

WINTER 2022



TREE HOUSE
HUMANE SOCIETY

THE CATalyst

TREEHOUSEANIMALS.ORG

**Creating
Corners
of Love**



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Let us know what you think!
Email your comments to
marketing@treehouseanimals.org

CALENDAR

- SAVE THE DATE
- Lights of Love Holiday Open House
Saturday, December 10, 2022
- Cat Walk
August 2023
- Catbaret
October 2023

LETTER FROM
THE EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

Every once in a while, a kitty enters your life and changes everything.

I am a new parent to a Tree House kitten. Adopting a 6-month-old kitten has taken me back to the feelings of my early years of human parenting – happy and physically drained at the same time. My family and I adopted Mordecai Brown – named after the three-finger Cubs pitcher. We call him Mordy.

It was meaningful to see first-hand how Tree House treats this moment not like a transaction but instead as a life-changing experience that is rooted in support and care for the kitty and the person. At Tree House, we strive to make the adoption experience open, positive, and supportive.

Introducing Mordy to my human-feline family of five required lots of patience and sensitivity. Like our adopters, I was able to draw on the resources Tree House provides in terms of behavior support and tips and tricks on a successful introduction. And I'm happy to say, the hissing has stopped in my household and we have moments of calm, harmony and chaos. It is our corner of love.

This adoption experience has served as a reminder to me of why the first few weeks are critical for a new adopter, and why it is important for Tree House to support new families and go beyond the adoption moment



Mordy (Note: Taking a selfie with a kitten is nearly impossible)

to help them succeed. It is also a reminder why it is important to create a community that is open, compassionate, and free of judgment. Our corner of love.

Though this year has been a roller coaster for nonprofits, we are doubling down. We are making our organization as effective as possible through practices like Capacity for Care, and going beyond our shelter walls to support pets (and the people who love them) thrive – through resources, affordable vet care, and open adoptions.

When shelters like Tree House open our doors as wide as possible, we can create more corners of love. Thank you for bringing us to this moment.

Raissa Allaire, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LESS IS MORE: WHEN LOWER OCCUPANCY MEANS HIGHER CAPACITY FOR CARE

By Anna Marketti

A woman stood in the lobby of Tree House, holding a meowing cat in a carrier, with a hopeful look on her face. After her cat received a diagnosis of diabetes, the woman was suddenly faced with mounting veterinary bills and a course of care she wasn't equipped to provide for her cat. Knowing Tree House specialized in vulnerable cats, she'd come hoping we'd be able to house the cat.

It's never easy to say no. An ideal Tree House has room for thousands upon thousands of cats—unfortunately, that's not the reality. As much as we wanted to give a home to this cat in need, our shelter had a substantial population of senior cats who required specialized veterinary care as well as diabetic cats already in our care. It wouldn't be fair to take on another, further dividing already scarce resources we couldn't guarantee.

Being able to care for more cats by accepting fewer of them seems counterintuitive. It can be difficult to convince someone strolling through

Tree House's adoption hallway how the spacious, sun-flooded rooms replete with toys, water fountains, window hammocks, colorful towers, and, on average, four cats per colony, couldn't possibly have room for more animals.

Tree House practices a sheltering model known as Capacity for Care—the gold standard in sheltering, according to many veterinary journals. As defined by the Association of Shelter Veterinarians' "Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters," Capacity for Care means ensuring all of the cats in our care have the Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare met while simultaneously ensuring staff is working in an environment that allows them to give their full attention to each animal without risking burnout.

It's helpful to put Capacity for Care into context, as stated in the ASV Guide: "If an average of five cats per day enter the shelter and each stays an average of five days, the average daily population would be 25 cats. If the average length of stay rises to 10 days with no change in the average intake, then the average daily population would double to 50 cats."

