



## New Beginnings: Morgan

Angela Townsend, Development Director

Tabby's Place occasionally has the privilege of meeting a cat who qualifies as a medical miracle. Our mighty Morgan is such a cat.

When we first met Morgan, he was unable to move his hind legs. Our team rushed him to the emergency veterinarian, where a cardiologist spoke the feared words: *saddle thrombus*. This terrifying blood clot's calling card is hind-leg paralysis, and in Morgan's case, it was due to serious heart disease. Veterinarians agreed that Morgan had little hope of recovery.

But Morgan never got that memo.

Exuberantly friendly, Morgan is here to live and to love, and he isn't taking no for an answer. Happily for him – and for our Founder & Executive Director – Morgan is now Jonathan's feline office-mate. This gives him unparalleled access to the man at the heart of Tabby's Place, and to a parade of doting visitors.

Morgan is the epitome of a Tabby's Place cat: courageous, living well in the face of adversity, and above all, loved. We know that every day with Morgan is a gift, and we are grateful he made his way to Tabby's Place.



## 9 Lives in 50 States: Cat Life Spans in the US

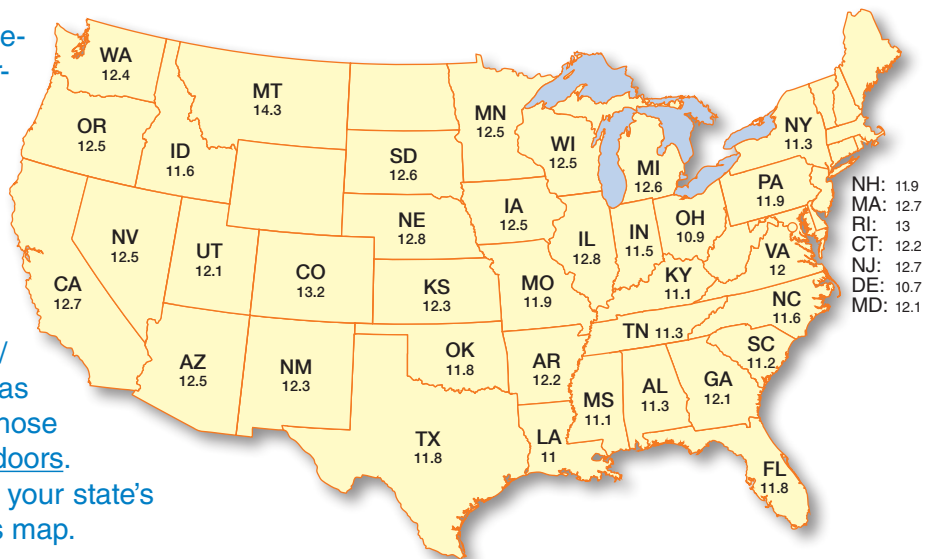
Angela Townsend

We always knew Mittens and Cookie were special – but a new study suggests these 18-year-olds are truly remarkable when compared to their fellow American felines.

According to Banfield Pet Hospital's 2012 State of the Pet Health Report<sup>1</sup>, the average feline life span is 12.1 years – up from 11.1 years in 2002. If that sounds disturbingly low to you, as it did to us (and to Mittens), note that the study includes cats who have not been spayed/

neutered, as well as those who go outdoors.

Check out your state's stats on this map.



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In Louisiana and Mississippi, among the states with the shortest feline lifespans, Banfield found that one in five cats is not spayed or neutered. Westward in Montana and Colorado, the two states with the longest kitty lifespans, only one in twelve cats is unspayed/unneutered.

<sup>1</sup>Based on the 456,717 cats seen at Banfield hospitals in 2012, as calculated by the Banfield Applied Research & Knowledge (BARK) Team. There are no Banfield hospitals in, and therefore no data, for AK, HI, ME, ND, VT, WV and WY. Note that this is not a scientific, representative study of any kind.

# Why Do Cats...Act Finicky About Food?

Angela Townsend



Even colossal cats like Raja can be finicky...well, at least hypothetically.

One day your tabby loves his tuna feast. The next day, he seems disgusted and “covers” his chow with linoleum dust as gingerly as he can.

What’s going on with your feline’s food fickleness?

