

SUMMER 2023



TREE HOUSE
HUMANE SOCIETY

THE CATalyst

TREEHOUSEANIMALS.ORG

Journey Towards
Brighter Horizons



THE CATalyst

Tree House Humane Society Magazine
Summer 2023

EDITOR:

Katie Jordan

CONTRIBUTORS:

Camden Jones
Renee MacDonald
Anna Marketti
Lori Postma
Rosie Solano
Sarah Vetrano
Emi Yamauchi
Chloe Waryan

SPECIAL THANKS:

Ann Kaplan-Perkins
Beth and Charles Phillips

DESIGN:

Lauren Monaco



CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE
WINNER

- 7225 N. WESTERN AVE.
CHICAGO, IL 60645
- 773-262-4000
- TREEHOUSEANIMALS.ORG
- INFO@TREEHOUSEANIMALS.ORG

CONTENTS

- 2 Letter from the Executive Director
- 3 Starting 2023: Captured Moments in Frames
- 5 Journey of Hope for 29 Cats in Need
- 7 Adoption Highlights: Linus
- 9 Legacy Giving
- 10 Meet Tree House: Ann Kaplan-Perkins
- 11 Catbaret
- 12 Merrick Thank You
- 13 Crossroads of Love: The Intersection of Social Work and Animal Welfare
- 15 Remembering Glenda: A Compassionate Farewell
- 17 Awaiting Happy Endings: Brownie
- 18 Artwork by Rosie Solano

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

CALENDAR

SAVE THE DATE



Catbaret
Thursday, October 12, 2023



Lights Of Love
Saturday, December 9, 2023

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Tree House Community,

Amidst the challenges we face, hope and change fill the air. I write with gratitude and excitement as we embark on a journey towards brighter horizons. Together, we can transform lives and create a better world for our beloved cats and their caregivers.

At Tree House, we believe in the power of giving. Every cat deserves love and care, regardless of their circumstances. In this magazine, you'll find heartwarming stories like Glenda's, who experienced love and care in her final moments. Learn about our partners and ambassadors who join us in protecting these precious beings. Through strong alliances, we amplify our positive impact.

Our work extends to animal welfare and the broader realm of social care. By addressing the needs of both humans and their feline companions, we foster empathy and build a more inclusive society.



Legacy giving is essential for our sustainability. By including our shelter in your legacy, you ensure our mission continues and leave a legacy of compassion. Your generosity helps future generations of cats receive the love they deserve. Meet Beth and Charles Phillips, who have included us in their legacy plans.

Join us on this extraordinary journey. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of our feline friends and their families. Your support, whether through donations, volunteering, or raising awareness, creates a more compassionate world. Let's weave a tapestry of hope and leave a lasting impact.

With gratitude and optimism,

Raissa Allaire, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



STARTING 2023: CAPTURED MOMENTS IN FRAMES

The first half of 2023 brought so much to celebrate:

1. Socialization volunteer Marlea celebrated 10 years of service (over 1200 hours!).
2. Our Veterinary Wellness Center team celebrated 1,000 successful surgeries this year.
3. Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle visited our first vaccine pop-up of the year.
4. We welcomed 29 cats in our biggest out-of-state transfer with Arkansas-based Cat House Palooza.
5. Geraldine Veneer had her hernia repaired thanks to the generosity of donors who raised over \$1,500 for her care.
6. We were featured on WGN segment Daytime Chicago to talk about kitten season.
7. Pets like Holler and Kilin the dog were saved by the lifesaving efforts of our veterinary team.

Cheers to a great start to the year!
We hope you'll join us in making the rest of it even better.

Together, we thrive.

3 SEE ADOPTABLE CATS AT [TREEHOUSEANIMALS.ORG](https://www.treehouseanimals.org)



JOURNEY OF HOPE FOR 29 CATS IN NEED

By Sarah Vetrano



In an impressive feat, 29 cats from Cat House Palooza in Fort Smith, AR were transported over 700 miles to receive vital medical treatment and shelter at Tree House Humane Society. This collaboration with Best Friends Animal Society represents Tree House's biggest out-of-state transfer to date.