Tree House is currently able to house about 150 cats throughout the facility, including those in our isolation wards and in foster care. When Tree House was founded in 1971, well over 300 cats were housed at one time, not counting cats in foster. While our capacity numbers have

Five Freedoms



Freedom from **hunger & thirst.**



Freedom from **discomfort.**



Freedom from **pain, injury, & disease.**



Freedom to express **normal behavior.**



Freedom from **fear & distress..**

lowered, adoptions have seen a constant increase—jumping from just under 500 annually in 2005 to 1,000 in 2021. While there are many factors that play into adoption numbers, Capacity for Care has certainly played no small role.

“In the end, we know that the two best ways to serve the cats of our community are to keep them in their homes when possible and to select those that we know we have the resources to care for in order to have the highest impact,” said Tree House veterinarian Dr. Jesse Navatta.

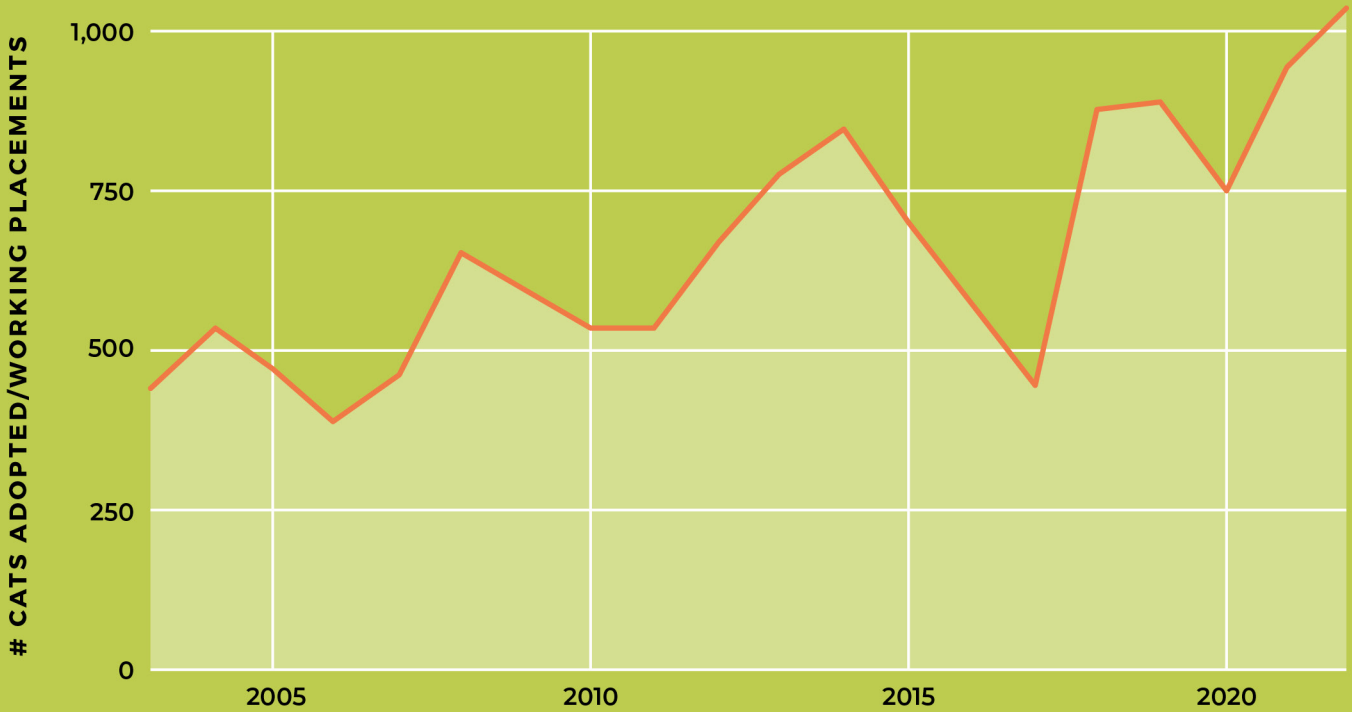
It’s through this model that we’re able to house feline leukemia virus (FeLV) positive

cats in our Cat Cafe. Having dedicated housing in our cafe allows them to socialize with other cats (and people), enjoy free roam of the room, and avoid risking disease transmission as a result of overcrowding. In turn, they’re healthier and are adopted just as swiftly as the FeLV negative cats at Tree House, with an average length of stay of 27 days, while non-FeLV cats see an average length of stay of 21 days.

