

# THE CATALYST

TREE HOUSE  
HUMANE  
SOCIETY  
NEWSLETTER

Spring  
2019

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Tips from the  
Community Cats  
Team: What to Do  
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Kittens



**KITTEN SEASON: ALL HANDS ON DECK**



# THE CATALYST

TREE HOUSE HUMANE SOCIETY  
NEWSLETTER SPRING 2019

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## CALENDAR

**National Kitten Coalition** - March 24, 9 am to 1 pm

The NKC will be providing a workshop at Tree House on how to increase survival rates of rescued kittens. Pre-registration required.

**Kitten Shower** - May 5, 11 am to 1 pm

Come celebrate kittens! Learn about our foster program, bring gifts for the little ones to help us with their needs, and play cute, kitten-themed games.

**Volunteer Orientations** - April 10 & May 15, 5:30 pm to 7 pm; March 23, April 20, May 25, 10:30 am -12 noon

Be a part of our life-saving success! Apply at [www.treehouseanimals.org/volunteer](http://www.treehouseanimals.org/volunteer) and then come to one of our orientation sessions to get started!



## Letter from the Executive Director

# What's it like to live through kitten season?

*Around-the-clock care, lots of training and socialization, and high-energy hijinks...it's all part of life at Tree House during kitten season.*

Dear Tree House Friends:

Anyone who's ever tried to raise kittens can confirm: looking after kittens is hard. While it's one thing to raise a kitten or two, a different challenge entirely lies in the art of caring for hundreds of homeless litters. Luckily, we have it down to a science here at Tree House.

Beginning in spring, peaking in summer, and tapering off in the fall, we are flooded with reports of kittens abandoned, sick, or injured and calls from families, who may be overwhelmed by the responsibility and cost of care. Most of our intake of cats happens during these critical months.

This year, we will be even more proactive when it's raining kittens.

**We are creating a culture of sharing best practices.** Homeless kittens affect our entire city. We are hosting the National Kitten Coalition, and inviting our peers to learn about increasing survival rates of rescued kittens.

**We are doubling down on our Trap, Neuter, Return and Vaccinate program.** Our Tree House staff-volunteer team -- individuals experienced in animal welfare, shelter medicine and community outreach -- will step up their game with the goal of 1200 spay and neuters (a nearly 200% increase from the prior year), and each month, we are out in the community trapping and reducing the amount of unwanted litters.

**We are recruiting more kitten heroes.** Our Kitten Shower in May will focus on collecting supply donations for young kitten needs and recruiting more foster volunteers who can provide critical, temporary care.

However, none of this is possible without our vibrant community of supporters -- you are a partner in our mission. Leonardo da Vinci once said, "The smallest feline is a masterpiece." Thank you for giving these smallest of felines the care they need and deserve.

Raissa Allaire, Executive Director

# ADOPTION SUCCESSES!

In 2018, nearly 900 cats were adopted from Tree House -- thanks to your support! This year, in January and February alone, we got a great start to the new year and placed 115 cats in homes. Here are some of our recent success stories.



## JINX

This lovely lady, previously known as Sprinks, was adopted in June 2018 by Susie Heissner, who says, “Jinx is thriving at my apartment. Every day, we get a little closer and more comfortable with one another. She loves her laser pointer toy and she’s a very chatty girl!”

## ELEANOR & MEATBALL

Eleanor and Meatball are two of our very special FeLV positive kitties. Tiffany Nichols & Luke adopted them in February, and Meatball is now “Sir Fredrik Meatball.” Tiffany said, “Fredrik and Eleanor are so sweet together and I’m happy I adopted both of them. The first couple days, Fredrik wouldn’t go anywhere without Eleanor. He’s still quite attached to her...It’s common to find both of them cuddling in a chair or on the couch.” Yay for our FeLV adopters!



We love to keep up with our kitties in their new homes! Send a photo and a few sentences with your cat’s name and when s/he was adopted to [marketing@treehouseanimals.org](mailto:marketing@treehouseanimals.org) or tag us [@treehousehumanesociety](https://www.instagram.com/treehousehumanesociety) on Instagram after your new sidekick comes home for a chance to appear in our next newsletter.

## MOUSE

Tree House's "Oscar," adopted in February, is now known as "Mouse." His new adopter, Jacob Mitchell, says, "He goes in his box, scratches the designated cardboard perches, HAPPILY eats his meals when given. He's an extreme cuddler." He lives with Cloud, who was adopted from Tree House in 2018. Jacob says, "All in all, everything is going swimmingly!"



## MITCH

Mitch is celebrating one year in his new home! Carla, who says she's "the luckiest adopter," told us, "He has brought me so much joy over the last year. He still adores food and loves escaping through open doors. He will sneak out the front door into the shared hallway on our condo floor. If someone else's front door is open, he'll walk right in and make himself at home. It's kind of embarrassing at times but, thankfully, all my neighbors like cats."



## FIDELMA

Fidelda was adopted in April of 2017 to Hillary Stifler, who was serving as her foster at the time. "She was shy and timid, hiding under the bed for weeks. It took a minute, but she came around; now she owns the place and greets all who visit. She loves belly rubs, playing fetch, snuggling, and playing hide and seek." See? Fostering is a great way to find your next new family member!