Like Tree House, Cat House Palooza is committed to ensuring every cat thrives whether they arrive sick, injured, abandoned, FIV+, or feral. That commitment includes partnering with shelters across the Midwest and South to provide the care cats need. Audry Cichosz, Tree House Shelter Operations Coordinator, spent many months making this transfer a reality; in fact, the planning for this transfer began almost a year before it actually happened.

Sherri Curtis, founder of Cat House Palooza, reached out in June of 2022 inquiring about the possibility of a transfer. As we were in the middle of navigating kitten season ourselves, space was prioritized for our local transfer partners, like Chicago Animal Care and Control. Though we weren't able to accept at the time,

Audry stayed in touch with Sherri, and when the spring of 2023 rolled around, the timing was just right.

"[CACC was] struggling less with their population, which meant we were able to take in cats from out of state," Audry said. And it got us in ahead of the early start of Arkansas' kitten season – everything came together easily.

"It was amazing to make this connection with such a lovely organization," Audry shared. "Sherri gave us such detailed background information on every cat and cared for each one deeply. She continued to check on the cats even after the transfer."

By partnering with Tree House, this transfer opened up critical space in the foster homes that work with Cat House Palooza just as they're entering the peak of kitten season.

"I have been doing transports for several years now. I have never been made to feel

so welcome as I did when we arrived at Tree House with our van full of kittens and cats. Our transport there was a great experience, and it gave all the kittens and cats opportunities they would not have had if it had not been for Tree House to help us," Sherri said.

"Managed admissions" is a familiar phrase at Tree House, where we've been practicing this model for over 50 years now. For us, it means limiting our intake capacity to cats we know we're able to allocate resources for, with pre-arranged appointments for admission. Foster-based rescue Cat House Palooza made the 11-hour journey with a van packed full of cats secured in their carriers, who all had a space ready for them to land. And they moved on to their next step swiftly: all of the Cat House Palooza cats have been adopted into loving homes making their long journey well worth the ride.

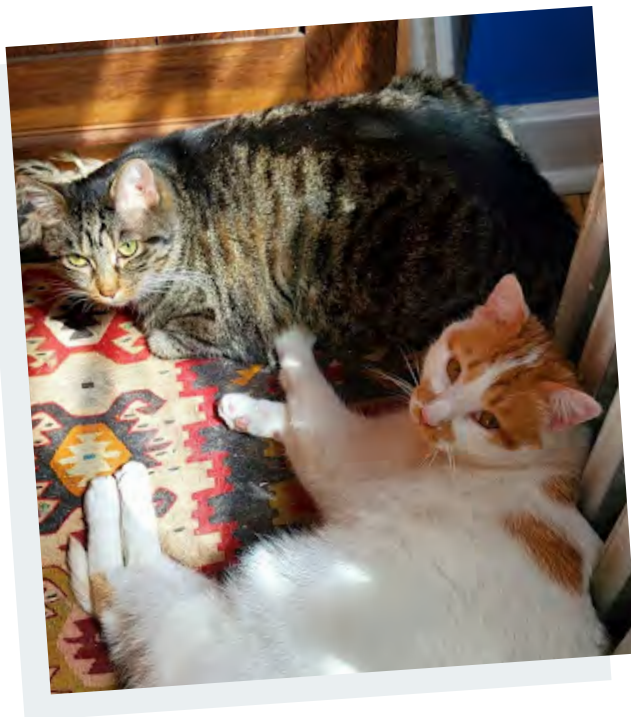


ADOPTION HIGHLIGHT: LINUS

by Chloe Waryan

Navigating the shelter's world isn't easy, especially for cats like Linus. His heart is as big as his white fur, but the shelter's confined spaces weren't made for his boundless energy. It's no wonder he lashed out when we tried to pick him up.

"A cat like Linus needs to explore, play, work his brain," Erin Mayes, Feline Behavior Specialist at Tree House said, explaining why she identified Linus as one of her first pupils for clicker training.



Mr. Pickles & Linus, photo courtesy of Andrew V.