As an animal’s length of stay increases, their risk for illness, physical, and psychological distress do as well. The UC Davis Shelter Medicine journal states: “If more animals are admitted at any one time than can be provided with an environment that meets their needs...



CATS ADOPTED INTO HOMES



inevitably animals’ mental or physical welfare will be compromised.”

When we don’t say “yes” to every cat, we’re able to guarantee a bigger slice of the pie, so to speak, to the cats we do take in. This offers a wealth of benefits to the cats’ emotional and physical health. Lower capacity colonies mean our cats get sick less frequently, which is not only better for their overall health, but also allows us to dedicate more resources to cats with more severe illnesses or conditions.

“Because we operate within our capacity for care, I am alerted to minor details that would otherwise be missed,” said Dr. Navatta. “There have been a number of times when a cat here has been simply acting ‘off’ or ‘just not themselves.’ Upon examination in these cases, I have often found fever and mild dehydration, early signs of an infection that would have

otherwise been missed if we simply looked to fill all available floor and cage space.”

When we can reduce a cat’s average length of stay, more animals can move through the system more quickly and we can recognize that the best solution for a cat may not always be at Tree House. The diabetic cat we weren’t able to take in found a happy ending: “We offered her a compiled list of shelters that, even though they were managed admissions like us, had specialized populations that they worked with such as special needs cats and senior cats,” said Danielle Faford, Tree House Shelter Manager. That cat was able to thrive in another shelter’s care—it just goes to show how important community is in animal welfare.

Everybody thrives with Capacity for Care.

ADOPTION SUCCESS: TATSU & MIYAMOTO

by Michael Conklin

Patience is a virtue. This adage applies to Tatsu and Miyamoto, now known as Tats & Mo. It took patience and perseverance to win this duo over, but it was definitely worth it.

Tatsu and Miyamoto came to Tree House in May 2021, pulled from a hoarding situation. These boys were tentative and guarded—who could blame them? Staff and volunteers patiently worked with the pair to win them over and help them acclimate to their new environment.

It took some time, but with lots of love and affection, this duo gradually warmed up. They began to show their sweet and playful sides; these boys just needed to know they were in a safe place.

We also noticed how attached Tatsu and Miyamoto were to each other, which sparked the re-evaluation of our bonded pair process. We realized it was important for these boys to be adopted as a pair.

Luckily, Tatsu and Miyamoto have a happy ending! In September 2021, they were adopted by Josie Lee.

WHAT WERE YOUR FIRST IMPRESSIONS?

Right before New Year's Eve in 2020, I lost my eldest cat at 21 due to old age. It was very hard to deal with. Eight months later, my other cat suddenly got sick, and due to several misdiagnoses, passed suddenly. It was a shock.

When we met Tatsu and Miyamoto—they were both so sweet, but they each reminded me so much of my kitties who were gone. They were both so loving and so reminiscent of our old cats with their personalities. We weren't leaving without them.

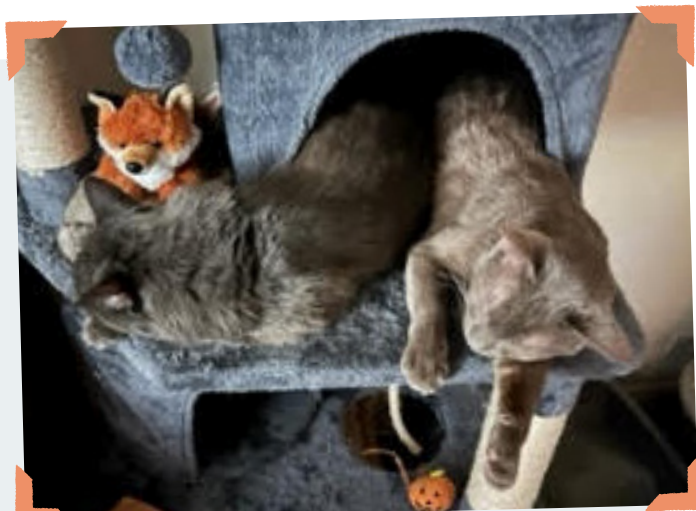
HOW ARE THE GUYS DOING NOW?

