$500 — Two (2) City Winery dinners for home + Assorted wines + Recognition listing + Unlimited access

**SPONSORS:**



## Q&A WITH WALLY LINDBERG

Meet one of our generous partners who makes our life-saving work possible.

### TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH ANIMALS!

“I grew up around Wrigley Field. I walked to many Cubs games because I am a die-hard Cubs fan. My mother had a white angora, Tallulah (after Ms. Bankhead). There are pictures of the cat in the crib with me when I was a little guy.

We had a bird, a parakeet which we adored...I brought him everywhere in the whole house. But the cat Tallulah was the long-lasting friend. I come from a cat family--all my cousins, all my aunts they all have cats. As long as a cat is in my lap, I'm happy.

I have always had one cat. Growing up we always had one cat, and they got lots of attention. You didn't have to split it between two. My current cat is called 'Kitty'. They've all been called Kitty, every one of them.

Before I retired, I was a pressman: Printers Union Local 458M. I am a firm believer in organized labor. I also owned my own small printing company for 34 years. 2021 is my 45th year as a vegetarian (30th as a vegan), and I was one of the founders of the Chicago Vegetarian Society.”

### WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO TREE HOUSE?

“Probably it was Judy Grossman [a long-time TH volunteer and partner] who informed me and others in the CVS about Tree House. We did two tours of TH, at the Carmen Street house. [As I toured the TH location] I got to thinking: These



buildings cost money, where does it come from? I got to thinking: I could make a good donation. When you're [gone, your estate,] it's all

got to be dissolved. My lawyer said to me [about my estate planning], 'You do know that if you are gone, it all goes to cat shelters? I said, I do know!'



Kitties are dependent on humans for their well-being. And I tell you they can depend on me. You just ask my Kitty, I'm hovering over that guy all the time. I watch him so closely. Especially as he ages, he's had some troubles, but when there's troubles I'm there to take him to the vet. My first kitty, I got him from a good friend. They found him thrown away in Tennessee, and they picked him up and drove him all the way to me. I gave him a home and loved him, he lived about seven years.

Anybody who knows me knows how much I love kitties, especially if they've been in my house. Every room has artwork of kitties. I just love animals in general. Kitties are dependent, and they can depend on me.”

### WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO OTHERS WHO WANT TO LEAVE A LEGACY?

“If they have resources to give, I would encourage people to give them to animal shelters that are dependent on people's donations to keep a roof over [animals'] heads and food in their bellies.

With my parents' estate, I ended up with it all. These animals in the future, that's what matters.

That table that my cats are sitting on in the picture, it's Italian marble and black walnut, and was made by my grandfather. He was a furniture craftsman here in Chicago. It's a family heirloom. If my house catches fire, I'm grabbing two things: Kitty, and that table. Then I'll put vegan marshmallows on a stick and watch it all go. As long as I have my cat.”



## MEET TREE HOUSE

### Kat Hindmand

By Amber Gibson

Kat Hindmand first got involved with Tree House when she and her partner adopted Auggie at the house on Carmen in 2006.

“I thought he was so handsome being all white except for an all-black tail and some little boops on his face,” Hindmand recalls. “He was in the Respiratory Room and was so sweet and playful. I thought it was brilliant the way they had different rooms for cats, like the Shy Room and the FIV+ Room.

*I also thought it was great that Tree House rescued all kinds of cats, including those with disabilities and health challenges. I had not previously seen a shelter or rescue organization do that.”*

After adopting Auggie, Hindman began donating cat food, supplies, and money to Tree House for many years and in August 2019 she joined the Board of Directors.

“When my partner and I got married on our 20th anniversary in 2017, instead of gifts we asked people to donate to our favorite organizations,” she says. “Mine was Tree House. It is so important to me that ‘Every Cat Thrives.’” Along with her role serving on the Board of Directors, Hindman is also the Chair of the Internal Affairs Committee.

Hindmand is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with a background in trauma work and emergency management disaster services along with education administration. She is currently the Director of Climate and Culture at W.H. Taft High School, overseeing two campuses and nearly 4,000 students.



“I oversee all student discipline and lead our behavior health, emergency response and crisis teams,” she says. “My ability to be calm in a crisis and bring order to chaos is probably my greatest asset.”

At home, she and her partner of 23 years have six cats and an 11-year-old son. “It took me a while to embrace being a ‘crazy cat lady,’” she says. “I am now an out and proud one!” Hindmann even has a word-find tattoo that she designed herself with the names of all of the cats she has had up until the last few years. “Soon, I am either going to have to add another couple of lines or create a new one to put elsewhere!”