- **He doesn’t feel well:** A vet visit is in order when your cat’s habits change. Dental pain or other maladies can cause cats to spurn food, and a cat who goes more than a few days without eating risks developing hepatic lipidosis, a life-threatening condition.
- **He’s learned it “works:”** Cats in the wild aren’t finicky, because they don’t have the luxury of choice. As opportunistic hunters, they eat what’s available. But if your cat learns that the moment he walks away from his food, you pop open another option, he’ll know he can hold out for something better. Like the toddler who must eat his turnips before he can have an éclair, your cat will benefit from being offered one option per meal. Proffer a selection you know your cat has eaten before, and set it out for

20 minutes. If your cat turns up his nose, so be it. He’ll have another chance to eat at his next meal – but not before. As long as you are consistent, within a few days, he’ll be eating his old favorites happily.

- **His routine is off:** Since cats often see change as a threat, any disruption can cause a kitty to avoid food temporarily. You can mitigate scary changes by keeping his routines as consistent as possible.
- **The dish is displeasing:** Cats dislike having their whiskers touched, especially when they eat. A sturdy, wide and shallow bowl will best encourage good eating.
- **It’s in the genes:** Researchers at the Monell Chemical Senses Center found that cats’ tongues lack a “sweet receptor.” This makes cats most attracted to a high-protein diet in which they can taste the amino acids. Select foods that are high in protein (with meat, rather than a grain or meat by-product, listed as the first ingredient) to appeal to his taste buds.

- **He knows what he needs:** Research published in the Journal of Comparative Physiology B found that cats are able to select and combine foods to attain their ideal balance of carbohydrate, protein and fat. Cats offered a variety of foods chose a mixture remarkably similar to what wild cats have been observed to eat. The researchers suggest that our tabbies may retain their instincts for an ideal diet. Your feline “scientist” may simply be trying to keep his diet tailored to his needs, rather than just eating what’s offered to him. Again,

as a general rule, cat foods high in protein are best for your cat’s health – and his preferences.



While some cats, like Hocus, eagerly eat all kinds of food...



...others, like Gunther, are chronically fussy.

## RECOMMENDED READING:

- **How to Solve Cat Behavior Problems, Animal Planet:** <http://animal.discovery.com/pets/how-to-solve-cat-behavior-problems4.htm>
- **Feeding Your Feline, Best Friends Animal Society:** <http://bestfriends.org/Resources/Pet-Care/Cats/Health-And-Care/Feeding-Your-Feline/>
- **Is Your Cat a Finicky Eater?, Cat Behavior Associates:** <http://www.catbehaviorassociates.com/is-your-cat-a-finicky-eater/>
- **Why Is My Cat...So Finicky About Food, MSN Living:** <http://living.msn.com/family-parenting/pets/why-is-my-cat-so-finicky-about-food>
- **Is your cat a finicky eater?, VCA Animal Hospitals:** <http://www.vcahospitals.com/main/news/pet-news/is-your-cat-a-finicky-eater/606>
- **Eat Up, Veterinary Partner:** <http://www.veterinarypartner.com/Content.plx?P=A&S=0&C=0&A=3212>
- **How to Deal With a Cat That’s a Picky Eater, WebMD:** <http://pets.webmd.com/cats/guide/how-to-deal-with-a-cat-thats-a-picky-eater>





# Case Study: Sylvia Dr. Laura Collins, Veterinarian



The amazing Sylvia

When Sylvia came to Tabby's Place in January 2011, she was weak in her hind end, her back legs were cold, and she was unable to feel pressure to her hind toes. An ultrasound and X-rays showed that Sylvia had severe hypertrophic obstructive car-

diomyopathy. Like Morgan (see page 1),

Sylvia's heart disease had caused a blood clot to form in her heart, which travelled through the aorta, lodging where it separates into the iliac arteries that supply her hind legs. It then obstructed the blood supply to her hind legs, causing them to become cold and weak. This all-too-common condition is called Feline Aortic Thromboembolism (FATE).