After two weeks of hiding around the house and getting to know each other better, Mo became so attached and loves being cuddled. Tatsu is very close with me exclusively, he's my little lap cat. He's obsessed with our cat who lived here when they moved in. The three of them still haven't become best friends, but they do tolerate each other well, and Tatsu has the biggest crush on her.

They are also very close with our grandmother. Whenever she takes a nap, they are both sleeping on her and cuddled up. My grandma has actually been in the hospital for a week, recovering from a small stroke. We are trying our best to give them extra love, but I feel like they love us way more than they lead us to believe, and they just want their grandma home.

HOW WOULD YOU SUM UP THIS PAIR?

Lovers and friends. They are so funny together. I catch them cuddling, and they annoy each other too, on purpose. They're very loving, and still open up more and more everyday.



MEET TREE HOUSE NAKUL KORDE

Member of Tree House's Board of Directors

WHAT DO YOU DO OUTSIDE OF WORKING WITH TREE HOUSE?

I'm a management consultant. I work with companies that are developing therapies and cures for some of the most complex and rare diseases and help them ensure they reach the right patients in an accessible and affordable manner. It gives me immense pleasure and satisfaction to know that my work is helping make an impact on people's lives, especially those who need it the most. On a personal front, my wife and I continue to learn how to be better parents for our 18-month-old daughter and three-year-old dog and exploit every opportunity to spend time together outdoors, traveling, and trying out different cuisines.

HOW DO PETS PLAY AN EVERYDAY ROLE IN YOUR LIFE?

We fostered our dog (Frodo) during the pandemic. Since then, he has been an integral part of my life and nothing but a sheer source of joy and a trusted companion. During the summers, we love to explore the entire length of the Chicago lakefront trail, go to beaches, and spend time hiking various forest preserve trails. During the winters, he gives me the reason and motivation to get out of the house every day no matter what the weather might be. He is also very gentle with our daughter and keeps her engaged.

HOW DID YOU FIRST GET INVOLVED WITH TREE HOUSE?

During my childhood, I had witnessed first-hand the misery and neglect that stray animals had to suffer. I was inspired to improve the quality of life for them and participated in several volunteering

opportunities and fostered. I felt that I could contribute even more and create impact at a greater scale if I could also put my professional skills towards the cause. Through a board matching service, I learned about Tree House and was convinced that Tree House would be a great organization for me to serve.

WHAT'S ONE THING YOU HOPE TO SEE IN TREE HOUSE'S FUTURE?

During my brief exposure to Tree House, I have come to appreciate the extraordinary passion and commitment from the staff and volunteers alike, towards ensuring every cat thrives and how each one always goes that extra mile to support the cause. I believe that this is truly special and would enable us to scale up to support even more pets and communities, establish ourselves as a role model and serve as enablers for other animal shelters to help further our cause and mission.

WHAT'S ONE THING PEOPLE MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I am a certified scuba diver and have dived in three different oceans.



— GROW UP TAILS: —

Tree House's Journey To The Next Level Of Cat Welfare

by Sarah Vetrano

Five years can pass in the twitch of a whisker, or it can usher in a new era. Moving to a state-of-the-art facility, achieving advancements in animal welfare, and a brush with fame begs the question, “Has it only been five years?”

Tree House reflects on moving locations from its beginnings on Carmen Avenue to its custom campus on Western, which opened in 2017. Both facilities focused on the main mission: to rescue cats. However, Tree House has come a long way since the days of putting the “paper” in paperwork and kitties nearly escaping through the front door.

