



TREE HOUSE
HUMANE SOCIETY

SPRING 2020

THE **CAT**alyst

TREEHOUSEANIMALS.ORG

Expanding Our Reach Through Foster

4 OUR ANNUAL REPORT

8 SHELTER SKIPPERS: CRUISING
FROM FOSTER TO FOREVER

COVER PHOTO:

Kitten rescued by Tree House from a high-risk shelter in Florida on a private transport flight in February 2020.

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CALENDAR

We continue to update our events as we work to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus).

Yoga with the Cats

Every Other Weekend at Tree House

Join us for a small-group yoga class amongst our Cafe kitties. Tickets sell out, so book early at:

treehouseanimals.org/cafe

Cat Walk Pub Crawl

July 25, 2020, 1 pm to 5 pm

Join us for the 2nd annual Cat Walk Pub Crawl, where you can have a drink for the kitties! This year, we'll be enjoying five different pubs in the West Loop neighborhood. Tickets on sale soon.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Tree House Friends:

As a mom to two tweens, I've had my share of watching youth sports games – the triumph and the heartbreak. I'm reminded each time that individual heroics only get you so far, but working together and knowing the play takes you to a whole new level.

At Tree House, one of our values is teamwork. We inspire, share, and create as a team. We believe in the power of "We" and strive to support each other, celebrate our successes, and believe that happiness and fun make us productive.

There is nothing like kitten season and the high intake of accidental litters that brings out teamwork. When you are a guest at Tree House – especially during kitten season (our busiest time of year), take a look at all the activity that goes into making sure that one kitten has a chance to thrive.

Take, for example, Awen's journey: safely trapped and transported to Tree House; socialized and cared for in a stress-free foster environment for a month; and finally, doing kitten hijinks in a forever home just days after returning to Tree House for adoption.

We have some of the most compassionate and dedicated people who work together inside and



outside our shelter walls – they know the play and they know and perform their roles well.

Kitten season is here. One day though, thanks to teamwork happening at all levels and throughout our city, we hope to say instead, "Kitten season has been cancelled." Spay/neuter, adopt, foster, and spread the word. Together we are stronger.

Raissa Allaire
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

P.S. At the time of this publication, COVID-19 is impacting us – as individuals and as communities. Visit treehouseanimals.org to learn how Tree House is serving you during the coronavirus crisis.

2019

THE POWER OF OUR COMMUNITY

OUR BOARD + VOLUNTEERS

11 board members and growing

12,675 volunteer hours

OUR DONORS

11,224 impact investments totaling \$5M+

OUR 30+ STAFF

44,402 animal care days

\$7k+ training & professional development

OUR COLONY CARETAKERS

934 managed colonies

OUR PARTNERS

45% cats transferred from high-intake shelters

9 new partnerships with senior homes

OUR ADOPTERS + AMBASSADORS

29,173 social media fans

OUR IMPACT

4,176

Community Cats cared for

1,082

cats adopted in homes and working placements

1,077

spay/neuter + life-saving surgeries

486

cats fostered

98%

live release rate

44

days average length of stay

100+

peers & partners convened for best practices

(Business of Saving Lives, National Kitten Coalition Kitten Care, Feline Leukemia adoptions and protocol)



SPECIAL DELIVERY!

by Danielle Case, Shelter Manager

This past winter, Tree House tried out an adoption delivery option called Winter Wonder Love, which allowed family members or friends to surprise loved ones with the gift of companionship through an adopted cat. Many of us received pets as gifts years ago as children that instilled a love of animals into our hearts. Those memories of that first meeting are special, which is why we have decided to offer this feature all year round at Tree House!

If you are coming to adopt a cat for a child, significant other, parent, or another loved one as a gift, you can opt to have that cat caringly delivered by Tree House staff right into your loved ones' arms. We are happy to work with you to personalize the delivery or make it specific to the special occasion you are celebrating, like Mother's Day, Father's Day, or for your children's birthdays.

Important Delivery Details:

HOW: If you are interested in having a cat delivered to your loved one, please contact the Shelter Manager, Danielle Case, at dcase@treehouseanimals.org before visiting the shelter or adopting the cat.

COST: The cost of delivery is \$125 + the adoption fee, which varies. Delivery fees are nonrefundable.

