

WINTER 2021



TREE HOUSE
HUMANE SOCIETY

50
YEARS
INSPIRING
CONNECTING
THRIVING

THE CATalyst

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50 Years of Gratitude

THE CATalyst

Tree House Humane Society Magazine
Winter 2021

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CALENDAR

SAVE THE DATE

Cat Walk

Saturday, August 6, 2022

Cat'bare

Thursday, October 27, 2022

Lights of Love

Thursday, December 8, 2022

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Tree House turned 50 this year. Milestones like these always give us moments of reflection.

I've been thinking a lot about the word grit – a combination of passion and perseverance, and of course, courage. For a group of donors who celebrated with us this past October, they heard me share a story that brings this word to life.

I'd like to tell you a story about Phil. Phil is a cat lover (no surprise) and a long-time supporter of Tree House. And Phil has two beautiful cats – Smokey and Morgan. Cats that he considered part of his family – a feeling that many of us understand.

With his health in mind, he made the most difficult decision -- he decided to give his two beloved cats, his companions for the last 13 years, one more chance in a loving home. The only place that entered Phil's mind to call, to give them that chance was us – Tree House.

When we picked up his cats from his home, it was hard not to feel his sadness and cry with him. It took Phil a lot of courage to let them go. I am thankful that we were able to find Smokey and Morgan a home together and bring Phil some peace during his final years. He donated two gold coins to Tree House. Coincidentally, gold is the anniversary gift for 50 years. And most importantly, these coins are a reminder to us of how to lead with courage.



This past year, I have learned a lot about our Tree House grit – the power of our passion, our perseverance and our courage.

Our house empowers, connects and innovates. Our house learns and finds a way. We go beyond the numbers, recognizing how we do things is just as important as what we do. And we realize the human and animal condition are intertwined. Even through the most challenging times, our house stands strong because of all you.

WE ARE SO GRATEFUL FOR YOU. Thank you for making Tree House a home. Thank you for loving cats. Thank you for making a difference in our families' lives. As 2021 comes to a close, let's celebrate all we've accomplished together and what is yet to come.

Raissa Allaire, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



@TreeHouseHumaneSociety



@TreeHouseCats



@TreeHouseHumaneSociety



@TreeHouseCats

— TREE HOUSE @ 50: THEN & NOW —

FIFTY YEARS AGO, Tree House Humane Society was founded on the dream of a group of volunteers who wanted better things for Chicago's homeless animals. At that time, euthanasia of healthy, treatable cats was a common occurrence and a topic of public concern.

Since then, euthanasia rates of healthy, treatable cats continue to decline nationally -- thanks to the rise of rescues and shelters like Tree House. Shelter adoptions have become more accessible and spay and neuter is more widely used to reduce the number of unwanted animals.

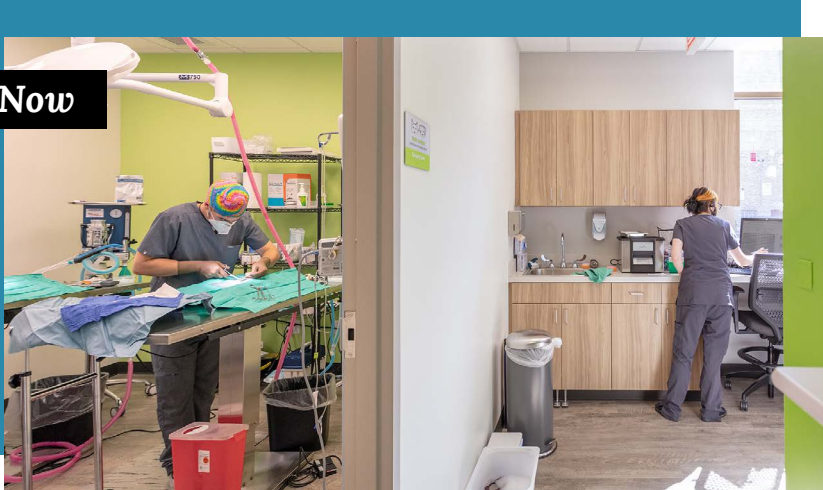
As pets have become an integral part of the American family and part of our community, Tree House is focusing on new opportunities to keep more families together and serve as a community resource for our communities of caregivers. And like back then, we continue to focus on our commitment to revolutionizing life for the cats who share our community -- and beyond.