Colonies were furnished with donated toys and beds, battered cat towers, patio chairs for seating, crumbling ceilings, and windows whose howls rivaled those of long-time residents Jeepers and Creepers. Condos were makeshift

broom closets. Walls were scarred and colored with leftover paint.

Five years ago, staff and volunteers worked in cramped office space and an outdated facility. Raise a paw for remembering when kitties did their business next to the humans in the restrooms, or how the attic served as home to the FIV+ residents. Every cat's file and every adoption application were still documented on paper. Staff shared their offices with special needs cats, and the cords to ancient printers already on the fritz were a favorite snack of the four-legged coworkers. And who can forget that distinctive eau d' Tree House scent?

A lot has changed in five years—the new facility meant saying goodbye to the organization's rustic beginnings and the lively chaos that came with it. Today, Tree House includes spacious and modern workspaces, a dedicated event space, locker rooms, a merchandise store in the atrium lobby, an elevator, and a Cat Café featuring FeLV+ residents. The residents enjoy nine spacious colonies outfitted with custom cat towers, heated floors, condos for those with special needs, and enrichment items like fountains and white noise machines in every room. Floor-to-ceiling windows provide a more calming environment while simultaneously reducing energy use. All of the animals at Tree House receive top-notch care in the modern clinic with a surgical suite, multiple exam rooms, and isolation units. PPE was in style here long before COVID-19.

A new building has helped Tree House open its doors even wider. With the opening of the Veterinary Wellness Center and the introduction of quarterly free vaccine clinics, Tree House offers a wide range of services for feline and canine friends alike. Staff and volunteers are provided with the latest software and technology and participate in regular training on advancements in shelter care. Once pitching in wherever needed, the volunteer program has expanded to a well-organized system with specific responsibilities, training, and staff support. Volunteers are now providing vital services that contribute to the success of the shelter, like transporting pets for in-home vet visits.

In a pandemic, a snowstorm, a far-flung state, or sometimes all three, Tree House remains more dedicated than ever to supporting its communities and making sure every cat thrives.



— **ALTERNATIVE AVENUES OF DONATING** —

by Jesi Peters

Tree House Humane Society is creating change in the lives of cats and those who care for them. Did you know that cash and checks are only the beginning when it comes to how you can have an impact at Tree House? There are several avenues that will take your dollars twice as far, from donating directly from your IRA and Donor-Advised Fund to donating appreciated securities.

STOCKS, SECURITIES, AND CRYPTO

Donating appreciated stocks, crypto, bonds, mutual funds, and other securities can benefit Tree House and our cats while providing you with a charitable tax deduction. By donating appreciated assets, you may avoid capital gains taxes, and your donation goes further because the money you would have paid in taxes instead goes entirely to the Tree House.

DONOR-ADVISED FUNDS

A donor-advised fund, or DAF, is a unique investment account for the sole purpose of supporting charitable organizations, such as Tree House. When you contribute to the DAF, you are generally eligible to take an immediate tax deduction. Reducing capital gains tax is one of the primary reasons donors utilize this avenue.

IRA (INDIVIDUAL RETIREMENT ACCOUNT)

For anyone 70 ½ years or older, you can donate any amount (up to a maximum of \$100,000) per year from your IRA directly to Tree House without having to pay income taxes on the money. This popular gift option is called the IRA Charitable Rollover, but you may also see it named a Qualified Charitable Distribution, or QCD for short. If you are at least 59 ½ years old, you can take a distribution and then make a gift from your IRA without penalty.

Humans are not Chicago's only residents. Upwards of 200,000 homeless cats live in Chicago, the vast majority without access to food, water, and veterinary care. Stray and feral cats are highly vulnerable to unnecessary euthanasia when our city's shelters are under-resourced. Your donation to Tree House goes directly to life-saving resources to give cats a second chance at life and a loving home. Your investment funds free vaccine clinics in underserved neighborhoods, reduced adoption fees, and the resources to care for vulnerable cats requiring specialized care.