Clicker training is a type of positive reinforcement-based training that rewards desirable behaviors appropriate to their setting. A target stick or clicker can be found inexpensively online, but any clicking sound (your tongue, a pen) will do. First, the trainer identifies a reward for the cat – a treat, brushing, or a favorite toy. Then, the trainer waits for the cat to naturally engage in the behavior. This is called "capturing." After the cat does the behavior, click and reward them.

Erin started training Linus with a target stick with a method called "targeting," rewarding Linus first for sniffing the target and then batting it with his paw. After just 10 minutes a day, Erin was able to teach Linus other tricks, like how to fistbump!

"Be patient," Erin advised, "Some cats catch on more quickly than others." Erin prefers to start with capturing or targeting techniques, but there are other approaches like luring or shaping that may work for other cats.

Linus worked hard on his manners through training sessions with Erin for eight months before finding a home with his adopter, Tree House foster and volunteer Andrew Vesselinovitch. "I didn't understand why he wasn't adopted yet," Andrew said, "He's young, looked good and healthy, yet he'd been there for months."

Bringing shelter cats into a home can have great benefits to their emotional health, which is why Andrew fosters cats as a Tree House volunteer. Structured play and interacting with humans in a safe controlled environment can be beneficial for the cat, and Linus is no exception.

It's been five months since Andrew brought Linus home to his new roommates, Andrew's other cats Mr. Pickles and Honey. Linus and Honey love to chase each other around.

"There's a level of excitement and physical activity that's good for both of them," Andrew explained. When asked about Linus' behavior, Andrew observed that he is much calmer at home. "Sometimes it's still hard to pick him up," Andrew said.

Though cats who are frustrated may be difficult to interact with at first, carefully controlled exposure may help. Andrew suggested providing consistent human interaction for these types of cats, at least once a day, which is readily available in a foster environment. "I pet him a little bit every day," Andrew said.

Erin agreed, adding that clicker training also socializes cats with humans, since it is an enrichment activity that cats and humans do together. If you're not sure whether your cat is up for the challenge, Erin said, "I know any cat can be clicker trained."

