

## New Beginnings: Heather

by Angela Townsend, Development Director



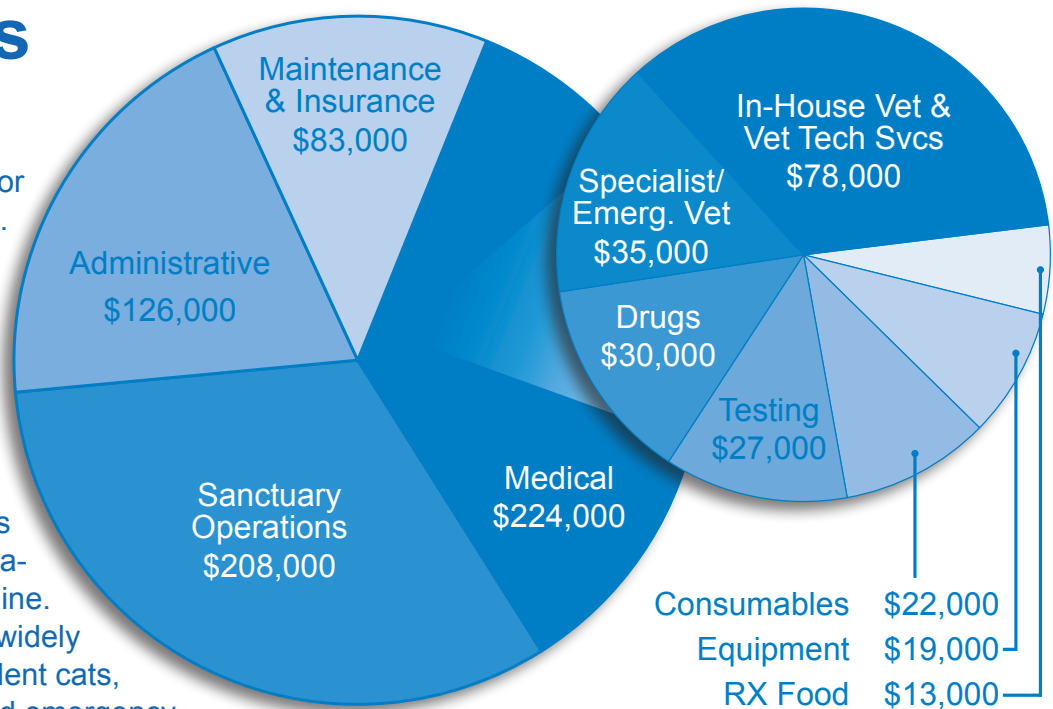
Anyone might be inclined to feel bad for Heather. Anyone, that is...except for Heather.

Sure, she only has 3 legs; sure, she was abandoned to the frigid streets in a Pennsylvania winter; and, sure, she had a mysterious brief case of diabetes. But this wonder-tortie loves her life, and she's not wasting an instant on self-pity. Since Heather was outdoors shortly before coming to Tabby's Place, she needs to undergo a longer quarantine period than the average cat. She's currently biding her time in our on-site hospital, where she loves chattering at visitors and showing off just how gracefully she can move on three legs. Although Heather had startlingly high blood glucose (BG) during her early days with us, suggesting that she might have diabetes, her BG is now normal, and she's eager to chirp and caper her way into a forever home of her own. Click [here](#) to check out Heather in action, as captured by devoted Tabby's Place volunteer JM.

## 2010 Cat Costs

by Jonathan Rosenberg,  
Founder & Executive Director

2010 was an excellent year for Tabby's Place in terms of finances. Compared to 2009, expenses decreased 2%, while donations increased 14%. For the second year in a row, we were able to cover our expenses entirely from donation income. The biggest savings came from the Administrative and Medical areas. Some of the medical savings came from our increased in-house capabilities, such as the x-ray machine. But, annual medical needs vary widely depending on the health of the resident cats, and luck played a role in our reduced emergency and specialist costs. The year-to-year variation in medical costs makes it crucial that we accumulate a monetary cushion, to accommodate large, unexpected costs. We were able to start a small, but meaningful, cushion for 2011. Administrative costs were shaved to 20%, which means that 80% of your donations go directly to the cats.



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# Letter of the Quarter

I wanted to email you about my visit to NJ. It was such a wonderful experience to visit Tabby's Place. ... Jonathan ... orchestrates such a loving sanctuary for these babies. They are fortunate to be there and get the TLC that they do. I pray you can always continue the unselfish acts of kindness .... God bless each and every one of you, and of course the babies as well.

Chance was the guy who really left paw prints on my heart. If I lived up there, I would have taken him home for his final days.