It's a mission that, even after all these years, remains necessary.

Let's take a look at "Then & Now" photographs in celebration of this year's 50th anniversary.



A magical place for cats and cat lovers



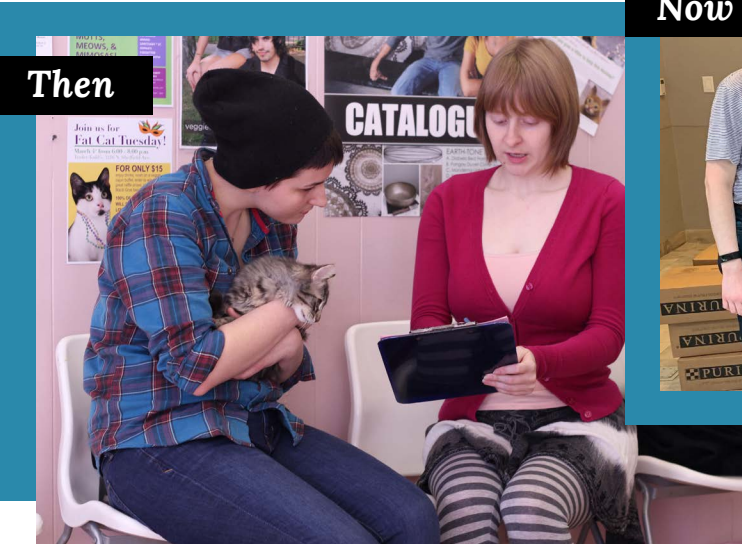
Innovative and holistic programs



Inspiring connection and community



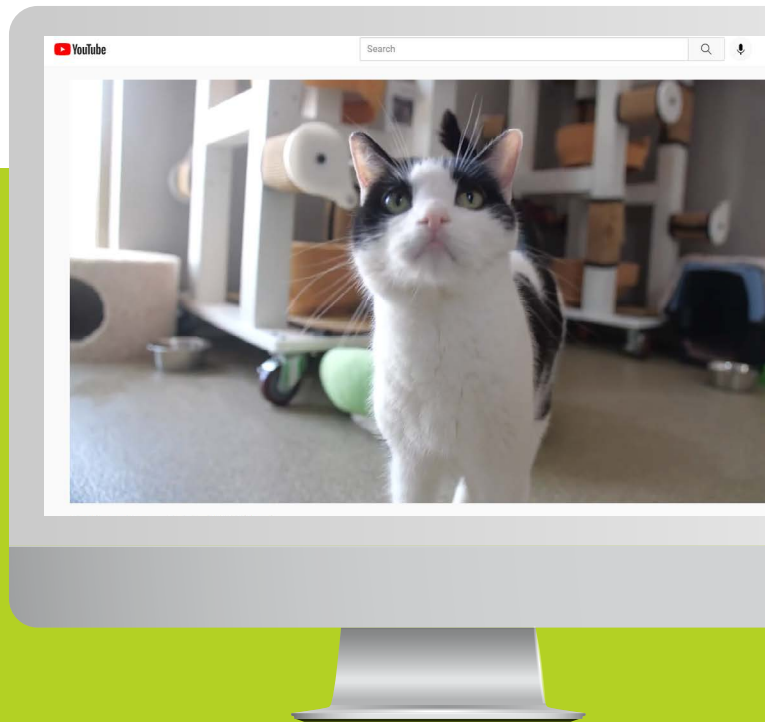
A community with a lot of heart



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Watch our 50-year retrospective on the Past, Present, and Future of Tree House:

► treehouseanimals.org/50



OUR STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-24

Pursuing Excellence through Community

As we prepare for our next 50 years, we are excited to invest in everything that's made Tree House great for the last 50: community, innovation, and resilience. These strategic priorities are only the surface, and reflect the exciting future of the next three years.

