



New Beginnings: Doc Watson

Angela Townsend, Development Director

"It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye." - Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Le Petit Prince*

One bulging, useless eye and one nearly-empty eye socket. The scrawny legs and frowzy fur of old



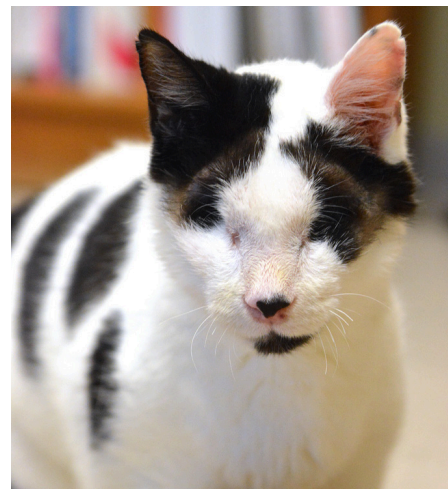
[Doc navigates Jonathan's office](#)

age and hard living. Doc Watson was no candidate for the cover of *Cat Fancy*.

Yet, two young siblings found Doc wandering their school grounds and saw a creature worthy of love. A fortunate series of events led Doc to Tabby's Place, where we'd all see the beauty of our newest old soul. But first, we were in for several surprises.

Doc was very old. Doc was diabetic. And Doc was FIV+.

Even following difficult surgery to remove his badly-diseased eyes, Doc sparkled at human affection, melting into hugs and purring with all his might.



[Doc Watson](#)

Today, Doc Watson is healthy, happy, and holding down the fort as Jonathan's office mate. We are so grateful for the opportunity to love and care for him.

2013 Tabby's Place Expenses

Jonathan Rosenberg, Founder & Executive Director

"You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you." - John Bunyan

As I reflect upon the past year and the generosity of our donors, I am struck by the appropriateness of this quote. Thanks to all of you, in 2013, our income grew by 30%, leaving us just a whisker short of \$1,000,000¹.

A significant chunk (25%) of the income was for our new TNR project, which will be ramping up this year.

And, while our expenses grew to \$837,111², it is mostly good news:

- Administrative expenses dropped by 4% in absolute terms, now making up only 22% of expenses, compared to 26% in 2012.

- The bulk of the increased costs were in two areas:

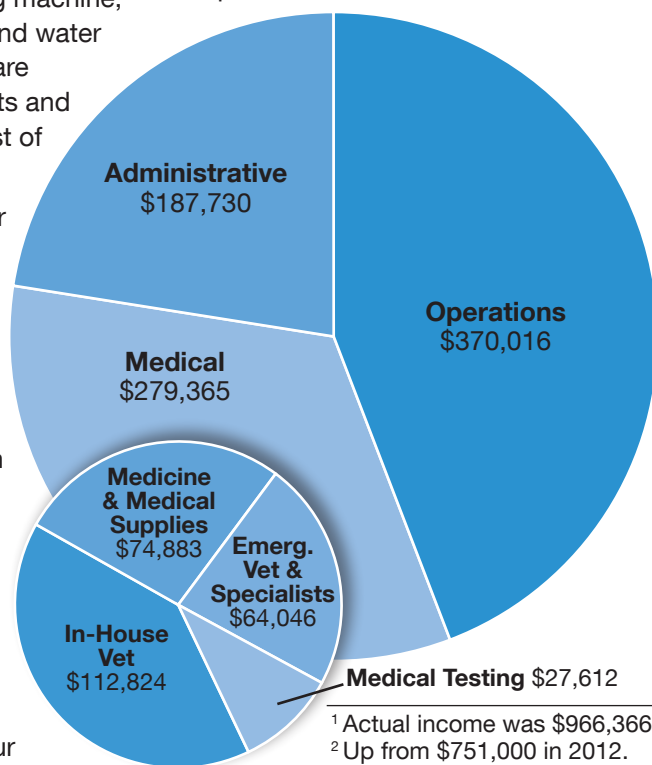
- o Equipment: after 10 years of faithful service, we had to replace our washing machine, dryer, dishwasher and water conditioner. These are commercial products and 5 - 10 times the cost of home equipment.