## OPENING HOMES THROUGH OPEN ADOPTION

By Sarah Vetrano

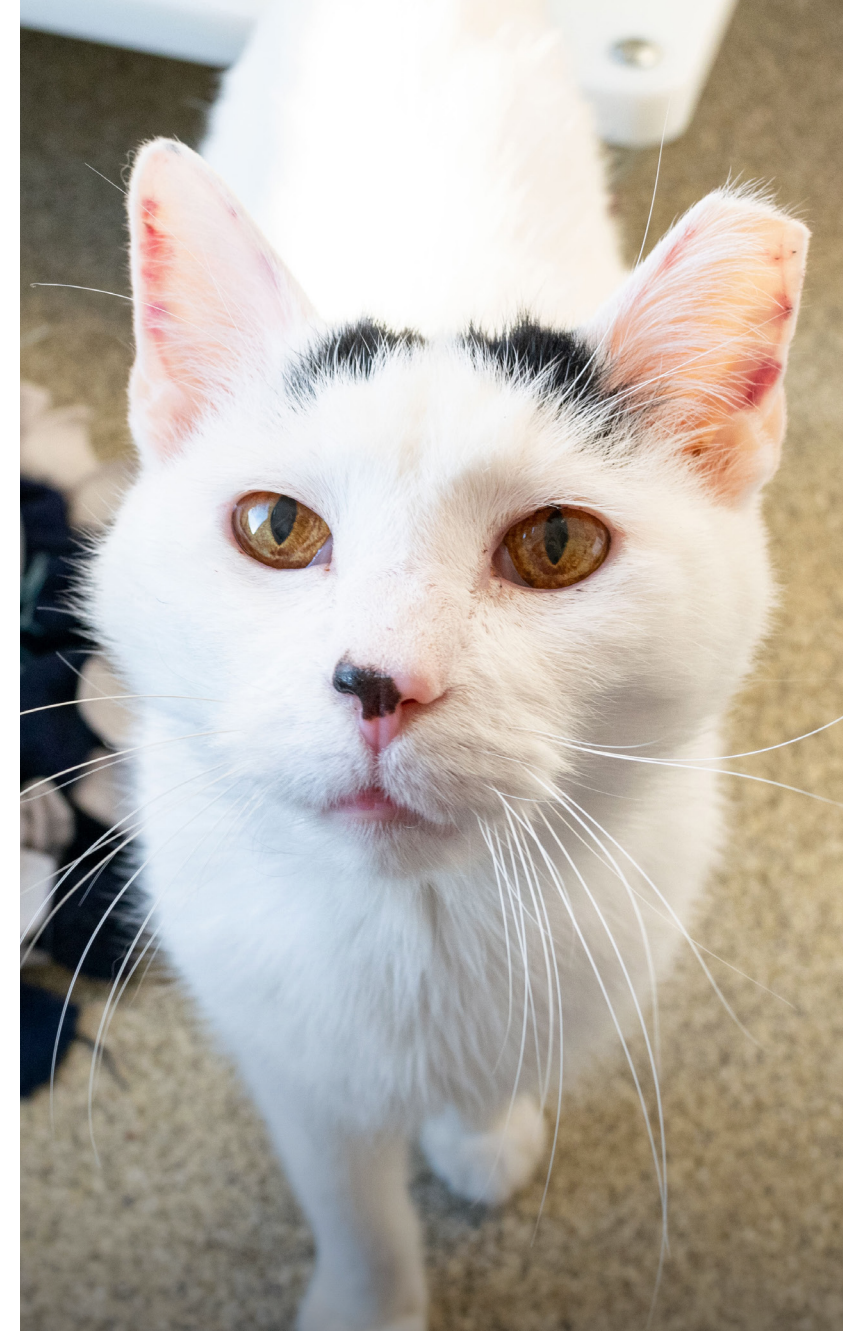
### STILL PINING FOR A FURRY COLLEAGUE DURING THE PANDEMIC?

Tree House is increasing accessibility to that dream by implementing a new process aimed at empowering adopters and creating a more inclusive experience. Instead of the traditional application process, open adoption relies on dialogue with counselors and focuses on eliminating unconscious bias and judgement while creating a custom experience to ensure a purrrfect match between adopter and future ruler of the household.

“[This process] is more in line with the Tree House mission,” Shelter Shift Lead Sonia Ramos said. “We are welcoming of all people who are interested in adopting a cat, and we are making sure we aren’t excluding anyone based on income, background, or housing factors.” Instead, we’re focused on building trust, providing education, and addressing the needs of both the adopter and the cat.