► Learn more at treehouseanimals.org/strategicplan.

ENGAGE OUR COMMUNITIES

To set the stage for continued growth and innovation, we will use the lens of **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)** to guide how we work, interact and engage.

We will embed DEI principles into our organization through education and training, more transparent and equitable policies, and inclusive behaviors.

We will develop stronger connections in the communities we serve, expanding our community base, and engaging with more diverse partners.

EXPAND ACCESS TO CARE

Focusing on innovation, quality, and sustainable growth, Tree House intends to expand its commitment to excellent, progressive services — specializing in feline care.

We will pursue growth opportunities in **underserved communities**.

We will grow our service offerings in response to the needs and health inequities experienced by the pets and the communities we serve.

BUILD FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

We will strengthen our financial capacity over the long term and champion **proven strategies of thriving organizations** — including sound investment and reserve policies and multi-year planning.

Revenue streams will be balanced, diverse and sophisticated. Services and programs will be evaluated based on the dual bottom line of impact and finances.

We are committed to embedding financial data in program discussions and decision-making.

SUPPORT A HIGH-PERFORMING CULTURE

The talents, passion, and compassion of Tree House's workforce constitute its most valued resource.

With emphasis on both new employees and existing employees, the enhancement of systems to attract, retain, and support talent and create high-performing teams using data effectively will be prioritized over the next three years.

We aim to be a **workplace of choice**.

EXPANDING ACCESS TO CARE

By Anna Marketti

OVER THE COURSE OF THE NEXT THREE YEARS, Tree House is excited to expand access to veterinary care throughout Chicago. Through new partnerships and service delivery models of its Veterinary Wellness Center including satellite care and professional behavioral assistance, we're ready to take the next step towards a world where every pet thrives.

"This service helps keep pets and their human caretakers healthy," according to veterinarian Dr. Jesse Navatta. "We vaccinate these pets against rabies which is a life-threatening disease for all mammals, humans and other animals alike." The pop-ups also offer vaccines for other preventable

diseases including parvovirus in dogs and panleukopenia in cats in addition to microchips.

"This idea became a reality because of the shared vision and hard work of our staff, volunteers, and city members to keep pets in homes with their families and out of shelters," said Associate Director of Veterinary Operations Dani Robinson. "We hope that not only will we reach pet owners who may not otherwise have access to care, but that this may also reduce some of the recent stress created by these things on local animal hospitals."

"Mobility is the key to resolving the transportation roadblock," said Dr. Navatta. Increasing access to care should include "bringing preventive care into the homes of our community members." In an ideal future, this could include satellite spay/neuter services through a dedicated Tree House mobile clinic.

More people have been adopting pets in recent years, while animal hospitals have seen staffing shortages, placing veterinary care further out of reach for residents in neighborhoods without many options for veterinary care to begin with. The closest veterinarian may be inaccessible to those without a car.

A study from Maddie's Fund in partnership with the Access to Veterinary Care Coalition (ACVV) found that cost was another major barrier for pet owners seeking veterinary care for their pets. Conversely, 88% of those surveyed in the report agree that they see their pet as an important member of the family and felt negatively emotionally impacted when they couldn't afford care for their pet.