*Linda H., Florida*

I'm so happy to sponsor Edward and Lily! I have two rescue cats of my own, whom I love so much. They came from a feral cat colony in rural South Carolina that I am currently trying to TNR with the help of our Humane Society. My cats were kittens when I adopted them, and they now love living inside and being lap cats. They were infected with the feline herpes virus in the colony, so they have constant sniffles, and one of them has cerebellar hypoplasia (CH) like Edward. My kitty with CH is so spunky and confident, and she could care less that she is a little wobbly and uncoordinated.

I hate that some CH kitties like she and Edward are not given a chance to show that they can live happy, fulfilling lives .... I am so happy to support your cat rescue efforts at Tabby's Place! Thank you for everything you all do there!

*Catherine D., South Carolina*



Edward



# What's in a Meow?

by Angela Townsend

Stuart McMillan said "a meow massages the heart," and spending five minutes with a chatterbox like Hooper confirms it. But much as we all love meows, there's a bit of mystery around them.

- Cornell's Nicholas Nicastro did his Ph.D. thesis on human ability to understand meows. Nicastro recorded cats meowing in common situations, then presented these recordings to listeners. Amazingly, even people with pet cats could correctly classify only 41% of the meows, while those without cats could identify about 20%. It seems our cats must use a great deal of patience when communicating with us.



Hope communicates with us in many ways, not least of all the meow.



Hooper's chatty meow is almost as loud as his famous purr.

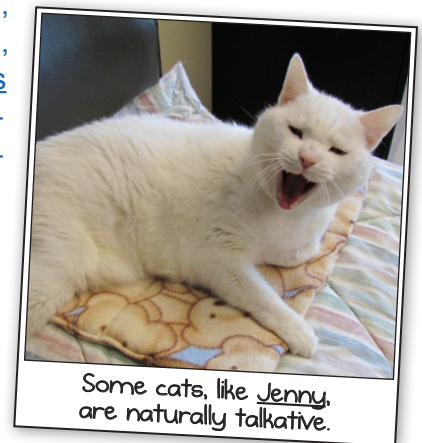
- Meows are rarely heard between cats, who apparently reserve meowing for communicating with humans. They will caterwaul when mating and chatter at prey, but find no need to meow among fellow felines.
- It is speculated that cats "talk" to us because we talk to them, and that they adapt the meow based on the sounds they hear from us. Some compare this to the way humans will talk more

loudly or slowly to help someone who doesn't understand their language, or who may seem a little "slow."

- Among cats living with humans, the meow is the 2nd most common vocalization after the purr.

- When a kitten is upset (e.g, separated from mama, trapped, or cold), he issues a distress call. This squeak also lets littermates know when they are playing too roughly.

- Meows are generally demands (albeit sometimes only for you to continue the "conversation"). As a cat becomes insistent, her meows lower in pitch and grow more strident.



Some cats, like Jenny, are naturally talkative.

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• Excess meowing may be cause for concern. A cat may meow more than usual due to deafness; Alzheimer's; stress or separation anxiety; thyroid, kidney or heart issues; or nausea. Excessive meowing may be also a sign that your cat feels hungry, thirsty, restless or irritable. A vet visit is warranted if your chatterbox cat becomes quiet, or your "silent type" begins meowing madly.

## Vox Optio Veterinarius

### When You "Just Don't Have Enough Time" For Your Cat

by Denise Jeffries, Senior Veterinary Technician

Extra time is hard to come by. But with a few easy steps, you can keep your cat entertained when you are unable to be with her:

1. Window perches enable your cat to enjoy the scenery.
2. Offer live catnip or cat grass for your kitty to chew. These plants are inexpensive and easy to care for.
3. Battery operated games like Fling-ama-string and Undercover Mouse can entertain your kitty for hours.
4. Provide mice, balls, crinkle or feather toys, or catnip-infused toys.



Like Kirk, your cat can amuse himself when given the proper tools...



...but nothing quite compares to the fun of getting to play with you.

5. Cardboard boxes or paper bags make for fun hiding places.
6. Scratching posts provide your cat with places to stretch and expend excess energy.
7. Outdoor enclosures come in a variety of sizes and allow your cat to safely enjoy nature.
8. If your cat is food motivated, provide toys that dispense cat food or treats as she plays with them.
9. Leave your radio on a talk station, or set your TV on animal/nature channels.

10. Cat condos offer places to hide, scratch and sleep while you're away.

Without taking much time and energy, you can enrich your cat's life through interactive play with wand toys, laser pointers and remote control toys, as well as a good snuggle session on the couch.

Although cats love our company, they are independent animals. Provided with the right tools, cats can keep themselves entertained while waiting for you to come home.