WHEN: Delivery times must be within operating hours and within a 30-minute drive of our facility. Further scheduling will be confirmed at the time of inquiry.

OTHER IMPORTANT DETAILS: Giving a pet as a gift requires important communication with the receiver ahead of time. **We highly recommend that you have that conversation and receive confirmation that they want to care for a cat before choosing this option.**

Adoption Counselors will help guide you to the perfect match. Keep in mind that not all cats are a good fit for this service and Tree House's usual adoption procedures will still be in place to make sure our cats find the perfect home.

PETS AS GIFTS

Through nationwide industry research & our own experiences, we have found that giving pets as gifts has the same outcome as an adopter adopting the pet for themselves. ASPCAPro conducted a study in 2013, which states:

"Using a random dial method through an omnibus survey, we reached 222 individuals who reported they had obtained a pet as a gift. When asked if obtaining a pet as a gift increased, decreased, or had no impact on the love or attachment to the pet, 96 percent thought it either increased or had no impact." Additionally, 86 percent of the pets referred to in the study were still in the home.

The full study can be read here: www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/3/4/995/htm

MAKING AFFORDABLE VET CARE A REALITY:



COMING IN 2021

treehouseanimals.org

IN 2020 AND BEYOND:

YOU + OUR COMMUNITY = GROWING OUR IMPACT



A New and Smarter Way to Buy or Sell a Home

Use a broker of your choice and Tree House Humane Society gets at least \$500.



Learn more at iiconline.org



ADOPTION SUCCESSES

Tree House places almost 1,000 cats in homes each year. This issue, we're including a few updates about cats who were adopted by our staff members. Even though they may see cats every single day, they're not immune to falling in love, too.

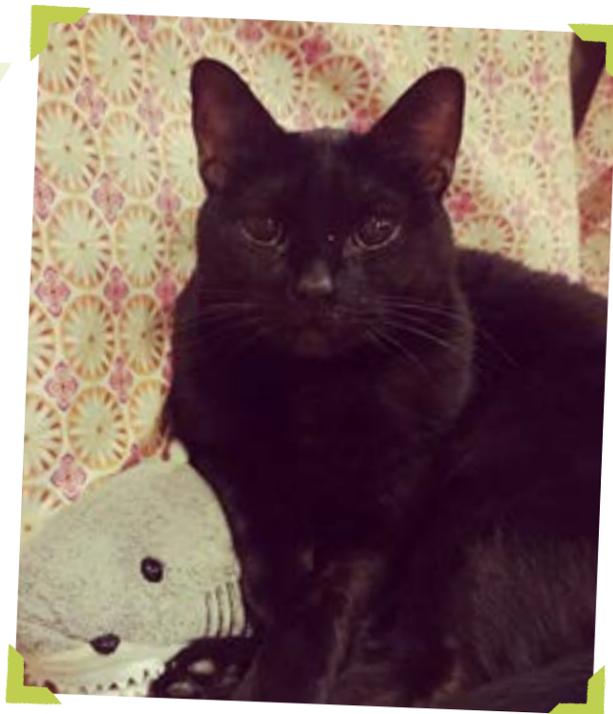


Emily

Christine wrote to us about her September adoption. "Browser (previously Emily) is a real cool cat who loves adventure, looking out windows, and running at full speed. She's recently learned how to sit and give high-fives, but is still working on coming when she is called. So far, she is having a good life as a spoiled house cat and our new best friend."

Tucci

Tucci was adopted by Tree House Director of Development Christine Holt before she worked with us. He sent us a text message to let us know how he's doing, and said, "Hi, I'm Tucci (aka 'The Toooh'). My human companion is a gal named Christine, who adopted me at the ripe old age of seven from our old building on Carmen Ave. When she came looking for a cat, I walked right up to her and yowled. I flopped over at her feet. Gets them every time. I'm almost 13 now, my stomach has grown and so has my intellect. Christine has me watching dramas and comedies from the 1930's, reading mystery fiction (the cat always solves the crime), and we even traveled to Southern California together! Christine joined the staff at Tree House a year ago, so my picture is plastered all over her office door (as it should be). Here I am with my support shark. I love him."