# MEET TREE HOUSE

## OLGA STEELE, FOSTER MANAGER



**M** eet Olga, Tree House's Foster Manager. She is celebrating her 11th year of service with Tree House this month after starting her journey as an adoptions counselor in 2007.

### Why has Olga stayed with us for so long?

"Over the years I've worked in different departments and stayed the course in times of transition. This has given me an appreciation for Tree House that runs deep--knowing what has set us apart historically, and what continues to make us great. Our unique mission and amazing supporters allow us to continue helping cats that may not have a chance somewhere else."

A large part of Tree House's success is due to our foster program, which Olga points out is "one of the most essential aspects of lifesaving in shelters, big or small."

### How do foster programs help?

"Foster care is a total game changer for organizations and the animals they rescue. It reduces the costs of caring for animals, increases capacity for housing, and even helps our cats get adopted faster!" said Olga. "I like to think about the foster program as a shelter outside the shelter walls. A community of loving foster families allows us to treat ill cats, rear hundreds of kittens each year, and socialize those who are behaviorally challenged."

Many of the cats in our foster program come from Chicago Animal Care & Control. "They are the hub for animal intake in our city," said Olga, "and it's essential for us to work together. We make an effort to transfer animals from that facility to our own every month and we rely on fosters stepping up and agreeing to take cats and kittens so we can save as many lives as possible."

### And how important are fosters?

"Our ability to meet the needs of our population is only as strong as our foster community," Olga said. "We work hard to train and support our foster volunteers so they have the education and skills to rise to the challenge."

With kitten season upon us, Olga stresses that now is the perfect time to become a foster. "We love our fosters and are always looking to recruit more. We'd love to hear from you!"

# WHY FOSTER?

## Q&A WITH CHRISTINE ANDERSON

**C**hristine has fostered for Tree House for 9 years. Here are some of her thoughts about why she does it:

### **What's it like taking care of kittens?**

It's a lot of work but very rewarding. It's also a lot of fun watching them grow and the silly things that only kittens do. The bond you form with the kittens stays in your heart forever.

### **How difficult is bottle feeding?**

It's not difficult as long as you have the energy and patience. I've always done a litter of kittens so it can be time consuming.

### **What kind of person do you recommend for the job?**

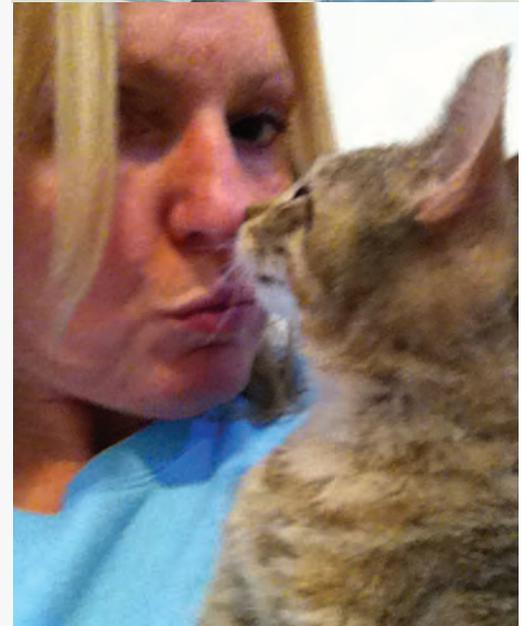
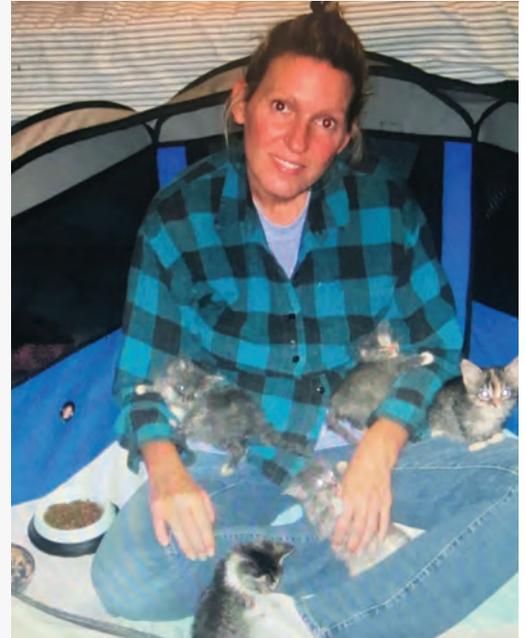
The kind of person it takes is someone with the energy and time to feed every few hours and patience. Kittens don't always get it right away so you need to be gentle and patient with them.

### **What's the hardest thing about fostering?**

Saying goodbye to the kitties when it's time for them to go up for adoption.

### **Do you have anything else you'd like to add?**

I think anyone that likes/loves cats should give fostering a try. My heart is so full from all the love I've shared with my fosters over the years. It truly is the most rewarding experience I've had in my life and I hope to continue doing it for a long time.