- o IT infrastructure: our IT equipment was also 10 years old, which is an eternity in this area. We spent \$10,000 doing much needed upgrades in 2013.

We are, frankly, all charged up about what we will be able to accomplish in 2014 as we continue to save cats from hopeless situations, increasing our

outreach to strays and ferals.

I hope you are as excited as we are about the work that lies ahead. I am looking forward to having you as partners.



¹ Actual income was \$966,366.

² Up from \$751,000 in 2012.

Your Cat's Year of Awesome: Maintain a Healthy Weight

Editor's note: This new column features tips for your cat's health and happiness. Rather than pile on the New Year's resolutions, we'll stretch them out across 2014. Always consult your veterinarian before changing your cat's diet or attempting a weight loss regimen.

Being overweight wasn't a concern for our pet cats' wild forebears. Until recent times, finding food went hand in paw with hunting, roaming, leaping and burning boffo calories. But now that our cats find food at the crack of a can, we need to love them enough to keep them fit:

- **Estimate your cat's Body Condition Score.** A fit, healthy cat will have a visible "waist,"



Roly-poly Maggie is beautiful just the way she is, but shedding a few pounds will help her long-term health

proportional shape, and ribs that can be felt but not easily seen. Note that although more than half of cats are overweight, it's equally important (indeed, often more urgent) to ensure that your cat is not underweight. If your cat is underweight, a vet visit is in order immediately.

- **Read food labels with a critical eye.** The Association for Pet Obesity Prevention (APOP) recommends that a 10-pound cat consume 180-200 calories daily. APOP lists the caloric content of many commercial cat foods and treats. The "recommended feeding amounts" on many food labels are excessive for most cats.
- **Consider canned food:** Dry cat food is generally more calorie-dense than its canned counterpart, which has high water content. Wet food can help keep your cat fuller longer while also decreasing her caloric intake.
- **Stop the smorgasbord:** Making kibble available all day can contribute to weight gain. Talk to your vet about "meal feeding." By splitting your cat's daily diet into several small meals, you can control how much she's eating, while keeping her satiated. If your cat begs for more, pet her, talk to her, and distract her with your love.
- **Get moving:** Exercise will do wonders for your cat's well-being.



Sammy, on the other hand, needs careful monitoring in order not to lose too much weight



Jackie is on a vet-monitored weight loss regimen at Tabby's Place

APOP recommends that cats enjoy 30 minutes of daily activity. Tired of typical toys? The Huffington Post, About.com Cats, Ohio State University's College of Veterinary Medicine and CatsPlay offer creative new ideas. In addition to playing with your cat, provide an enriched environment with climbing structures, tunnels and a rotating array of toys.

- **Take it seriously:** A single pound on a cat is roughly equivalent to ten pounds on a human, so even a small weight gain can tax your kitty's health. Obesity can cause type II diabetes, osteoarthritis and respiratory problems.
- **Don't go to extremes:** Sudden weight loss, especially in a previously hefty cat, can cause fatty liver disease, a life-threatening condition. Work closely with your vet to plan the ideal regimen for your uniquely wonderful cat. —A.T.

Recommended Reading:

- The Association for Pet Obesity Prevention
- APOP, Weight Reduction in Cats – General Information
- PetMD, Obesity in Cats
- Franny Syufy, About.com Cats, Safe Weight Control for Your Cat
- Vetinfo, What Is a Healthy Cat Weight?

Case Study: Jennifer Ann

Dr. Laura Collins, Veterinarian

When she came to us in late 2011, Jennifer Ann, like many elderly cats, had early chronic kidney disease. This causes an afflicted cat to lose the water needed for bodily functions, which leads her to drink more in order to keep up with her fluid needs. As the disease progresses, waste products build up in the bloodstream, making the cat feel sick, lose her appetite, lose weight, and suffer from anemia, vomiting and/or diarrhea.

Unfortunately, Jennifer Ann's condition progressed rapidly, and by early 2012 she became dehydrated enough to warrant hospitalization. After 2 days of intensive care, she began fluid therapy every other day, which maintained her for three months. At that point, in addition to again being dehydrated, Jennifer Ann became anemic.