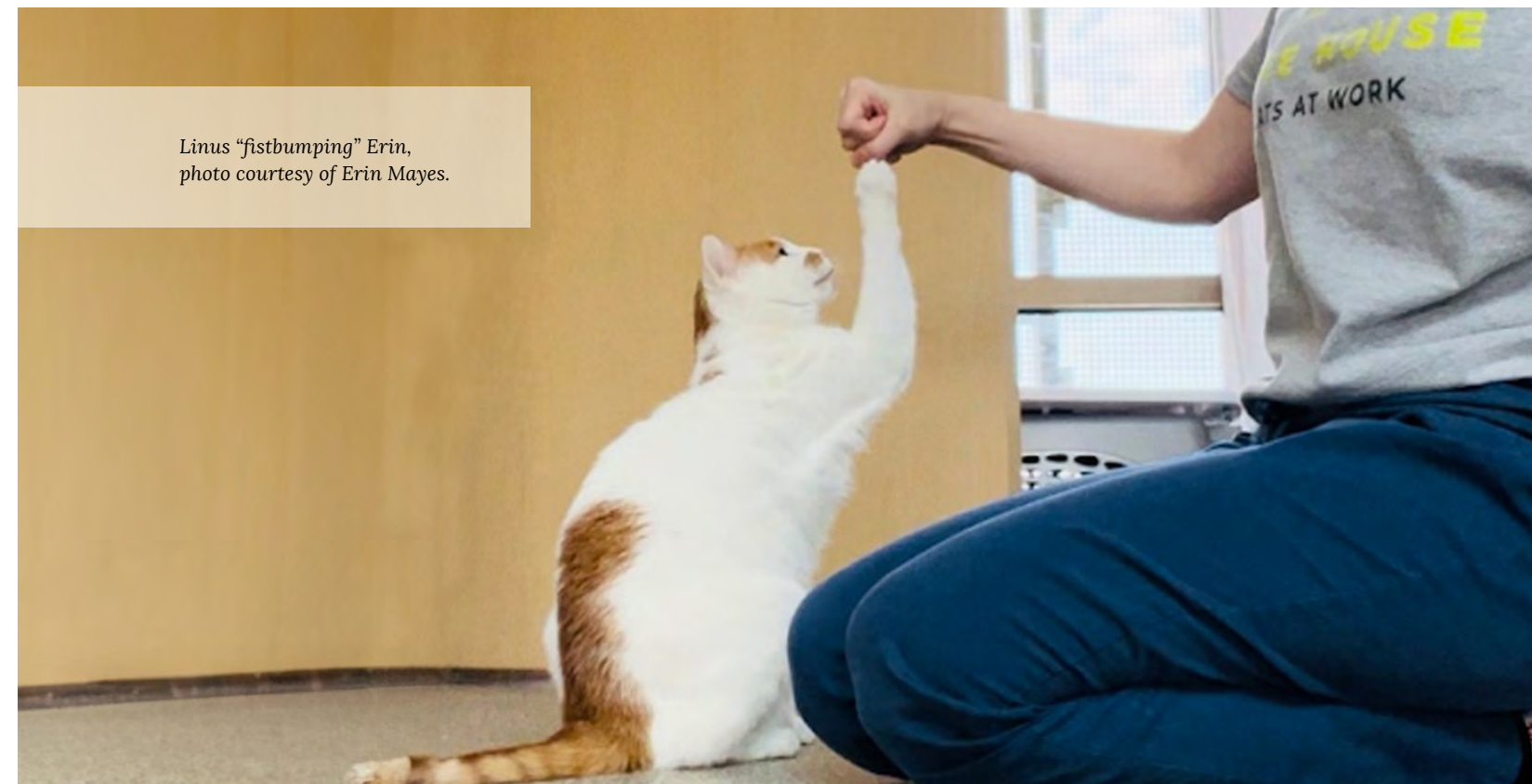


Honey (left) and Linus, photo courtesy of Andrew V.



Linus at the vet, photo courtesy of Andrew V.

Linus "fistbumping" Erin, photo courtesy of Erin Mayes.



LEAVING A LEGACY TO SUPPORT CATS IN NEED

by Lori Postma

Long-time donors and supporters of Tree House, Beth and Charles Phillips have been loving cat parents for many years. In 2009, the Phillips met and adopted a Tree House colony cat.

“Our current cat, Finn, was in the community cats program,” Beth said. “Tree House gave our Finn a neuter and health check.”

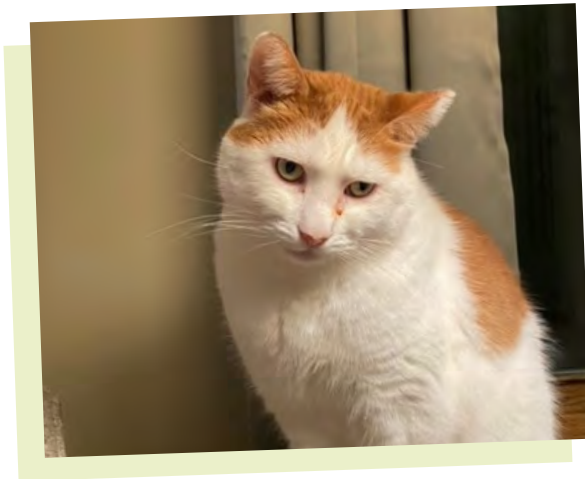
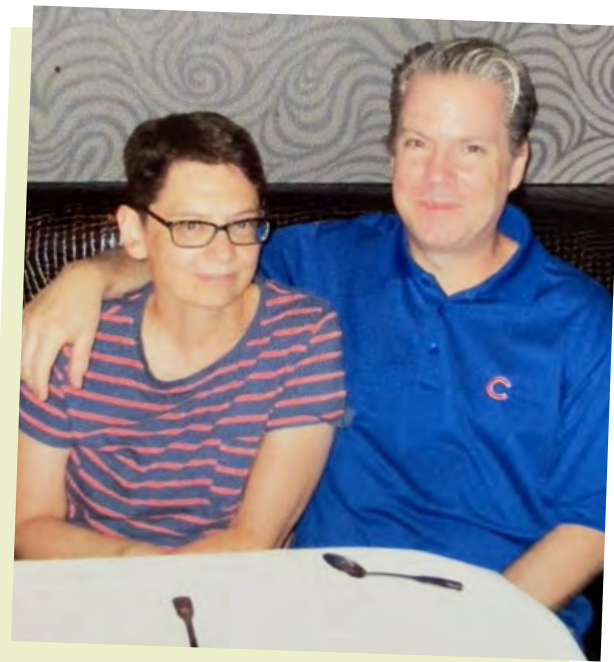
A short time later, Finn clearly chose indoor living with his parents, the Phillips and they happily welcomed him into their family.