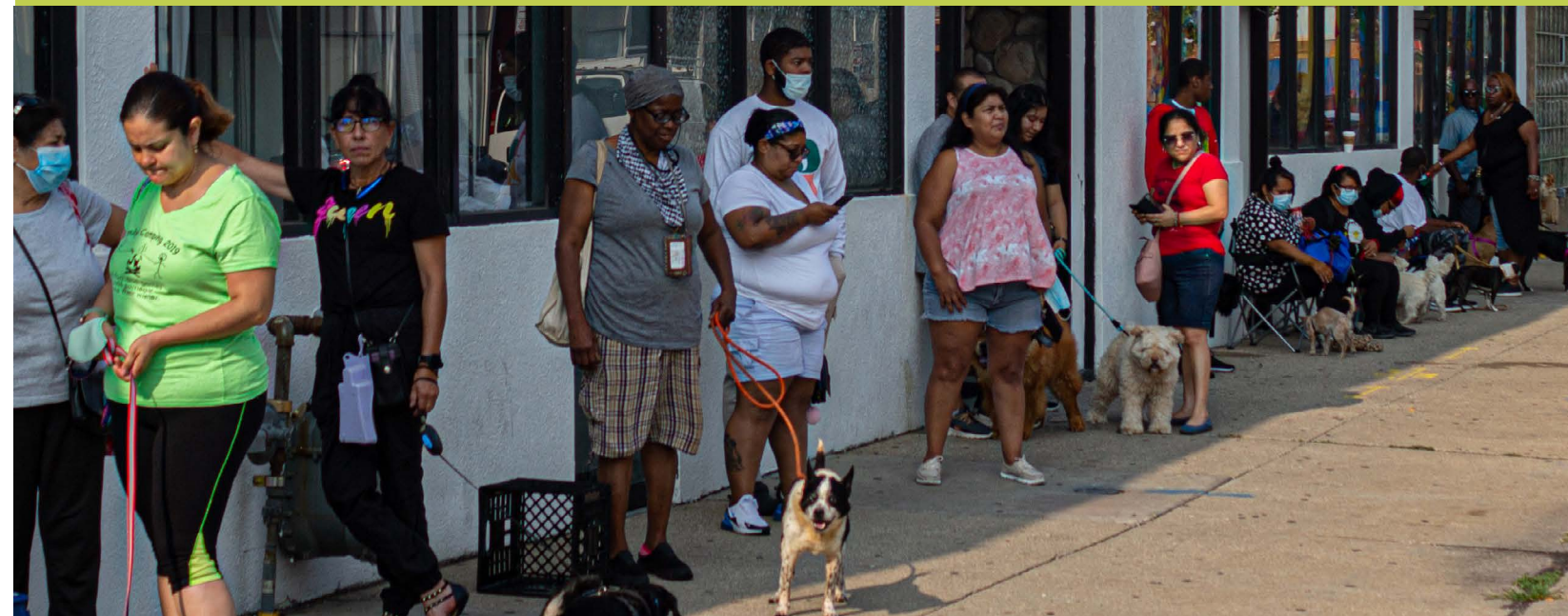


"We believe that financial situations and/or location should never be a barrier that prevents families from providing protection against preventable diseases to their pets— who we know are family members too," said Robinson.



The ACVV study also found that one of the biggest reasons people surrender their pets is due to solvable behavioral concerns. Looking beyond preventive care, Tree House is working to keep pets in homes by offering sick and injured care for pets in addition to professional behavior counseling over the course of the next three years.