This happens to many cats with kidney disease, since the kidneys are responsible for producing a hormone which stimulates red blood cell production. When a cat slows down or stops producing

this hormone, life-threatening anemia can result. We treat these cats with synthetic hormones. However, cats frequently develop antibodies to them, which can cause anemia to recur.

Hormone treatment initially helped Jennifer Ann, but after 10 months she developed severe anemia. We suspected she had developed antibodies to the hormone, so we immediately discontinued it, and gave her a blood transfusion. We continued to transfuse her every 2 weeks for the next 2 months, until her anemia finally reversed.

Over the past eight months, Jennifer Ann's recovery has been astonishing, with no recurrence of either dehydration or anemia.

Although her kidney values are still elevated, Jennifer Ann enjoys a good quality of life. Her activity level is good and her appetite hearty – in fact, she's gone from underweight

to a slightly chubby 9 pounds.

Jennifer Ann is unique to make it through this many episodes of renal failure and emerge with a good quality of life. She is also one of very few cats to have survived anemia resulting from both decreased hormone production and the development of antibodies to the treatment.

Through her treatments, Jennifer Ann has transformed from a semi-feral, terrified cat to a sweet girl who loves to be petted. Perhaps she has figured out we were helping her. We know she is living day to day, which makes us treasure each moment with her (newly) friendly face even more.



Amidst her health struggles, once-terrified Jennifer Ann has become a love bug at Tabby's Place

Sweetness for the Strays



Frosty was found wandering in winter's cold. He hopes you will help cats like him with this special gift basket.

The last pine needles are swept away, and the Elf on the Shelf has safely returned to the attic. But in the chill of January, there are little ones still waiting for their special gift: stray cats.

You can answer their wish with the [Feral Friend Virtual Gift Basket](#) this winter. Your gift will provide spay/neuter surgery and compassionate care for cats in our [Trap-Neuter-Return \(TNR\) program](#). Plus, we'll send a beautiful card to the recipient of your choice – the sweetest post-holiday gift they'll ever see.

Tinsel may tarnish come January, but your love will melt

winter's chill for outdoor cats. Please give the [Feral Friend Virtual Gift Basket](#) today. –A.T.



Jean Valjean has come a long way from being abandoned outdoors. Your donation can help cats in his previous predicament.

Looking for Love in 2014: The New Special Needs Cats

You wish you could be the one to nurture sick cats back to health. You regret that you can't personally be here at Tabby's Place.

But when you sponsor a Special Needs cat, you can.



[Mimi](#)

As a Special Needs sponsor, you will personally be caring for a wonderful kitty who truly needs you. Even if you are 2,000 miles away, in a very real sense, your love will be right here with your sponsored cat every day.

This winter, our newest Special Needs sweeties just may be the ones for you:

- See beyond appearances? Consider [Doc Watson](#).
- Champion of shy sweeties? [Paulette](#) needs your love.
- Cheer for the quirky? Tiny [Brielle](#) is your girl.
- Go weak over CH cats? [Mimi](#)



[Paulette](#)

hopes to wobble her way into your world.

Please open your heart to one of our Special Needs cats. You are the one they've been waiting for. -A.T.

Forever Loved: Cookie

The cats that entered Tabby's Place in our first year hold special places in our hearts. Wearing number 127, [Cookie](#) was such a cat.

She was not friendly. In fact, she was downright disagreeable. But, we loved her as she was.

Through the years we tried to do what was best for Cookie, though this was complicated by her recalcitrance in the face of human contact.

In 2012, I had a spot for a new officemate. I moved Cookie in,



[Cookie](#)

hoping she would appreciate the prime real estate, extra attention and food. She did enjoy the food, but she moved into the Lobby at the first chance.

As best I can tell, Cookie was happy there. She had a handful of volunteers whose attentions she would tolerate, plus an endless buffet of fine food.

After a few months in the Lobby, Cookie developed what appeared to be a persistent ear infection. Over time, we realized there was more going on, and further diagnostic tests showed that she had a tumor in her inner ear. The only viable treatment was surgery.