Little Wayne

Little Wayne was adopted by Tree House's Program Manager, Operations & Community Cats Sarah Liss. "When we decided to adopt a cat friend for our dog, Maggie, it was a no brainer to adopt one of the cats I hung out with at Tree House all day! We settled on the rambunctious and unshakable Little Wayne, as we knew he'd work with our crazy pup. From his cuddly, but over-stimulated personality to the way he drags his wand toy around the house - he just makes life more fun and exciting."

Louie & Martha Sorbet

Louie & Pinkle (Martha) Sorbet belong to our Manager of Marketing and Community Relations, Alana Grelyak. She fostered them both in 2014, before she worked at Tree House, and fell so in love with them that she decided to keep them for good. They're both learning how to high-five and have appeared in numerous episodes of Alana's cat-themed web series. Louie loves to snuggle, especially with the dog, and has never met another cat he didn't like. Pinkle loves Alana and is currently working on her Doctorate of Alana Studies degree.



Crowley

Augustus (nee Crowley) is settling in slowly but surely into his new home with David, who also worked at Tree House for a time. He chills in his bed on top of David's dresser during the day and explores the apartment at night. He loves lazing on the window sills of the seventh floor apartment, and has started meowing fervently when he wants attention (which is often). Augustus is very interested in Henry, his adopted brother, and has started answering to his new name (especially when treats are involved)! Augustus is a petting enthusiast who loves to have his belly rubbed and will begin thoroughly grooming David's hands and arms during snuggling sessions.



SHELTER SKIPPERS

Foster Program

Cruising from Foster Straight to Forever

With kitten season just around the bend, we're searching for new foster homes, but this year, we're doing it a little differently. You see, we can increase our capacity for care, i.e. how many cats we can help, if we have more foster homes. We can increase it even further if the cats move from the foster homes straight into their forever homes without ever having to detour to the ol' Port o' Tree House. Enter: the Shelter Skippers Adoption Program.

We're currently recruiting Captains (foster parents) for our little Sailors (cats). If you happen to have a spare ship (room) and some time in your life for some soft, warm snuggles, we've got the opportunity of a lifetime (yours and the cat's) for you. You will personally be involved in helping to market your Skipper online and amongst your social circles, and you'll be supported through every nautical mile by your very own Tree House mentor to make sure it's smooth sailing all the way.

Ready to set sail?
Visit treehouseanimals.org/foster to apply.

And if you're adopting? Don't forget to take a look at all of our little Skippers! You can see them at treehouseanimals.org. Ask an adoption counselor to set up a special meeting for you. We believe you'll be pleased with what you find. **All aboard!**

BIRTHDAY PARTY

Celebrate your child's special day with the cats of Tree House! We are excited to announce that we now offer birthday party packages for children ages 6-16 years old. Each party includes an educational presentation, a craft activity that supports our mission, and hands on time with our cats. Those interested in booking their child's party at Tree House can contact Shannon Gonzalez at SGonzalez@treehouseanimals.org or 773-262-4000 ext.123



LIL BILL: CHALLENGE ACCEPTED?

WORLD, MEET LIL BILL. His moniker is a bit of a misnomer for he is neither little nor is he a request for payment. Instead, he's quite big, and by adopting him, we think you'll feel like you won a million bucks.

LB is one of our very first Shelter Skippers. His time in our shelter wasn't exactly smooth sailing, so after a bit of searching, we shipped him off to foster with the intention of having him cruise straight into his new home without seeing the insides of Tree House again. Some cats just do better in a home environment, and Lil Bill is one of them.

Now, Lil Bill has some very particular tastes so we're looking for just the right place. For instance, he really likes reggae music played almost inaudibly between the hours of 2 and 4 pm only. Specific, right? Additionally, he's really into the smell of polished oak floors. Maple floors can see themselves out right now. Also, he likes to stay hydrated, and he prefers his hydration shaken not stirred, served room temp subcutaneously. Again, very specific, but he claims this is for the sake of his kidneys, dubbed Pearl and Pete, and not really for himself. What a generous, thoughtful guy. Pearl and Pete are lucky to have him. Finally, he really wants love and mutual trust. Reasonable, we think.