This encounter with Tree House left Beth and Charles very impressed with the varied ways Tree House supports homeless cats, including nurturing care for all cats (indoors or outdoors,) regardless of their situation, as well as the community outreach and safety net programs like distributing pet food through local pet food pantries.

“We strongly believe in the mission of Tree House,” Beth shared. The Phillips wanted to give back to the shelter that gave them Finn, which is why they became loyal donors and supporters. It was just a natural next step to include Tree House in their legacy plans.

“We are [including in our will] a percentage of our estate to Tree House,” Beth said. “I always wanted to give a meaningful gift to [Tree House,] and this just seemed like the best choice. It’s nothing less than wonderful knowing our legacy will continue to assist homeless cats long after we’re gone.”

Here at Tree House our hearts are filled with gratitude for Beth and Charles, thoughtful and loving donors and passionate cat advocates.



Watching the exciting growth in the last few years with Tree House’s Veterinary Wellness Center and expanded community care efforts, Beth and Charles encourage others to get involved: “Don’t hesitate. This ever-evolving organization is helping the community in a multitude of ways, and it’s not only for adoptions. You will never regret your decision to honor Tree House and its deserving residents. The staff is the best!”

We agree! Thanks to our staff and our strong community of loyal donors and volunteers, the cats in our care have a chance at their best lives. Thank you, Beth and Charles Phillips. We are forever grateful.

Learn more about legacy giving:
treehouseanimals.planmylegacy.org

MEET TREE HOUSE: ANN KAPLAN-PERKINS

by Emi Yamauchi

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FIRST EXPERIENCE OR MOST MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE WITH A PET.

Last year, in an effort to keep up with all the fur tumbleweeds from two cats and a dog, we decided to get a roomba vacuum. We’d seen those videos of cats riding the roomba, and we thought our cat Midge would be entertained following it around the house. Midge is one of our Tree House cats — she’s a tortie with a devilish streak. When the roomba arrived, Midge got to work stalking it, but not in a playful way. She wanted to conquer it. In less than a day, she had figured out how to flip the roomba over and dismantle it. Game, set, and match to Midge!

WHAT DO YOU THINK A PET CAN TEACH YOUNG PEOPLE?

I believe that pets teach young children compassion and responsibility. Children who do not have siblings can learn patience and what it means to share by having a pet. And older children who might be feeling misunderstood by parents can find totally non-judgmental comfort in pets.

HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR ROLE ON TREE HOUSE’S BOARD, AND WHAT LED YOU TO BECOME A BOARD MEMBER OF AN ANIMAL WELFARE NON-PROFIT?

I decided to join the Tree House Board because I have loved the mission of Tree House since I first walked into the house on Carmen Ave. back in 1988. Tree House has always had a holistic approach to cat welfare, acknowledging that some cats simply cannot live their best lives inside, and communities who support outdoor colonies are the better for it. That progressive stance was



catnip to me! I’m a transactional attorney, so I’m detail-oriented and can help with organizational and contract issues. As one of the older board members, I have a couple decades of experience on nonprofit boards, so not much surprises me.

WHAT KIND OF IMAGE WOULD YOU LIKE THE TREE HOUSE BOARD TO PROJECT TO STAFF, VOLUNTEERS, ADOPTERS, AND POTENTIAL DONORS? WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE THEM TO KNOW ABOUT THE BOARD?

We board members are passionate about animal welfare and we LOVE cats. We’re professionals from a variety of sectors who bring our different experiences and talents to bear on forwarding the Tree House mission. We have a commitment to diversity that might surprise people — among us we have POCs, queers, neurodiverse individuals and a nice balance of younger and older folks.