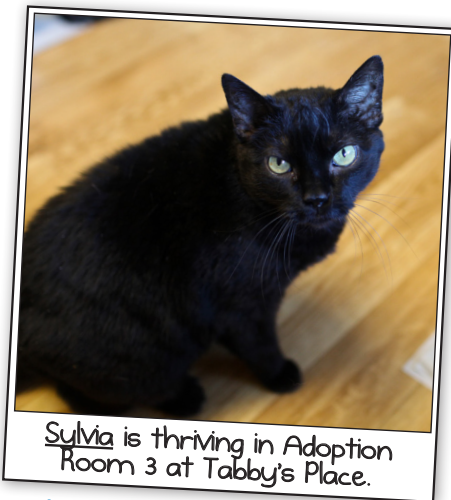
In addition to weakness or paralysis of the hind legs and cold, blue toes, FATE usually causes severe pain, although Sylvia, luckily, did not seem uncomfortable. The prognosis for FATE is guarded to poor, with only 37.5% of cats surviving the initial incident.

Following Sylvia's diagnosis, we treated her with anti-coagulant medications to minimize clot formation, as well as a diuretic and an ACE inhibitor to treat her heart failure. She re-vascularized (improved circulation), regained good function of her hind limbs, and remained stable...until November 2011.

At that time, Sylvia developed congestive heart failure, and we increased two of her medications. Because these medications can cause side effects in the kidneys, we regularly monitored Sylvia's blood work

to maintain the delicate balance between her cardiac and renal health. Sylvia again enjoyed a long period of stability until December 2012. At this point, Sylvia's already-severe heart disease progressed again. An increase in her diuretic, with the addition of a second similar medication, caused Sylvia's heart failure to resolve rapidly. Since then, her kidney values have increased slightly, but her cardiac status is stable and she continues to enjoy her life with her friends in Adoption Room 3.

Based on the severity of Sylvia's heart disease, statistics would suggest that she could be expected to live approximately 7½ months after her initial crisis. In her amazing 2½ years at Tabby's Place, Sylvia's quality of life has been good, and she has gone from being very scared of humans to enjoying our company, if we are patient and gentle. Given the severity of her heart disease, we worry that one day we will not be able to help her as we have before. Meantime, we are grateful for the life we have been able to provide Sylvia through our medical care and love.



Sylvia is thriving in Adoption Room 3 at Tabby's Place.

## Tabby's Place: The Next Big Thing

First, the bad news: Tabby's Place will not be hosting Catoberfest this fall.

But that's because of the good news: our cats are cooking up something spectacular for our 10th anniversary. We'll be officially announcing the "Next Big Thing"

in our October newsletter - but, for now, we'll tell you that it's about our wild and wonderful feral friends.

Can't wait to get involved? You can sign up to sponsor the TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return) Fund at Tabby's Place and start caring for our feral sweeties right away.



Feral-born kittens like Heidi are among those who will benefit from Tabby's Place's Next Big Thing.



# So You Think You Can Train a Cat?

Nancy Meyer, Feline Behavior Consultant & Volunteer

At Tabby's Place, we train our cats through the Volunteer Socialization Program. The cats enrolled in this program have "special mental needs," often resulting from a history of negative or limited interactions with humans.

It's not always easy to get these cats to trust people, but it's very rewarding when we can help them progress enough to find a forever home.

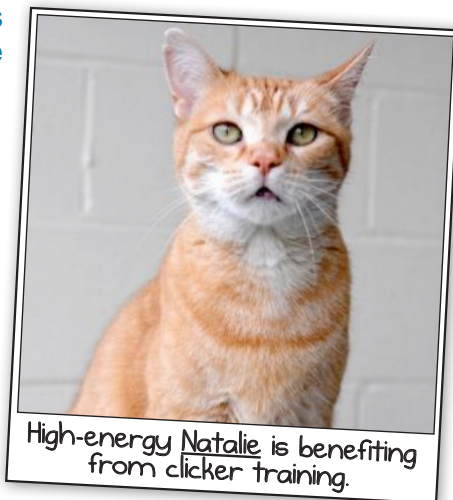
This spring, an intern from Rider University worked intensively with our cats. She and I concentrated on a method called clicker training, based upon positive reinforcement.



Clicker training reinforces Maggie's positive behaviors.