Director of Operations, Danielle Case, says of the new adoption criteria,

*“This process really highlights our commitment to providing cats with the best possible outcome. We want adopters to be encouraged and feel equipped with the information they need for a positive outcome.”*



### ADOPTABLE CAT BANDY

**BANDY IS AN ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD MALE WHO ARRIVED AT TREE HOUSE IN MAY OF 2019 AND HAS BEEN PATIENTLY WAITING ON OUR ADOPTION FLOOR SINCE THEN. A SWEET (AND RATHER VOCAL) GENTLEMAN, BANDY ENJOYS A GOOD PETTING SESSION AND TASTY SNACKS. HIS ADOPTION FEE HAS BEEN WAIVED BY A CARING COMMUNITY MEMBER WHO JUST WANTS BANDY TO FIND A LOVING HOME. COULD THAT HOME BE YOURS?**



## CHOOSING OUR PARTNERS WITH PURPOSE

Here at Tree House, our mission is to empower our communities of caregivers and ensure that every cat thrives. We strive to provide model cat care, and we do it through the model of **Socially Conscious Sheltering**.

The Socially Conscious Animal Community framework is about creating the best outcome for all animals and nurturing the human-animal bond through thoughtful placements, assessing and thoughtfully addressing animal needs, and considering the health and safety of both animals and communities.

That focus on community is what makes Tree House so special. We choose our vendors, volunteers, peers, and partners purposefully with that mission in mind, too! This month, we're honored to feature our partnership with an organization that keeps Tree House running in more ways than one: **National Able Network**.

The National Able Network started in 1977 here in Chicago, primarily as a workforce development program in retraining those for new careers, working with veterans, senior citizens, future IT career seekers and the unemployed. Since then, NAN has grown exponentially and now connects those community members with businesses and nonprofits in need.

Tom Jurlina, CIO of National Able Network, says,

*We're excited to expand Tree House's impact with our support. It's a win-win to align with organizations that want to affect change and do their part to help the community thrive."*

National Able Network provides outsourced IT services for Tree House, including helping set up all the workstations our volunteers use and the technology that keeps us running in so many ways.

The fundamental goal of a Socially Conscious Animal Community is to create best outcomes for all animals. The responsibilities of Socially Conscious Shelters include:

- Ensuring every unwanted or homeless pet has a safe place to go for shelter and care



- Placing every healthy and safe animal



- Assessing the medical and behavioral needs of homeless animals and ensuring these needs are thoughtfully addressed



- Aligning policy with the needs of the community



- Alleviating suffering and making appropriate euthanasia decisions

- Considering the health and wellness of each animal and each community when transferring animals between communities



- Enhancing the human-animal bond through thoughtful placements and post adoption support



- Fostering a culture of transparency, ethical decision making, mutual respect, continual learning and collaboration





# TRANSFER PARTNERSHIPS: SAVING CATS IN LEAPS AND BOUNDS

By Caryn Tomasiewicz

Our transfer cats arrive by car, by van - even by private airplane. They may hail from Alabama, Southern Illinois, or the south side of Chicago. Destination: their forever home. But first, a stop at Tree House!

Every year, hundreds of furry travelers find permanent homes through Tree House's transfer program. This initiative involves working with animal welfare partners to quickly move cats out of shelters and onto sun-soaked sofas.

Our transfer partners share our mission to save feline lives and strengthen the communities they live in, but may be overwhelmed at times due to factors such as:

**OPEN-ADMISSIONS POLICIES.** Shelters with open admissions are at the center of the animal welfare ecosystem. But because they accept all animals - including those surrendered by their owners - their resources can be rapidly taxed.

**WARMER CLIMATES = PERPETUAL KITTEN SEASON.** Year-round kittens may sound heavenly, but saving the tiniest lives requires significant resources, putting kittens in shelters at high risk of euthanasia.

**LOW-DENSITY POPULATIONS.** Rescues in rural locales may struggle to find foster and permanent homes and often lack the resources for a robust (or any) trap-neuter-release program.

With our in-house surgical suite, full-time clinic staff, expert adoption counselors, and location in the country's second most populated county, Tree House can help mitigate the distress caused by prolonged shelter stays, reduce the risk of capacity-based euthanasia, and help more cats thrive.



## Better together

The ability to pool resources is a key benefit of transfer partnerships. When five, fifteen, or fifty cats arrive at once, Tree House becomes noticeably busier and more boisterous! In most cases, our partners have already administered vaccines and provided other services prior to the transport. This allows us to focus our resources on resolving more complex medical issues and putting cats on the path to adoption. Many partners also provide their own transport or coordinate with nearby transfer groups to make the journey to Chicago more efficient for all.

## Feline Advocates without Borders

Our transfer work begins in our own backyard, with weekly visits to Chicago Animal Care and Control (CACC). Similar to Tree House, CACC benefits from an in-house clinic, experienced adoptions team, and access to millions of potential adopters in the Chicagoland area. But as an open-admissions shelter, CACC experiences a sustained, high volume of cats, dogs, and other pets, pushing their capacity to its limits. Through this key partnership, we receive an average of 30 adorable cats each month.