While it's true that Bill has a touch of the kidney disease and requires every-other-day fluids, he's still good and we think he'll make someone happy. All that worrying about the comfort of his kidneys, though, has caused him a little anxiety, so he's also on a daily dose of medication to smooth out his days. Also, you know how some cats like to be petted on the head, body, tail, and sometimes given hugs? Not Bill. He wants his pets right on the head and NO FURTHER. But let's be serious here: do you want to be petted indiscriminately? We didn't think so, and so we respect that about Lil Bill.

Listen, we know this big ol' tabby isn't for everyone, but neither is cilantro and that seems to be doing just fine with the right people. We think the same can happen for Bill. Adopters are like chess players – some like to play their cats on easy, but others like to strategize, plan, and go for the gold. Those latter ones are the people we are seeking for Bill.

If you really want to make a difference in the life of one cat and level up in yours, we've got the guy for you. Ask us to meet Lil Bill. He's willing to compromise on the oak floor smells, but he's firm on the love. And the reggae.

MEET TREE HOUSE

William Heron

FOSTER PROGRAM ASSISTANT

If you decide to take the amazing step of fostering a cat, you'll be working closely with our foster team here at Tree House, so we thought you should meet William Heron, our new Foster Program Assistant. William (and not Will), started at Tree House on October 1, 2019. He works on placing cats and kittens into foster homes and then keeps in contact with the fosters throughout the cats' check ups and surgeries prior to adoption.

William is originally from Nevada and has a long background in animal welfare, having started his journey as a volunteer at the Nevada Humane Society in 2013. "They hired me as the offsite adoption coordinator in 2015. It was my job to take the animals out of the shelter and go to pet stores/special events to be adopted at the events."

William believes that fostering can be life-changing, both for the foster family and for the cats. Take, for instance, Lil Bill, a Tree House cat currently in foster. William says this is one of his favorite stories thus far because of the unbelievable changes he saw in Lil Bill thanks to his placement into a foster home. "It took us a long time to find a good foster home for him due to his behavior issues and his kidney disease requiring fluids every other day. He is currently in foster care with some amazing volunteers! He is much more relaxed and his behavior has significantly improved." Lil Bill is now part of our Shelter Skippers program and we hope to see him sail home right from foster to forever. (See page 8 for more on Lil Bill.)

Outside of passionately caring for our kitties, William likes to play board games and he attends



a lot of trivia nights around the city. He also says, "I'm trying to teach myself to be a better cook." His favorite things to cook? "I am mostly trying to cook healthy foods and meals. I have perfected my spaghetti sauce and chili recipes already! I like to find different vegetables in the produce section that I have never had before and I will look up a recipe to attempt." William's worst fail? "Probably any time I try to cook fish," he said. "I love seafood, but I am terrible at cooking it! I always overcook fish." Don't let the cats hear that, William.

Where does William see himself in 10 years? He definitely wants to continue working in the shelter environment. His favorite part of working at Tree House is the community. "I have felt welcomed and supported since day one in ways I haven't really experienced at previous jobs," he said.

When we asked him what his one career-related wish would be, he said he would like to ask our readers and supporters to:

Volunteer to foster cats! And not just kittens; be open-minded to older and special needs cats. It is very rewarding!"

KITTENS: FROM FLORIDA TO TREE HOUSE BY AIR

In late February, 27 kittens flew in to Chicago Executive Airport from Florida on a private plane.

None of the kittens were piloting, mind you, but were safely stowed in back as two kind SPCA Florida volunteers made the trip to save the kittens from overcrowded Polk County, which faces a constant influx of animals due to year-round warm weather. Their shelters are already at capacity and these kittens were at risk, so Tree House, along with Hinsdale Humane Society, stepped in to save some lives.

Tree House and other northern shelters experience their "kitten season" from April through October when the warmer weather leads to litters from unsprayed females. In the winter months, Tree House sees a population lull and therefore has the increased capacity to support animals from outside our local community.

SPCA Florida and Polk County Animal Control arranged the transport of these vulnerable animals with the help of generous SPCA Florida supporters Donna Robinson and Mark Helmericks, who provided the use of their private plane for this transport. Robinson and Helmericks are passionate about Florida's efforts to bring down



the state's pet euthanasia numbers. They shared, "We hope that taking 30 kittens from Polk County to new homes in Illinois...will spread the word that every animal deserves the opportunity for a good life. And it will give 30+ lucky families a wonderful new fur member."