In clicker training, we mark a desired behavior with a mechanical device that makes a fast click sound. This is a very effective means of communication, and it sometimes appears to work like magic. A cat can learn a new behavior in ten minutes. The intern and I

worked with shy cats as well as, shall we say, our more opinionated residents. For instance, Maggie and Natalie tend to have their own agendas, but we've started to transform those tendencies with clicker training. Maggie now comes over on command and does a "trick" for her treat. Natalie, very much a Type A personality, will now go to her "spot" and wait patiently (at least most of the time) to get rewarded.



High-energy Natalie is benefitting from clicker training.

But the miracle of miracles was Ali. Once described by our Founder & Executive Director as "afraid of molecules," Ali will now come out of hiding on command to obtain her special treat.

Clicker training not only helps our challenging cats, but it's also fun for the humans involved. Watch for future articles on how you can use this great technique to enhance your bond with your own cat.

## Forever Loved: Franny

Jonathan Rosenberg, Founder & Executive Director

*Grand dame: [an elderly,] flamboyant woman, prone to extravagant and eccentric fashion.*

I always thought of Franny as a Grand Dame. I envisioned her as an old Hollywood starlet, who had retained her figure, and was past her prime, yet unwilling to admit the decline in her status.

Franny lived in the Community Room. She wore her beautiful tortoiseshell fur as if it were a fur cloak that had seen better days ... possibly from her role as Princess Dragomiroff<sup>1</sup>. Despite her age, asthma and severe arthritis, Franny carried herself with elegance and knew her rightful place in (the Community Room) society. She was, indeed, eccentric, but she was such a gentle soul that one couldn't help but love her. It always brightened my day to see her sweet face.



Franny

As the years passed, Franny became diabetic. Being a Grand Dame, Franny never did anything in a small way. It was the same with her diabetes. She was exquisitely sensitive to the dosing, and a tiny change in the amount of insulin could send her into hypoglycemic danger. We had to dilute her insulin so that we could accurately measure it in 1/10 of 1 unit doses.



Franny was a beloved fixture in the Tabby's Place Community Room for over five years.

Franny's kidneys were always iffy, and during the last year they started to fail. She lost weight and began to act senile: wandering with no apparent goal for hours. Reluctantly, we admitted it was time to let her go one day in January. She went very gently, surrounded by an immense amount of love from the people whose hearts she had touched so deeply.

Franny is missed sorely. She will always live in the heart of the Community Room. Rest gently, dear girl.

<sup>1</sup>*Murder on the Orient Express.*



# Adore the Elderly Angela Townsend

When we launched the "Care for Elderly Cats" portion of the 2013 Linda Fund Matching Challenge, you responded with generous gusto. So many of you asked how you could continue to help our senior kitties that we've created the [Elderly Care Fund](#) at Tabby's Place.

Your monthly gift will nurture seniors like blind, deaf [Levi](#) and 18-year-old phenom [Cookie](#). As thanks for your compassion, we'll send you monthly updates and photos on the different golden oldies you're helping.

Thank you for loving our snuggly seniors.



Eighteen-year-old [Cookie](#) would love to be one of your sponsored senior felines.

# Your First Priority: Feline First Aid Angela Townsend



First aid is especially essential to know when you have a youngster like [Mei Li](#), since kittens excel at getting into trouble.



[Chooch](#) can enjoy sweet dreams since the humans around him know what to do in case of emergency.

Cats help us through everything from bad days to broken hearts. How can we return the favor and be there for them in their own emergencies?

- Assemble a first-aid kit: Keep basic supplies handy in case of the most common kitty emergencies. Both the [American Veterinary Medical Association](#) and [About Cats](#) offer helpful lists.

- Familiarize yourself with life-saving steps for the most likely "what ifs." Check out [easy-to-understand](#)

[overviews](#) of pet first aid [online](#), and revisit them periodically so you are always ready to apply the [tips](#) if needed.

- Learn how to [properly handle](#) an injured cat.
- As summer returns, learn the signs and remedies for [heatstroke and sunburn](#).
- Get to know the symptoms of [poisoning](#), and keep the number handy for the [ASPCA Poison Control Center Hotline](#): 1-888-426-4435.
- Program the phone numbers of your regular veterinarian and nearest 24-hour veterinary emergency hospital into your cell phone. In case of an emergency, a professional can walk you through CPR or other life-saving steps. The [Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Society](#) and [MyVeterinarian](#) provide searchable directories of emergency veterinarians.
- Consider enrolling in the Red Cross's [Pet First Aid Course](#).