If your cat has ever mentioned her origins as a "barn cat," she may have started her journey at Richland County Illinois Animal Control or at the Animal Welfare League of Montgomery County, Indiana. Located in rural areas several hours south of Chicago, the number of available cats often outweighs the "demand" due to lower population density in these communities. Every month, we work to find loving homes for approximately 20 country kitties, some of whom have been waiting in shelters for too long. Tree House also spays and neuters many of these transfer cats, an essential service that our experienced clinic is happy to provide.

Working towards a world in which all cats thrive sometimes takes us to states such as Florida and Alabama. According to Best Friends Animal Society's "Lifesaving Dashboard," these and a handful of other states have save rates below the ideal 90%. Best Friends' interactive map identifies areas in which the risk of capacity-based euthanasia is high. In order to realize the best outcomes with our transfer resources, we seek efficiencies such as "cat-pooling" or coordinating with other Chicago-area organizations to share the cost of kitty transport. Seeing a fur baby land in its forever nest is the best reward. Tree House also benefits from the idea exchange that occurs in working across state lines, and increased visibility, which helps us get more humans to support our mission.

Regardless of where their journeys begin, transfer cats **are** Tree House cats. Our partnerships make it possible for us to treat, nurture, and find homes for many felines all at once. In doing so, we take long, lovely strides towards creating a world full of thriving cats and happy, adoring humans.







## Honor your loved one with a gift this holiday season.

As we snuggle up with our animals with the approach of colder months, we like to take a moment to reflect on how much of an impact our pets have had on our lives.

It's during times like these that having a pet takes on a much deeper meaning. A gentle nudge with their head, a quiet moment curled up on the couch together, looking into their soulful eyes, can truly turn a frown upside down. So many of our adopters, fosters, and others have shared heartwarming stories about how their cats (and dogs too!) have been there for them in unexpected ways through the pandemic.

During this annual celebration we like to pause for a moment to honor and remember the people and pets in our lives who have brought us joy and lifted us up.

Won't you help us shine bright with love this season?



**DONATE AT [TREEHOUSEANIMALS.ORG/HAPPYHOLIDAYS](https://treehouseanimals.org/happyholidays)**

## — ASK THE EXPERT —

### Ask the Expert with Dr. Emma Klein

By Jan Willer

#### What is Community Medicine?

Community medicine is about increasing access to veterinary care for everyone. Pet ownership comes with many benefits, and everyone deserves to experience the human-animal bond. All pet owners want to take good care of their pets. But some owners may not be able to afford veterinary care. A community medicine service provides basic wellness and preventative care for the pets of owners who would not otherwise be able to afford it.

#### How does Community Medicine help families and their pets?

Before arriving to Tree House, I worked in New York City with the Community Medicine Department of the American Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA). We provided spay/neuter services and basic wellness care to people who could not otherwise afford it for their pets. Since families could get veterinary care from us, fewer pets were relinquished to shelters.

#### What have you learned from working in Community Medicine?

Community medicine goes beyond vaccines. My relationships with the pet owners empowered them with the knowledge they needed to provide the best environment, stimulation and care for their pets. I have experienced the sense of joy and



accomplishment that pet owners feel when they can help their pets and keep them in their care. Clearly, a family's income is not related to the love they feel for their pets!

#### How will the Veterinary Wellness Center (VWC) at Tree House strengthen our community partnerships?

At the VWC, we will provide veterinary care to other animal rescue groups and the public, specifically people receiving public assistance. Our partnerships with other rescue organizations will maximize their resources to help more pets exit the shelter system and enter a forever home.

#### How will the VWC help families?

We have learned that up to 90% of pet owners coming to low-cost facilities had never visited a veterinarian before. We are happy that we will be able to provide access to veterinary care, which is so critical for the health and well-being of pets. We will help families avoid heart-wrenching decisions about whether they are able to keep their pets, when they are struggling financially. Accessible veterinary care keeps pets with their families and out of the shelters.





**TREE HOUSE**

HUMANE SOCIETY

7225 N. WESTERN AVE.

CHICAGO, IL 60645



## Thinking About The Future?

Tree House can listen and provide estate planning information. We offer:

- Basic information on trusts, bequests, and IRA giving
- Forms for indicating an intended gift
- Personal calls/visits to hear all your questions and concerns

*"I am so glad to know that, because of planned giving, I can use my resources to continue to save lives."*

*– An anonymous Tree House Donor*

To find out more, visit our website or contact our Development Department: 773-262-4000 (ext 105)  
[development@treehouseanimals.org](mailto:development@treehouseanimals.org)

[treehouseanimals.org/ways-to-give](https://treehouseanimals.org/ways-to-give)