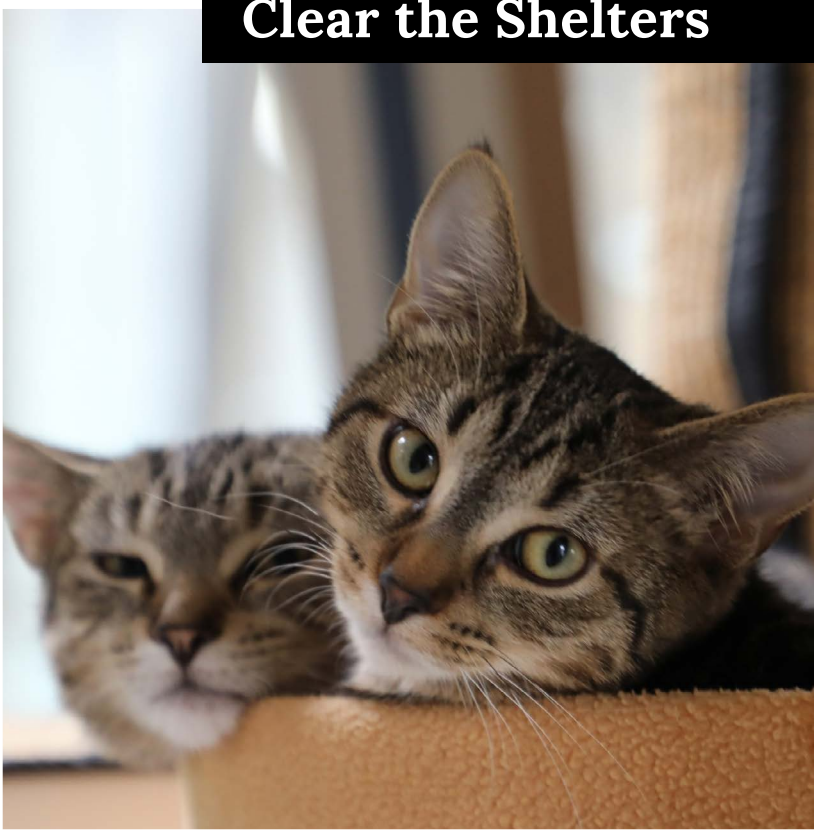
"The paradox that we face is that while it may be logical that someone should not have a pet if they cannot provide veterinary care, it is difficult to defend denying companionship with pets," the report states. "These families deserve companionship with pets and to enjoy all of the benefits that come through these relationships."



In a year like no other, we were still able to celebrate with our community. From opening our doors for events like *Clear the Shelters* or *Open House Chicago*, to bringing Tree House to you at the *Orland Park Library* or *2022 Cat Walk*, we've loved being with you.

Here's to many more.

Clear the Shelters



Open House Chicago



Cat Walk



Cat'baret

Orland Park Library



MEET TREE HOUSE

The Mocha Fund

By Eileen Hoenigman Meyer

RACHEL AND GLENN RIPPPIE, PROUD CAT PARENTS TO MOCHA AND LATTE, BECAME TREE HOUSE ENTHUSIASTS IN 2012 WHEN THEY ATTENDED THEIR FIRST BLACK CAT BALL.

They were excited to see the plans for the Western Avenue space, which was still in development at the time. Coffee lovers, as their java-colored cats' names suggest, Rachel and Glenn were excited that a cat café was in the works. The space's open design and its sensitivity to cats' needs piqued the Rippies' interest.

Sadly, the Rippies lost Mocha to cancer after he brought joy, love, and fun to their household for 16 years. "From the moment I picked him up as a kitten and he stuck his nose in my neck and started

purring, till the last time Glenn and I got to hold him, he never stopped loving us," Rachel shares.

Full of personality, Mocha had a way of making his presence known. From unlocking doors to playing fetch, to loyally guarding his family, Mocha was a cat who "made things happen."

Mocha loved his home and the delicacies served there; the fact that he enjoyed Rachel's spaghetti sauce and Glenn's chili made it clear that Mocha was a member of the family. Glenn describes Mocha: "He taught us how to live better. That there was a time for everything important, if you just asserted yourself and did it. He taught us that love is strength, and that some things are eternal."

To keep his memory alive, the Rippies established a fund in Mocha's name. They explain: "Knowing that finances can be the breaking point for some people when taking care of the furry members of their family, we never wanted anyone to make that hardest of decisions based solely on their inability to cover the cost of treatment."

The Rippies point out that it's love that fuels Tree House's work: "Love for animals and the people who love animals." They explain: "What we know is that committed people drive change, and imaginative people drive innovation. Beyond that, if anyone knows how to put those things together to build a better future for cats, it is the people at Tree House. We hope Mocha's Fund – something that everyone can be a part of no matter what they can give – helps Tree House do that."