We thank you for your generosity and your passion for animal welfare. Your investment helps create a future where every cat thrives.

To learn more about these avenues, please visit our website at treehouseanimals.org/ways-to-give. To discuss investment options, please reach out to Jesi Peters at jpeters@treehouseanimals.org.

**Learn more at
[treehouseanimals.org
/ways-to-give.](https://treehouseanimals.org/ways-to-give)**

Tree House is not a lawyer or tax professional, as with many financial situations, please consult your tax advisor or financial planner. Donations to Tree House 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization and your donation are tax-deductible within U.S. law guidelines.



This year, we've been celebrating our community. Whether we're increasing access to veterinary care through home visits and free vaccine pop-ups, honoring our volunteers and stakeholders at events, or making perfect matches between people and cats, it's all possible because of you.

Together, we thrive.



— TAILS OF A SHELTER PET: PEACH & LEAH —

By Alina Dain

When 16-year old cats Peach and Leah arrived at Tree House from Chicago Animal Care and Control in November 2021, their records had only two simple sentences about their history: “Owner surrender. Rescued from Hurricane Katrina.”

The math added up, and we had no doubt that these two skinny ladies were certainly geriatric. Hurricane Katrina, a deadly Category 5 storm that ravaged much of the southeastern United States in late August 2005, occurred almost exactly 16 years and two months before Peach and Leah came through Tree House’s doors. Seeing them as they are now, senior kitties with their thin faces and stiff joints, we pictured what they must have been like as fluffy little kittens.

We imagined what they must have seen, whether they bore witness to any of the destruction and chaos of the storm. We wondered if they were someone’s beloved pets down south, or if they were found somewhere taking refuge. They certainly made quite a journey up to Chicago, where they were presumably transported as part of one of the many relief efforts made to help the people and pets of New Orleans.

As of November 2021, they became Tree House cats, and we all immediately fell in love with their sweet personalities. Peach, the buff tabby, always seemed to take the lead. Though she weighed a mere five pounds, she had the spunk of a cat 10 years younger and 10 pounds heavier. Her distinctive croaky meow could be heard down the hall, and she was always the first one to greet you at the door. Patch tabby Leah could be a bit more reserved, but if her sister was venturing out to seek some affection, then she was never far behind. She loved to curl up in her bed as she received gentle scratches behind her ears.

Aside from their old age, they were both underweight and displaying signs of upper respiratory infection, which can be hard