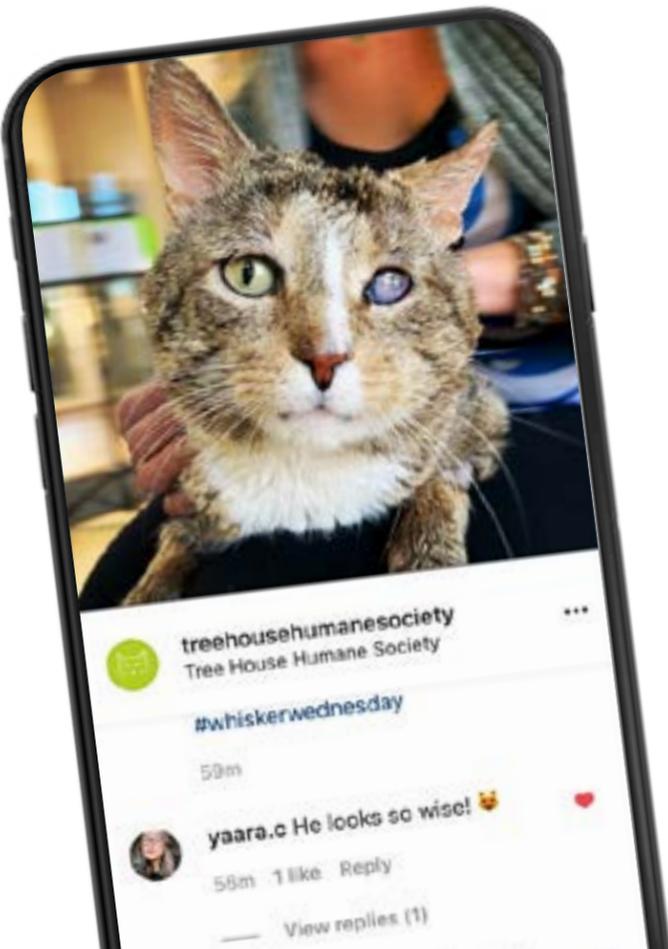
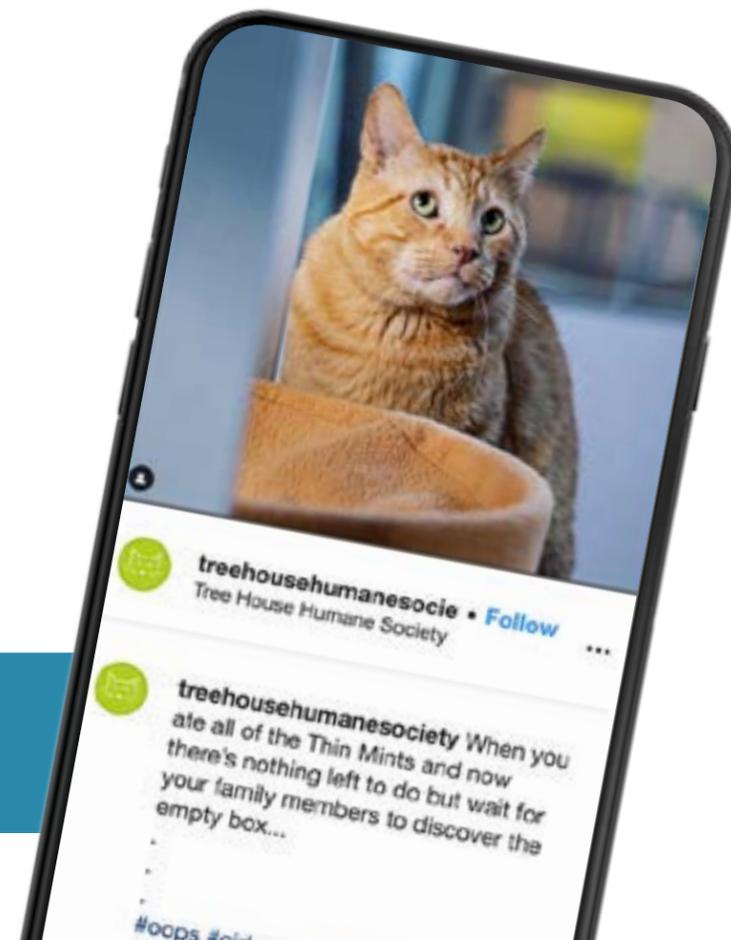
Tree House makes an effort to be good to our community – to its cats and its people – and that effort extends beyond the invisible lines of our state borders. While we have a lull in our season here, it's imperative that we use that time to do what we can to help those in need so that one day we really can say "kitten season is cancelled."