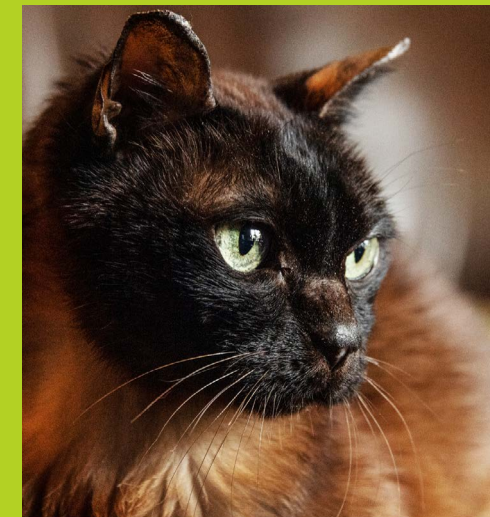
Mocha's Fund is an impact fund. The goal is to inspire grassroots philanthropy with a match from the Rippies and to fortify strategic pillars such as financial assistance grants for pet owners and rescuers, enhanced technology support that furthers the work at the Veterinary Wellness Center, and other areas of pressing need.

"Give. Give. Give." The Rippies encourage anyone considering making a gift. "There is no more rewarding feeling than knowing that you are doing good for those who cannot 'speak' for themselves. And a gift to the Mocha Fund, no matter the size, will continue to give again and again. Plus, the cats are watching."

► [Learn more: treehouseanimals.org/mochafund](https://treehouseanimals.org/mochafund)



Pictured is the donor recognition wall for leadership donations to this fund.



Mocha

February 9, 2005 - January 12, 2021



WE LOVE OUR DONORS!

REASONS WHY:

- 1) You are generous.
- 2) You believe in what we do.
- 3) You put the human in humane.
- 4) You go above and beyond.
- 5) You make a difference in our cats' lives and the people who love them.

THANK YOU!

Shining a spotlight on our special donors

Our sustaining donors, who have committed to supporting Tree House's work on a recurring basis.

Making a recurring donation enables our team to better allocate resources throughout the year to best meet our mission-critical needs.

**296 SUSTAINING DONORS
\$150K/ANNUALLY**



**ALLOWS US PROVIDE WELLNESS
SERVICES FOR 2,200 CATS**

**\$50 MONTHLY DONATION PROVIDES WELLNESS AND
VACCINATIONS FOR ONE TREE HOUSE CAT.**

Join the club - visit treehouseanimals.org/monthly.

Our legacy giving donors - transformational donors who have committed to including Tree House in their estate plans.

Legacy gifts provide life-saving resources to give cats a second chance at life and a loving home. These transformational gifts ensure that Tree House can support homeless cats well into the future.

Join the Paw Prints Legacy Society - [treehouseanimals.planmylegacy.org](https://treehouseanimals.org/planmylegacy.org)

**368 TRANSFORMATIONAL DONORS
COMMITTED TO LEAVING A LASTING AND POWERFUL LEGACY
TO HELP HOMELESS CATS WELL INTO THE FUTURE**

— HELPING KIDS COPE WITH PET LOSS —

By Lori Orlinsky

We made the difficult decision to put our beloved 18-year-old cat Tiger down after the vet told us she had hours to live. At the time, my daughters Hayley and Ellie were just four and two years-old.

Fearful of giving the wrong answers to their persistent questions about death, I decided to be honest and not sugarcoat the situation. Through this tactic, I realized that kids are resilient – sometimes more than we give them credit for. As parents, all we can do is listen, be a shoulder to cry on and validate their feelings.

I told the girls that while Tiger has left our life, she will never leave our hearts. In the days following her death, Hayley and Ellie drew photos and wrote letters to Tiger, and we taped them to balloons and sent them up to Heaven. It was a beautiful, intimate moment for our family, which inspired my children's book *Balloons for Tiger*.