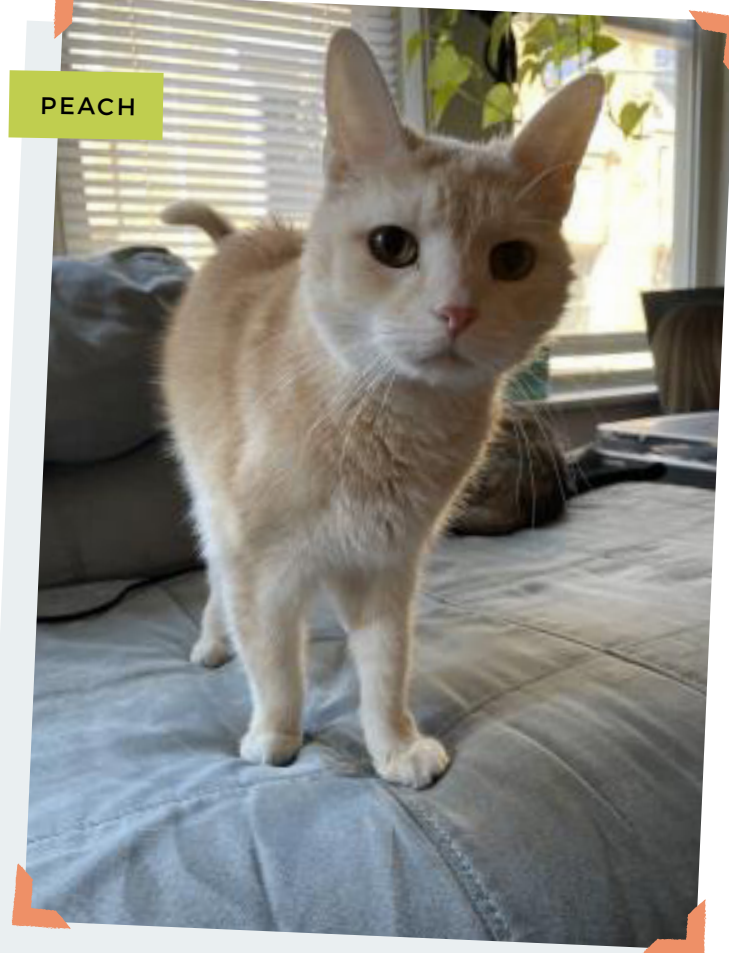
LEAH



on geriatric cats. Peach was found to have hyperthyroidism, and bloodwork revealed that they both had stage 2 Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD), an affliction commonly seen in older cats that is incurable, but can be slowed down with proper diet and medical care.

Transitioning diets came with a few hiccups, but once they were settled in and had good appetites, along with starting courses of long-term medications and supplements, they were sent to foster to continue their treatments in a quieter environment. Over the next 10 months, they jumped around foster homes and the shelter, receiving care and love, before they found their forever home with their final fosters in September 2022.

PEACH



It is thanks to all those who work, volunteer, and donate to Tree House that we can continue to help cats in need. We all make it possible to support cats need that special care, and those who have stories like Peach and Leah’s. In early October of this year, we partnered with Anti-Cruelty Society to transport a group of cats from Florida that were displaced due to Hurricane Ian. It is good to know that Tree House will be there for cats in our care, whether they’ve been displaced due to disaster, require long-term medical care, or simply need to find a warm and caring place to call home.



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.

Ally Kacmar	Dennis (Beloved cat of Dr. Colleen Currigan)	Margon Rizzo	Saint Godwin
Andy		Marlea Edinger	Sally Carpenter
Archy and Mehitabel	Edgar Kelley	Max Bowen	Sansli Bottfeld
Bascomb and Zingaro (Tree House cats adopted in 2006)	Erica Wilms	Megatron Ritter	Seitz Kitties
Billy Bob and Lil Gris	Evan Vint and all the Zaldivar Cats	Mocha & Latte (Beloved cats of Rippie Family)	Seitz Kitties
Boots, Tommy, Tabby, Shoes, Kitty, Cat, Patch, Twible, Miss, Muffin, Cotton	Frankie	Morella Kelley	Smidgen
Buddy Bozonelos	Freddi and Pepper Walsh	Mousie & Lord Slobberrocket	Snooki Cookie Cosmo
Buela Bump	Friskie, Tiger, Timmy, Samantha, Bonnie, Erin, Sweetie Pea, Farrah, Felix, Benny, Misty Jean, Mittens, Clinker, Emma, Abbie.	Mr Boynton, Incubus, Atticus, Eros, Corky Erbach, Chairman, Olive, & Elvis	Sparky Hlohowskyj
Buela Bump		Nino Edinger	Sparky Hlohowskyj
Chai (Beloved cat of Legac-Cisek Family)	Gary Tuscany	Okya, Mozart, Moxie, Athna, Jerry & Simon	Stanley, Catolah, Cashmere, Houdini
Charlie"Bongo" Nylund	Gaurie Marzec	Ollie (Minuet)	Star de Rama
Chloe pet	Gerald 3	Peggy Maggid	Tanner, Tippy, TJ, Asher and Graycie
Connie and her four-legged friend Ginger	Holly	Penelope and Arthur Skerrett	Tessa Bitz; Grey Goose; Theodore; Benjamin Bitzer Serenity
Corkey, Murray, Allie, Dorie	Katy & Tallulah Irwin	Piper Lilly	The Great Gatsby
Cosmo & Snooki Lewandowski	Katy, Taluulah	Poe McMahon	Wascal, Cinder, Molly, Gabby, Bob, Cameron, Camille
Dana, Mini, Conner, Tucker, Slippy, Tommy, Eddie, Jaguar, Jesus, Maria, Ricky, Allie, Sammy, Lupe, Nancy, Rosie, Leah, Rachel, Tortie	Kumar, Laertes, Quandry, Mooch, Charlie, & Kuvo	Pookie Beat	Wilde
David and Patricia Reid	Lady Goodman	Previous Kitties	Wolfgang, Alabaster, Nina, Simone
Davis, Munchkin, Claudia Millicent, Anastasia, Tatiana	Lila, Babe, Dolly, Sadie	Princess PumpPump	Yeti, Hamlet, Charlotte, and Mom
	Luli Walker	Red, Rocky, Butterscotch Camp	
	Maggie, Samantha, Dinah, Meggie, Cori Irwin	Robert Koltun	
	Maggie, Samantha, Dinah, Nutmeg, Criander	Ruby von Arb	
	MarcoPolo, OwieKapowee, and Cocoa Yamauchi	Ruby von Arb	
	Margon	Sadie Carreno	