//////////////////// **CONTACT [Foster@treehouseanimals.org](mailto:Foster@treehouseanimals.org) to become a part of our foster family!**

HOW DOES TREE HOUSE PREPARE FOR

# KITTEN SEASON?

**“Train up,  
stock up!”**

-Danielle Case, Shelter Manager

**“Deep  
Breathing”**

-Bob Sutton, Community Cats Field Specialist

“

**We have a kitten supply drive each year where we gather donations for the little ones. We also rally our current fosters to be ready when we have kittens who need placement quickly. This year, we’re planning a Kitten Shower to bring people together to celebrate the work we do for our littlest residents.**

-Olga Steele, Foster Program Manager

## TREE HOUSE CAT CAFE

COMING SPRING 2019!\*

\*FUR REAL  
THIS TIME!



# 2018 HIGHLIGHTS

Thank you for being partners in our mission. You've helped us protect and nurture our city's cats each year.

785 CATS SPAYED/NEUTERED	14,388 VOLUNTEER HOURS	1,000 COLONY CARETAKERS
1,100 MANAGED COLONIES 4,000+ CATS RESIDING	98% LIVE RELEASE RATE	47 DAYS AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY
485 CATS RECEIVING FOSTER CARE	250 CATS AT WORK PLACEMENTS	879 ADOPTIONS

## PET FOOD PANTRY

Did you know that we have a Pet Food Pantry that serves approximately 100 families in our community? It's true! In 2018, our pantry provided 3,200 pounds of food to those families. That's over 27,000 meals that were donated by our supporters and those meals directly helped these families keep their pets during times of financial hardship.

We are now calling on our supporters to help restock the pantry! Our supplies have run a bit low and families are counting on us to help them feed their pets. If you'd like to donate, visit our Amazon.com wishlist (go to Amazon.com and search for Tree House Humane Society) or drop off sealed, unused bags and cans of food and litter to our shelter any day of the week between 9 am and 5 pm. Your donations really make a difference!

**Follow us on Instagram @TreeHouseHumaneSociety to see daily updates of our cats, shelter, and programs!**





## IF YOU FIND

# Kittens

**Finding kittens can be exciting, but it can become scary for both the finder and the kitten if you don't have a plan.**

Kittens of any age need a lot of care, and the younger they are, the more time and effort they require. Very small kittens under three weeks old stand a much better chance of surviving with their mother around, so it's important to be absolutely sure that the kittens haven't been abandoned before taking them inside. She may just be hunting or in the process of moving them from one location to another, so make sure to monitor them for 3-4 hours before disturbing them.

If you are absolutely certain the kittens have been abandoned, they will need to be bottle fed every two to three hours if they're under three weeks old. If they're over three weeks old, they will still need lots of care, but you can start their weaning process and get them ready for adoption!

## HOW TO ESTIMATE AGE:

- 1 Eyes open around 10 days old and are blue
- 2 Ears open around 2 weeks old and are erect by about 3 weeks
- 3 Incisor teeth come in around 2-3 weeks but are difficult to see
- 4 Canines develop around 3-4 weeks
- 5 Kittens start to play with their siblings around 3-4 weeks
- 6 Eye color changes from blue around 5-6 weeks old

**Contact Tree House  
for bottle feeding training!**



## Ask the Expert with Dr. Emily



Dr. Emily Swiniarski is Tree House's Director of Veterinary Services. She graduated from Iowa State University's College of Veterinary Medicine, did a specialty internship in Shelter Medicine at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, and has worked across the country in small to large shelter organizations. Her passions include infectious disease, care of community cats and teaching.

### QUESTION

How do I keep my kitten healthy?

Your kitten should visit your veterinarian every 2-3 weeks until their vaccines are finished. At each appointment, kitty will be examined to ensure that he or she is doing well, and your veterinarian will provide dewormers and flea treatments. Choose a single, high-quality diet that is made for kittens (avoid grocery store brands), and allow your kitten to eat as much as he or she wants. Always have litter boxes available and cleaned daily – have at least 1 litter box per cat, and an additional one, if possible. Do not let your kitten outside – they can get sick or injured easily. Your kitten should live with another cat and be introduced to other people on different occasions at home with play and affection.

### QUESTION

How do I know if my kitten isn't feeling well?

Kittens remain very playful and will eat until they are really sick, so even subtle changes in your kitten could indicate they aren't feeling well. Monitor your kitten for the following and seek veterinary care if any of these symptoms are noted:

- Less active than normal
- Eating less or not eating
- Cold symptoms – common in kittens and causes frequent sneezing, tan to green discharge from the nose or eyes, redness of the eyes, and other things like decreased activity or appetite
- Change in your kitten's stool, such as less firm or liquid
- Vomiting

➤➤ **If you have any concerns at all, talk to your veterinarian! They will help you decide if your kitten requires an appointment.**



Tree House Humane Society  
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## SAVING CATS' LIVES EVERY DAY

We believe every cat deserves compassion, care, and the chance to live a safe and happy life.

You can help change their lives by donating, volunteering your time, or giving a cat a home.

[TreeHouseAnimals.org](https://TreeHouseAnimals.org)