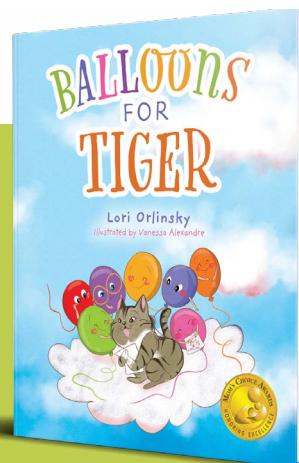
The book takes kids on the journey of the balloons on their way to the rainbow bridge. In addition to my book, which can be a very helpful resource for families dealing with the loss of a pet, here are some more tips that helped our family:

TIPS ON DEALING WITH PET LOSS

- Encourage your child to ask questions
- Validate your child's feelings
- Remind your child what a good life they gave your pet
- Allow your child time to grieve and realize it may be different than your grief
- Provide your child with a tangible reminder of your pet (a photo, stuffed animal, etc.)



Lori Orlinsky is an award-winning, bestselling children's book author who lives in Chicago. *Balloons for Tiger* is her third picture book. Connect with Lori on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or at loriorlinskyauthor.com.



BALLOONS FOR TIGER, \$14.95

Balloons for Tiger takes an imaginative look at pet loss as colorful balloons travel from the hands of children to their beloved cat who has passed on. As they watch the balloons voyage to the other side of the rainbow bridge, kids will learn to positively process their grief. *Balloons for Tiger* is a great tool for any child who has experienced the loss of a pet.

— ADOPTION HIGHLIGHT —

Monty & Kendall

By Andy & Lizzie Hendren



SINCE THE DAY THEY WERE CARRIED HOME

in one surplus cat carrier from Tree House's Carmen street facility in August 2008, Kendall (Klaudia at adoption) and Monty (Bruce Wayne) have brought boundless joy to our lives. Kendall and Monty have moved three times and are spending the golden years basking in the sunshine through the windows of their loft in Chicago's River North.

One of us (Lizzie) had just moved to Chicago from the UK, had never lived with a cat, and wanted company during her wait for a work visa. Andy, not having had a pet since childhood, had to be convinced to adopt a kitten, which became two. But there are no regrets whatsoever.

Kendall's clever – she can open kitchen cupboards where the food is kept, plays fetch with sparkle balls, and always knows when the humans have plans to take her to the vet (and tries to hide) – and is a

consummate lap cat. She'll settle for cuddling up with her adoptive brother if no human is home.

Monty's a sleeper, climber, and talker. He loves to pull open a closet door and sleep all day on a dark shelf under some hanging clothes. Monty sleeps so much he's barely noticed that his humans have worked from home for 18 months through the pandemic. Monty's door-opening skills gave us quite a fright once when they had just touched down at London Heathrow and got a phone call from the door staff at their condo building saying Monty had let himself out into the floor's hallway and got locked out! (We suspect Kendall.) Neighbors with a spare key saved the day.

We love Monty and Kendall as our only "children", and make sure to support Tree House's mission of finding loving homes for so many other deserving cats.



One of our longest traditions is our annual Lights of Love celebration, where our community lights up our shelter in honor of their loved ones past, present, and future.

Thank you for helping us shine bright this year and every year.