Florida kittens look just like Chicago kittens. Fancy that.

— INSTAGRAM FOR THE CATS —

Tree House uses Instagram to bring you beautiful photographs of cats lovingly displayed alongside some delightful, cat-themed humor. It is always current with cats who are presently in our care. We feel like it's a great way to keep you updated on everything that's happening here at Tree House while showcasing our cats' personalities in the hopes that they'll find the homes they're looking for through views and sharing. Whether you're looking to adopt or you just want a photo that's going to make you smile, we have you covered.



Follow [@treehousehumaneSociety](#) and feel good about the time you spend on social media.

— TREE HOUSE SUPER SUPPORTERS —

Lisa & Daniel Stein and the Feline Steins

Lisa and Daniel Stein are two long-time supporters of Tree House who have chosen to adopt the last nine of their family's cats from us. We were curious to know what keeps bringing them back to Tree House so we asked Lisa a few questions.

Q: What year did you adopt your first cat?

A: 1991 - I had just moved to Chicago and was single. I adopted Sammy and he was a great roommate.

Q: When was your most recent adoption?

A: 2018

Q: Have any of those cats been fostered by you first or did you always come in to meet them on the adoption floor?

A: We always met them on the adoption floor. Meeting and playing with the cats is so much fun and our visits are some of our family's favorite memories.

Q: What is it about Tree House that makes you keep coming back here to adopt?

A: So many things. We love the atmosphere of a cageless shelter. The facility (especially the new one) is always clean and comfortable for cats and humans alike, and the staff is incomparable in their care and knowledge of the cats, their friendliness with visitors, their general positive attitude, and their support with any issues that arise after we've taken the cats home.

Q: What's an amazing story about your cats that you love to tell?

A: Over the last year, our son has played with the cats using the laser pen. One of our youngest cats, Luna, is an incredible jumper. She can jump



as high as five feet for the laser in one particular corner of our house. Her brother, Oscar, likes to crawl into bags, giving us a big surprise when we look down and see his large green eyes peering at us! And all of them enjoy placing small objects in our shoes (they've trained us to look inside before we put them on).

Q: What's something you'd like everyone to know about you?

A: Cats are a big part of our lives. Right now we have five (Tigger, Pepper, Nash, Luna, and Oscar), and they bring us so much joy! Our kids love them as part of our family, and the cats have taught them how to care for, nurture, and respect other living beings.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

A: Just that we're eternally grateful to Tree House for all the good work they do.

FIELD NOTES FROM COMMUNITY CATS

Choose Your Kitten Adventure

by Sarah Liss, Program Manager,
Operations and Community Cats



Finding kittens can be an adventure! What to do next when you find a group of these little guys depends on their age. If you ever find kittens in an unsafe location, such as a window well or right near a busy road, or if you need help determining the age of the kittens you come upon, please give Tree House a call.

0-3 WEEKS OLD: MAMA CAT IS BEST

Kittens in this age group need a lot of care. It is imperative that you wait 3 to 4 hours before determining that mama cat is not around. She may just be out hunting or could be in the process of moving the kittens to a new location.

Mom: If mom comes back, fantastic! There's no need to intervene at this time.

No Mom: If mom does not come back, the kittens should be considered orphaned and be provided care as quickly as possible. Kittens require food every 3 to 4 hours.

If You Can Foster: Give us a call! We are happy to walk you through the steps of caring for bottle babies. You will need KMR (Kitten Milk Replacer), a kitten bottle, and something to keep them warm, such as a heating pad or a Snuggle Safe. They will also need to be stimulated to urinate and defecate. Please ask for help if you are at all unsure of how to proceed.

If You Can't Foster: It is best to bring the kittens to an open admission shelter, like Chicago Animal Care and Control, as shelters like Tree House are not equipped to provide 24-hour care.