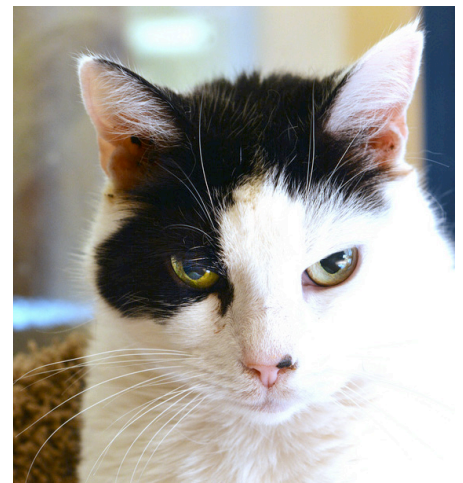
We struggled over the decision. Though she was 17 years old, Cookie was otherwise very healthy. We decided surgery was in her best interest. Her ear was already bleeding, so we had to do something.

Cookie sailed through the usually difficult surgery and recovered rapidly, to our great

delight. We were hoping for many more uneventful years for our girl.

Sadly, one morning our early shift found Cookie had died during the night. There was no sign of trauma or distress. Our best guess is that she had a heart attack.

I feel sad when I think of Cookie, wishing things had turned out differently. But, Cookie was loved and cared for. In the end, maybe that's all anyone can ask for. -J.R.



[In nearly ten years at Tabby's Place, Cookie worked her way deep into all of our souls](#)

Clickers & Cat Carriers

Nancy Meyer, Feline Behavior Consultant & Volunteer

All cats need motivation to change their behavior. How we wish we could just “talk” to them.

That’s where *clicker training* comes in. As we discussed [last time](#), cats can acquire new, desired behaviors very rapidly with this “language.”

First, we must always start out with a suitable motivator. In most circumstances we can find a treat the cat really loves.

We begin training by getting the cat’s undivided attention. Then



[Strong-willed cats like lively LaFawnduh can benefit from clicker training](#)

we click and immediately present the treat to the cat. Repeat 4-5 times. We’ve now given the clicker meaning for the cat, who forms a strong positive association between the click sound and the treat. Subsequently, when we click on a desired behavior, that positive association communicates to the cat that a treat is on the way.

This same language can work against us – in fact, we may create strong negative associations without intending them. How many of you only bring out the cat carrier immediately before the vet visit? You have accomplished a goal similar to what is done with clicker training... except that you’ve established a *negative* association. The cat carrier, rather than communicating “treat,” now screams VET.

You can transform your carrier-phobic cat with simple changes. First, keep the carrier out all the time, so it becomes a familiar place where your cat finds refuge to eat and sleep. Once your cat begins to replace that negative association with a positive one, we can hasten the learning process with the clicker.

Toss a treat your cat really likes to the back of the carrier. Now give a



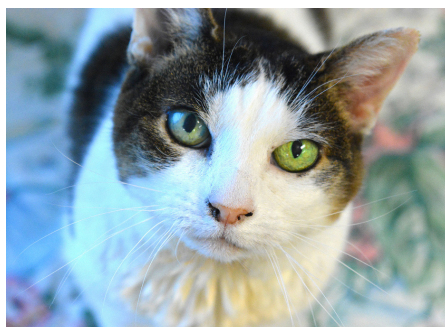
[Clicker training and positive reinforcement helped feisty Natalie find a forever home after six years at Tabby’s Place](#)

verbal command, like “Go for a ride.” As soon as your cat starts to enter the carrier, immediately click on that behavior. This tells your cat, “treat to follow.” Before you know it, she will load into the carrier on command. Remember to periodically take your cat for “fun” rides, rather than packing her up solely for vet visits. These fun trips can be very short. The goal is to present more positive associations than negative ones.

Do try this at home. Training with positive reinforcement coupled with the language of the clicker can transform your cat’s carrier from a torture chamber to her new happy place.