### RECOMMENDED READING:

- [Pet First Aid, American Animal Hospital Association](#): [http://www.healthy-pet.com/PetCare/PetCareArticle.aspx?title=Pet\\_First\\_Aid](http://www.healthy-pet.com/PetCare/PetCareArticle.aspx?title=Pet_First_Aid)
- [Pet First Aid: Basic Procedures, American Veterinary Medical Foundation](#): <https://www.avma.org/public/EmergencyCare/Pages/Basic-Pet-First-Aid-Procedures.aspx>
- [Basic First Aid for Your Pet, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Illinois](#): [http://vetmed.illinois.edu/petcolumns/petcols\\_article\\_page.php?OLDPETCOLID=530](http://vetmed.illinois.edu/petcolumns/petcols_article_page.php?OLDPETCOLID=530)
- [First Aid: Emergency Care for Dogs and Cats, Veterinary Partner](#): <http://www.veterinarypartner.com/Content.plx?P=SRC&S=1&SourceID=20>

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# Happy Endings: Tina

Melissa Alford, *Adopter*

Tina came to Tabby's Place through the sanctuary's very first Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) project. When I first met Tina, I noticed right away how small she is. She was very comfortable around all the other cats, and very calm.

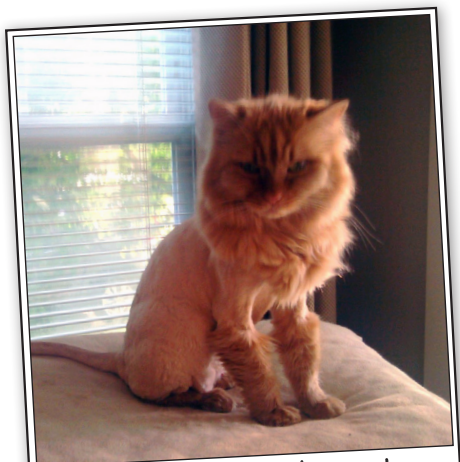


Tina

Since coming home with me, Tina has come out of her shell even more. You would never know that at one time she was a stray. She loves running water and can't resist jumping up on the kitchen sink whenever I'm working there.

Tina is almost impossible to photograph, because she won't stay still long enough to get a good picture. She always just wants to "mush" you. But, oh my gosh, her summertime "lion cut" is adorable. Few things (if any) are cuter.

Tina has proven to me that, given enough time and love (and the right environment), any cat – even a former feral – can become a wonderful pet. It just takes time and patience, and a quiet household helps. Tina loves to be loved and is just perfect in every way!



Tina models her lion cut.

# Where Are They Now? Drita

Kaylie Yaskowitz, *Adopter*

*Editor's note: We first introduced you to "micro-kitten" Drita in the April Tabby's Place newsletter. Since that time, she's been the "poster kitten" of the 2013 Linda Fund, been declared free of any serious underlying conditions – and found an amazing home of her own.*

Drita has acclimated very well to life in a home and seems happy. Sometimes she just sits down with us and starts purring, even if we aren't petting her.

Her favorite spot is on the back of the couch, looking out the window at the backyard. If there are birds or flying insects out there, she can be amused for hours.

Drita is very playful and loves anything with a string attached (pants, keys, and window shades are all fair game). She also loves exploring small spaces like kitchen cupboards, open boxes, and even large handbags. She has an amazing appetite and may have gained weight since we got her, although I can't get her to sit on the scale long enough for it to register.

We've had a few flies get in the house since the start of summer, and Drita seems to have taken on the job of hunting them down and killing them.

It's a bit of a challenge to take pictures of Drita, since she's never sitting still for too long!

*Thank you to all who helped Tabby's Place to care for Drita – and especially to the wonderful family who embraced her into their hearts and home.*



Drita during her time at Tabby's Place.



Drita sits pretty in her forever home.

**Calling All Social Networkers!**

Join the cats on [Facebook](#) & the [Tabby's Place Blog](#) today!