ARE THERE ANY PARTICULAR GOALS OR MILESTONES THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE TREE HOUSE REACH IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS?

The pop-up clinics that Tree House has sponsored in the city’s south side and west side communities have had tremendous responses. I would love to see that outreach continue and expand.



CATBARET

Indulge in an elegant evening to save lives.

OCTOBER 12, 2023

6:00 PM

GREENHOUSE LOFT
2545 W Diversey Ave
Chicago, IL 60647

Step into the jazz age for a 20s-themed gala as we celebrate over a half-century of fostering the human-animal bond. Join the Tree House team and fellow cat lovers for an invigorating night out featuring stories of our impact and the lives changed through our work. Delight in live music, craft cocktails, and award-winning eats before our program and fundraiser begins.

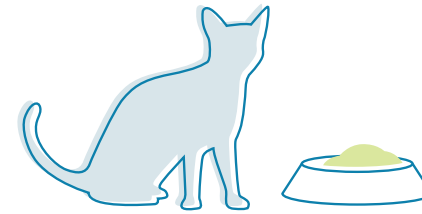
*RSVP to Catbaret
treehouseanimals.org/catbaret23*



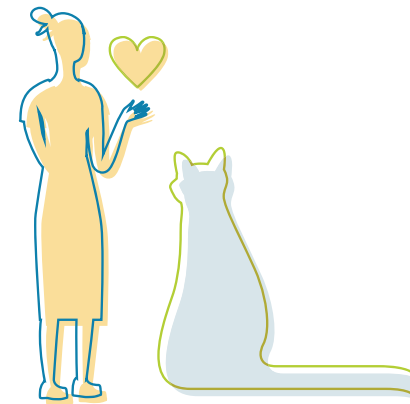
**Franco
La Marca**



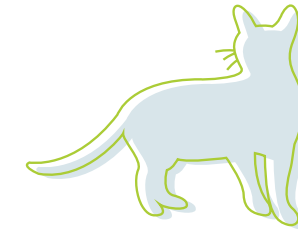
Merrick Nurtures Tree House Cats' Health and Nutrition



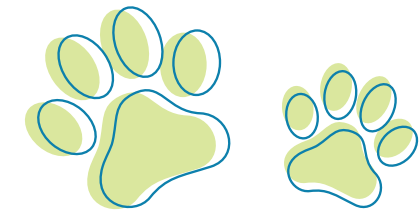
5100 lbs
*of food distributed to
communities in 2022*



**OVER
\$25,000**
*worth of food donated
to date in 2023*



Fed over
**1100
ADOPTABLE
CATS**



**NEARLY
3000**
community cats fed



*Thank you,
Merrick!*



CROSSROADS OF LOVE: THE INTERSECTION OF SOCIAL WORK AND ANIMAL WELFARE

By Renee MacDonald

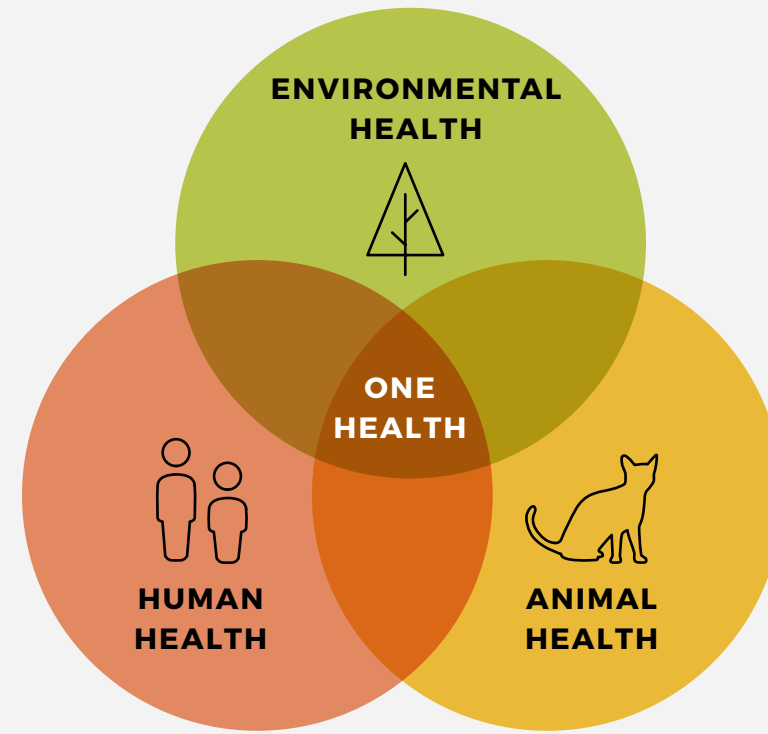
A woman was living in her car with her cats, reluctant to go to a shelter as it would have meant giving up her cats, who she considered family.