Visit Tabby’s Place

Join gym
De-clutter closets
Visit Tabby’s Place



[Colleen would love to meet you on your next Tabby’s Place visit](#)

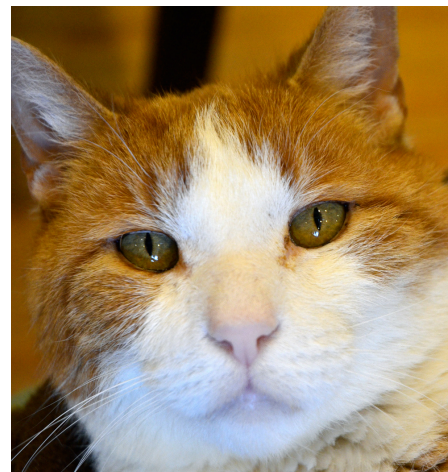
Our cats have the ultimate New Year’s resolution for you: come cuddle them in person.

Make 2014 the year you get to see the joy you’re giving cats from hopeless situations. Tabby’s Place is open 7 days a week from 12:00 – 5:00, and we (human and feline) would love to meet you. Check out directions to the sanctuary [here](#), and please feel free to [contact us](#) with have any questions.

Is a visit to central NJ not possible? Take a virtual getaway to Tabby’s Place with our [online video tour](#).

You’ve given our cats so much love, and we can’t wait to show you

what you’re making possible every day. –A.T.



[Morgan awaits you in the Tabby’s Place lobby](#)

Happy Endings: Sabrina

[Norma & Rick E., Adopters & Morgan Sponsors](#)

We were very fortunate to have Sabrina join our family on October 13, 2013. Sabrina has already brought us so much joy and happiness! She is truly a wonderful



[Sabrina snuggles up](#)

little girl!

Sabrina is slowly becoming friends with our other two cats, Henry and Kate. She has her own floor of our house, with her own litter box and food, although Kate routinely sneaks upstairs to help herself to both. Sabrina doesn't seem to mind sharing. She also comes downstairs to eat breakfast and dinner each day with Henry and Kate. So, she has privacy when she wants it, but she can come downstairs to join in the fun with Henry and Kate whenever she feels in the mood. Sabrina gets the full afternoon sun in her favorite room, and she loves to take a sun nap. She also likes to work on our computer!

This was Sabrina's first Christmas with us, and as you can see, she was not afraid of our

Christmas tree. She took turns with Henry and Kate guarding the tree and waiting for Santa!

We can't wait to visit Tabby's Place again, and we hope to see you all soon. We admire your wonderful facility and the incredible work all of you do!

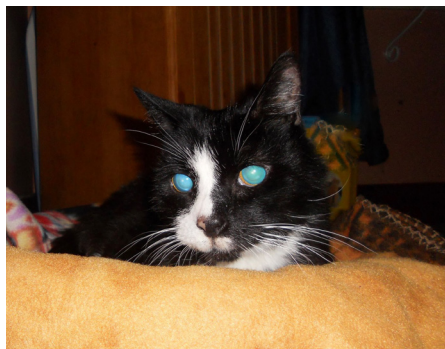


[Sabrina makes merry](#)

Where Are They Now? Levi

[Katie Tontala, Adopter](#)

You will glad to know that Levi is living the life of a prince here in Pittsburgh. His furry siblings accepted him without reservation, and you will often see him grooming their heads or laying quietly beside



[Levi](#)



[Levi enjoys a snack in his forever home](#)

them taking a nap. Levi has claimed the couch and clamors into the kitchen with all the others when its time for wet food. It's like he has been part of the family for years!

Levi loves to explore nooks and crannies and climb on the chairs to find the sunshine. But he has one favorite activity...and that, of course, is cuddling.

I have had many cats come and go, and although each one holds a

precious place in my heart, Levi has brought a magic that I have never experienced before. I have come to realize that Levi is that proverbial "ray of sunshine" personified.

With a calm and sweet presence, Levi gives his unbiased love to everyone he meets. Each time he crawls into someone's lap, I can see the transformation in their faces. The tenderness, happiness and love that Levi brings out in people is truly amazing.

With that in mind, he is embarking on a new adventure at the animal shelter where I volunteer. Levi has officially signed off to be a therapy cat...a Therapet! He will now have the chance to get even more cuddles and kisses, and he will bring his magic to the lives of so many who need it.

Thank you again for allowing Levi to be part of my life!