Athena

Wally

Comiskey

Jingles, Elvis, and Gunner

Hula-Girl and Aunt Jeanne

Chester Faron, Mildred Faron, Baxter Mueller, and Gracie Mueller

Juliet, Winthrop, Max, and Alex

Iggy Rollins, Shirley Rollins, Paul Rollins, and Jeanette O'Banion

Wrinkles, Ginger, Jaspurr, and Sam

Brandy, Misha, Tasha, and Darth

Spunky

Becca, Shadow, Minnette, and Fagan

Nutmeg

Pepper

Dusty, Donut, Simon, and Oscar

Nero Collins

Len & Lorraine Kruizenga, Chrissie, and Henry

Momma Maria and all buddies gone before

Cosmo and Snookie

Max, Grey, Simone, and Mia

Atticus and Priscilla

Elizabeth Casimir

Jeff Bullock

Marianne Graves

Sebastian Tinker

Murphy

Ninny, Chloe, Zoe, and Gracie

Dazzle and Tyrone

Kit Kat, Twinkie, Maxwell, and Orphan Annie

Cheddars, Mikko, Stitch, Shadow, Smokee, Patch, KoKo, and Soda

Bindy

Chuck and Lucky

Peanut, Jethro, and Bosco

Funnyface

Chester

Miss Sasha, Lucy Bob, Jessi Dey, and Sleaze Boy

Kitty Joyce, Molly, Roscoe, and Henrietta

Stryker and Rocky

Sam, Tony, Buzz, and Amber

Squeeky and Q-Tip Daniels

Peppie Sue Princess, Macylynn, and Mercedes Ava

Bianca, Natasha, Chuck, and Annie

Bones, Luckee, and Phoenix

Marmalade

Fluffy

Elaine Henry

Pepper, Homer, Even, Gem, Ruby, Camielle, Willy, Pewter, & Pearl

Merlin & Oz

Alex Stelmaszczyk, Melody, Chico, & Roxy

Kelly Kiorpes

Simone & Lamar

Rudy & Samson

Madison & Brownie

Janine Wallin

Mimic

Banshee and Winifred

**names as of Tuesday, November 22*

INTERESTED IN GIVING IN HONOR OR MEMORY OF A LOVED ONE?

► [HEAD TO TREEHOUSEANIMALS.ORG/GIVE!](https://treehouseanimals.org/give)

— ASK THE EXPERT —

Dr. Jesse Navatta, DVM



What's your top tip for anyone bringing a pet home for the holidays?

Adding a pet to the home is something to be celebrated but it is also a true responsibility. While giving the gift of a precious pet to a loved one is an amazing gesture, it is extremely important that all parties understand that they are now responsible for the wellbeing of another soul in the home.

The next important step is pet-proofing your home! Cats love to climb, so a holiday tree is always tempting to clamber into and play with hanging ornaments. A new cat might like to chew on light cords, eat tinsel, or swallow stuffing used to make fake snow. All of these are potentially harmful to pets when swallowed, so making sure these types of decorations are kept out of reach of our furred friends is our number one task. The other task is to secure any and all human treats. Many of these treats contain foods that are toxic to our pets, including chocolate, raisins, and sugar substitutes. This is of course not mentioning the bones, onion, and garlic that are just as dangerous in our savory treats. By being mindful of the placement of our decorations and foods, we can ensure that the holidays remain a time of joy and festivities for the entire family.



If someone wants to enter the veterinary field, where should they start?

The most intriguing thing about the veterinary field, in my opinion, is the versatility in the roles and niches within the profession...It's almost like its own universe! I started over 15 years ago as a kennel assistant at the local dog and cat clinic near my home.



Dr. Navatta joined Tree House earlier this year and is the primary veterinarian at our Tree House Veterinary Wellness Center.

Starting at this entry level gave me a deep understanding of animal husbandry, many lessons on appropriate cleaning techniques, and a deep sense of respect for anyone responsible for cleaning and feeding the animals housed in a facility. From there, I became a veterinary technician! This is the step I recommend to anyone interested in entering the veterinary universe — There are schools that teach the basic skills and knowledge needed to become a technician to become a technician before sitting for national boards to become licensed!

Much like the human nursing world, there are many specialties and avenues one can take including going on to veterinary school. That's exactly what I did - I became licensed as a veterinary technician and worked full-time while I finished my bachelor's degree. This gave me the experience needed to prepare for veterinary school, helped me continue to build my skills, and laid the foundation needed to launch into the role as a veterinarian. In the end, for anyone looking to work in the veterinary field, I strongly recommend seeking employment at an animal care facility, slowly building your skills, and absolutely consider veterinary technology as part of your career path even if your sights are set on becoming a veterinarian.



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Plan Your Legacy

YOUR GIFT MATTERS.

When you include Tree House Humane Society in your estate plan, your generosity provides life-saving resources to give cats a second chance at life and a loving home. Thank you for ensuring that Tree House can support homeless cats well into the future.

You decide how to give. Uncover the giving option that works best for your goals.

Visit: treehouseanimals.planmylegacy.org