However, it was stressful to live with so many cats in such a small setting and she wanted to get back on her feet – so that she could take care of her pets. After a Good Samaritan reached out to Tree House about the situation, we connected her to resources so she could access housing assistance. We found homes for all her cats, except for one, whom she decided to keep for the emotional support and unconditional love her companion provided.

In the March 2023 American Psychiatric Association's (APA) Healthy Minds Monthly Poll, 86% said that pets have a mostly positive impact on their mental health in things such as reducing stress and anxiety, providing unconditional love and support, and offering companionship. Tree House recognizes this bond and strives to be a resource hub for pet parents across all aspects of care and is working to build a support system that provides a social safety net to better keep pets in their homes.

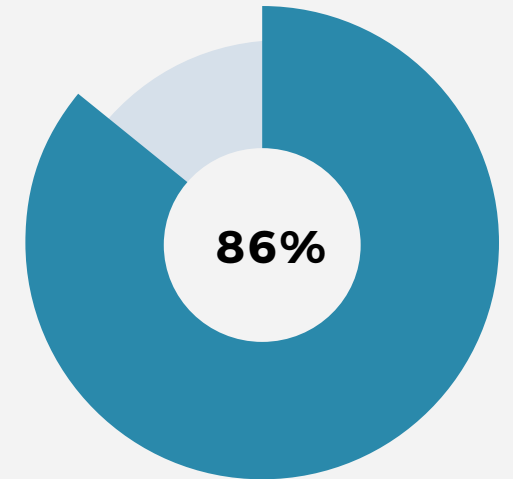
Some people may be faced with the difficult decision to give up their pets to access medical care for themselves or if they temporarily need to stay with family or friends while looking for more permanent housing. Tree House supports this by connecting them with agencies that offer temporary fosters; or, by connecting them with organizations that provide financial assistance for pet deposits.

Housing isn't the only barrier, however. More than half of respondents to the APA survey also worried about their pet's health care, especially expenses. Tree House provides high quality, low-cost spay/neuter care and vaccines at the Veterinary Wellness Center in addition to hosting pop-up clinics in South Shore and Humboldt Park in an effort to alleviate this. We often see a lot of overlap with humans in need of social services at these events and recognize it's something that's inextricably linked to animal welfare work. Most of the pets at these events have never seen a veterinarian before.



The One Health model is all about working together to achieve the best possible health outcomes for everyone: humans, animals, plants, and the environment we all share.

86% of people who have pets report improvements to their mental health.



Lack of transportation can also make it difficult for some people to access vet care or food banks, especially without a cat carrier or leash. To combat this, Tree House regularly distributes food and supplies to people on government aid in the Humboldt Park and Austin neighborhoods, and transports pets for vet care once a month. We also work with The Friendship Center, a food pantry for people and also for pets, where we regularly donate pet food and supplies.

We can't wait to see what new avenues of care this intersection introduces us to as we continue to evolve and grow!



REMEMBERING GLENDA: A COMPASSIONATE FAREWELL

by Camden Jones

On a sunny day in mid-April, senior cat Glenda enjoyed a last plate of tuna outside.



Accompanied by Tree House Veterinary Wellness Center staff member Kristen Leeth and other employees who'd come to love her in her two months in our care, Glenda basked on a soft towel and stood to feel the dirt under her paws. It was a beautiful send-off that saw Glenda more relaxed than her medical condition had previously allowed, as she lounged her shaved body on its side like a tiny, bony lion.