4-6 WEEKS OLD: MAMA CAT IS STILL THE BEST CHOICE

Kittens in this age group are also still being cared for by mom, but if they are orphaned, they can begin the weaning process. Kittens naturally wean at about 5-6 weeks, but may begin eating on their own at 4 weeks or sometimes younger.

No Mom: Test out their eating skills by offering a pate wet food mixed with water. Frequent feeding is still required. Near four weeks, they may still need elimination assistance.

Mom: Kittens who are not orphaned at this age should still remain with mom whenever possible.

6-10 WEEKS OLD: GET 'EM INSIDE

Mom or No Mom: Kittens of this age can be brought inside, with or without mom. These guys no longer require the very special care that comes with earlier age groups. However, socialization is imperative! Kittens found in this age group tend to be hissy and unhandleable. Tree House can provide socialization advice. Once socialized and 8+ weeks old, kittens can be spayed/neutered and placed up for adoption.

12+ WEEKS OLD: TIME TO TNR

Kittens Not Friendly: Kittens of this age group are typically provided TNR (trap-neuter-return) surgery rather than socialized. The further kittens are into this age group, the harder it is to socialize them. Keeping them indoors with prolonged human contact becomes extremely stressful for them, and it can lead to illness and even behavioral regression. While it's not impossible to socialize in the early stages of this age group, it is hard to justify using foster homes for this purpose in a shelter setting when there are many underage and sick kittens who need the space even more. Kittens who are 12+ weeks old have already developed the skills needed to live their lives outdoors, so it is just fine to let them do that.

Kittens Become Friendly: Kittens in this age group may socialize after time spent with a dedicated caregiver and kind people. If this is the case, they can always go up for adoption at a later date!

QUESTIONS? Call Tree House at 773-262-4000
or email us at info@treehouseanimals.org

KITTEN HEALTH

Ask the expert with Dr. Emily

Dr. Emily Swiniarski has been Tree House's Director of Veterinary medicine for the last four years. In March of 2020, Dr. Emily departed Tree House in search of other opportunities and to spend more time with her family and newborn son. We will be forever grateful for her contributions to Tree House and to our cats, and for bringing to Tree House the most progressive, cutting-edge shelter medicine possible that allows us to give shelter to FeLV+ cats, among many other things. We wish her the very best and will miss her.



Is it dangerous to vaccinate my kittens?

The short answer is no! Kittens should be vaccinated with an FVRCP vaccine, commonly called "distemper" vaccine, starting at 6 weeks of age. In the shelter, we start at 4 weeks of age. This vaccine rarely causes serious vaccine reactions and is critical to the health of your kitten. The most common reaction is a little soreness at the site of the vaccine, which should go away within a couple days. Most kittens act as if nothing happened! On rare occasions, vomiting and fever can accompany the vaccine and you would follow up with your veterinarian right away. Overall, kittens need this vaccine to stay healthy and serious side effects are exceedingly rare.

At what age should I have my kitten spayed/neutered?

Ideally by 4 months. Cats are able to begin sexually maturing at this age, meaning they could go into heat and become pregnant. Spaying your cat before their first heat cycle correlates with a much lower risk of mammary (breast) cancer, and avoids all

those pesky symptoms when a cat is in heat: excessive vocalization, acting overly affectionate followed by frustrated and upset, and a strong desire to go outside to find a mate. At the shelter, we spay and neuter kittens at 2 months for adoption. Even if your cat is an adult, it is never too late to get him/her spayed or neutered.

Do I have to adopt kittens in pairs?

No, you don't have to, but if you adopt a kitten, they really should have another cat at home! At the very least, another companion such as a dog who is friendly to cats. Kittens need socialization with other cats throughout kittenhood. Without it, they will not learn how to interact with other cats appropriately and as an adult will be unable to live with other cats. Also, kittens will not learn cat-appropriate behaviors such as how to groom themselves and others, as well as how to play with people versus cats. Many kittens raised by themselves develop undesirable behaviors that humans do not enjoy!



TREE HOUSE

HUMANE SOCIETY

7225 N. WESTERN AVE.

CHICAGO, IL 60645

Tree House Friends: How Are YOU? These days are challenging, but we will continue prepping and communicating about our three special Tree House events, and we invite you to reach out if we can assist you in any way.

SAVE THE DATES! 2020



CATWALK

SATURDAY, JULY 25



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12