*names as of December 3



There's no place like a (foster) home for the holidays

Bring a little warmth to your home this holiday season by fostering a shelter cat! Many of our residents would love a break from the shelter in a cozy, loving home. Fostering a cat during the holidays offers them the gift of peace and quiet while reducing the workload for our shelter employees and volunteers which gives them more time to spend with their loved ones. Hosting holiday parties means plenty of opportunity for your foster cat to impress guests and find a forever home.

“I started fostering as a way to heal after losing my cat. I knew I wasn't ready to adopt so soon, but still wanted to provide for a cat in need. My foster cats made me smile again, laugh again, and love again.”

FOSTER VOLUNTEER, SARAH V.

“We love our foster cats & kittens. Every kitty ends up becoming a part of our family; including our pet cat Jenga who we adopted after foster failing! We love knowing we can give a cat in need a comfortable, safe place to be until they are ready to be adopted.”

FOSTER VOLUNTEERS, ALFRED & SAM M.

“My favorite part about fostering is being a part of the cat's journey. It is so rewarding to see them come out of their shells after only a few days in a home. My kids love fostering and it's been a wonderful way to teach them about caring for cats. I can't help but smile when I see my son asleep in his bed with one of our foster cats curled up by his feet.”

FOSTER VOLUNTEER, OLIVIA S.

Can I foster even if I have a full-time job?

Yes! We will match you with a foster cat that works best for your schedule and lifestyle.

Can I foster if I have other pets?

Yes, but the foster cat should be housed in a separate room for the health and safety of your own pets. A bathroom or second bedroom is perfect for a cat or kitten.

Will I need to give a foster cat medication?

Many of our cats will require medication at some point, but we will teach you how to administer! It's not as scary as it may sound.

What does Tree House provide?

Tree House provides medical care for all our foster cats. We provide foster volunteers with dry food, canned wet food, and a cat carrier. If you cannot afford litter or a litter box we will provide those as well.

What type of experience do I need to foster?

No experience necessary! We welcome all fosters, even if this is your first cat experience. We can help train you on anything you need to know--our only requirement is that you are 18 years of age or older & that you are allowed to house a foster cat in your home.

Do I get to pick the foster cat I take home?

You can let us know which cats you're interested in fostering! We'll never send home a cat you aren't comfortable caring for, but please keep an open mind to give love where it's needed most.

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

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

Fosters Needed: December 17th-January 3rd

Email: foster@treehouseanimals.org 🐾 Phone: 773-262-4000 ext. 115



50 INSPIRING
CONNECTING
YEARS THRIVING

7225 N. WESTERN AVE.
CHICAGO, IL 60645



Want to be remembered?

WHERE THERE'S A WILL,
THERE'S A WAY.

You can make a gift today that will
support our mission far into the future.

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

Visit: treehouseanimals.planmylegacy.org