After her caretaker passed away, Glenda, who had lived as an outdoor cat, was brought to Tree House in February by a neighbor concerned about her severe and chronic diarrhea to see if euthanasia was recommended. She was emaciated and covered in feces and matted fur, but the team believed it was worth trying to treat her issues.

Glenda went home with Kristen in early March as a foster to receive further care and closer monitoring. Kristen had taken an interest in Glenda because of the help the poor cat clearly needed, and she "liked that despite living outside her entire life, [Glenda] was relatively friendly with people but maintained her old lady attitude." Kristen gave Glenda her daily medications, sat with her and pet her so she'd eat the "special diet that she hated," changed her potty pads multiple times a day, and gave her foot baths and applied ointment to the feces-inflicted sores on her legs.

But despite Kristen's care, Glenda kept losing weight, leaking stool, and developing painful fecal scalding. She was brought back to Tree House in late March for a try at a hypoallergenic diet and steroids. These,



too, brought no improvement to her situation. Seeing very little chance of Glenda's quality of life getting better, one of Tree House's veterinarians recommended euthanasia.

Humane euthanasia is a reality faced by all shelters. At Tree House, we deeply recognize that euthanasia is a fundamental aspect of animal welfare; it is an undeniably difficult decision and, on occasions, the most compassionate route to take. Our approach to these decisions is marked by unwavering seriousness and a comprehensive exploration of all options before choosing this course. At Tree House, we consider euthanasia when a cat cannot be treated and the cat's quality of life has been profoundly compromised and the overall prognosis is bleak. While we take pride in being a haven for cats with intricate

medical histories, there come instances when euthanasia is the sole means to end an animal's suffering.

Glenda, after a gentle transition indoors following her time basking in the April sun, found herself surrounded by those who cherished and nurtured her. As she was gently sedated, she brightened up, watching bird videos and receiving soothing caresses from our staff members. In serenity, Glenda peacefully underwent euthanasia.

Now, framed ink prints of her paw pads and "her little nose" grace the walls of Kristen's bathroom, the very space Glenda inhabited during her time in foster care.

AWAITING HAPPY ENDINGS: BROWNIE

By Anna Marketti

Brownie hasn't had the sweetest history: she was adopted and subsequently returned to Tree House twice, after initially arriving in March 2022 as a transfer from Chicago Animal Care and Control, where she was brought in as an owner surrender. She spent several months in our care before being matched with a foster.

Brownie has been patiently waiting in that foster home for well over a year now, hoping the right adopter will come through and recognize how irresistible she is. Throughout it all, we've been working hard to identify what Brownie really needs to thrive and ensure she finds a happy ending that lasts.

We've learned a lot about Brownie's behavioral needs during the 17 months she's been in our care, and we know that she's best suited as the only pet in your home. She's seeking an adult adopter who's experienced with cats, rooted in routine, and committed to ongoing enrichment and training efforts to help this playful, curious girl express her energy appropriately.

We know it takes a village to create a world where every cat thrives, and Brownie's adopter won't have to shoulder it alone: our staff Feline Behavior Specialist will work with you every step of the way, sharing resources and tools like a step-by-step enrichment guide written just for Brownie, to help her adjust to her new home. We believe that with the right person, Brownie will flourish and thrive, and be the perfect addition to the right home.

Change can be tough for all of us, especially cats, but after over a year of waiting, we believe that Brownie deserves a chance to finally find a home that she can call her own.

Thanks to a generous friend, Brownie's adoption fee has been fully sponsored, making it easier than ever to bring this sweet girl into your life.



Artwork by Rosie Solano

HAVE YOU HEARD?

Tortoiseshell cats are almost exclusively female, due to the genes that determine this particular color and coat pattern. The rare few male tortoiseshell cats that do exist are typically sterile. Lovingly referred

to as "torties," these brindled beauties are known for their sass, or "tortitude."

Brownie is no exception and we're confident that there's a special someone out there who will fall in love with her tortitude!



TREE HOUSE

HUMANE SOCIETY

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