## Feline Infectious Peritonitis: A Confusing Name for a Confusing Disease

by Dr. Laura Collins, Veterinarian

Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP) is a confusing disease in two ways:

1. The name is non-descriptive, since the disease is not believed to be contagious and often does not cause peritonitis (inflammation of the abdominal membrane).
2. It has non-specific symptoms and no definitive test. This makes it extremely difficult to diagnose.

FIP is caused by the Feline Enteric Coronavirus (FECV). FECV is an extremely common virus, believed to infect 30% of household cats, and up to 90% of cattery\* cats. In the vast majority of cases, it is a benign virus, causing a brief bout of diarrhea.

But in approximately 5-10% of (usually immature) cats, FECV mutates and becomes FIP. Unfortunately, there is no test that can differentiate the benign from the fatal virus, so diagnosis is made on clinical signs.

There are two forms of FIP. The wet form causes fluid build-up in the abdomen and sometimes the chest.

These cats usually appear thin, but with distended abdomens. The dry form of FIP can affect any tissue, most commonly the eyes, kidneys, liver, gastrointestinal tract and central nervous system. Cats with the wet form usually succumb quickly to the disease, while cats



Tiny Marlee had a brief but courageous battle with FIP. We all miss her very much.

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with the dry form can live weeks, months, or rarely a few years.

Unfortunately, there is no effective treatment for FIP, which is ultimately fatal. Supportive care, treating the cat's symptoms, and good nutrition may help to prolong the cat's life.

Note that a cat with FIP can only transmit the non-mutated, benign form of the virus. This makes FIP itself non-transmissible among cats.

A vaccine for FECV exists, but is only approved for cats older than 4 months and is useless if a cat has already been infected with FECV, which is likely, as we have seen.

At Tabby's Place, we have had two residents who we suspect had FIP. [Pumpkin](#) and little [Marlee](#) each succumbed quickly to the disease, suggesting that they suffered from the wet form. Although FIP is always fatal, affected cats like Marlee and Pumpkin appreciate all the love and care they receive in the time they have with us.

*\*A cattery is any situation where multiple cats are housed together, e.g. a breeder.*

**Calling All Social Networkers!**  
Join the cats on [Facebook](#) and the [Tabby's Place blog](#) today.

## Golden Years: Caring For Your Aging Cat

by Angela Townsend

With old friends like 15-year-old [Mittens](#) and 16-year-old [Franny](#), we're sweet on seniors at Tabby's Place. We can serve our golden-aged loved ones well when we educate ourselves about how to meet their changing needs:

- According to the [AAFP](#) and [AAHA's Feline Life Stage Guidelines](#), a cat is properly considered "adult" from 3 - 6 years; "mature" from 7 - 10 years; "senior" from 11 - 14 years; and "geriatric" after age 15.
- Most cats have [some age-related physical changes](#) by age 12. Veterinarians [recommend](#) increasing your cat's vet visits to twice each year, starting around age 7, to catch treatable conditions.
- The most common age-related health issues involve a cat's [thyroid and kidneys](#). Your vet will also want to monitor your senior kitty for a [weakened immune system](#); dental disease (which may affect [up to 70%](#) of senior cats); hyperthyroidism; hypertension; and diabetes. Franny Syufy offers a [helpful list](#) of common senior diseases and early-warning signs.

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[Tashi](#) would be elated to help you fill this year with love.

New Year's Virtual Gift Basket



## Tabby's Place Online Gift Catalog

Next time a celebration sends you searching for the "perfect" gift, [think feline](#).

The Tabby's Place cats now have a one-of-a-kind [gift catalog](#) where you can find the most loving gift for your special occasion.

[Virtually adopt](#) a needy kitty like [Bialy](#) or [Tashi](#) for a loved one's birthday, or give the [New Year's Virtual Gift Basket](#) to ring in 2011.

For Valentine's Day, [Polly](#), [Boots](#) and all of our cats with heart disease hope you'll give the [Happy Heart Virtual Gift Basket](#) to your sweetie.

And, unlike a sweater or tie, your cat-centric gift is 100% tax-deductible, and can be delivered (via e-mail) within minutes of your order. To find out more and start helping homeless cats by shopping, [click here](#).



A gift sponsorship of little [Linda](#) is sweeter than any chocolate for your Valentine this year.



Celebrate 2011 with baby [Sesame](#) by donating the [New Year's Virtual Gift Basket](#).



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• Many conditions common to elderly cats increase urine production, so your senior will appreciate your changing the litter box more often. "Stinky" wet food can help keep her appetite strong even as her sense of smell may decrease.

• A recent study found that most senior cats have some degree of arthritis. Hard ledges, windowsills etc. may now be uncomfortable to your cat, who will appreciate your padding these areas with soft places to nestle.

• A cat's environmental needs begin to change after around age 7, making it important to provide easy accessibility to the litter box, bed, food etc. Older cats are also sensitive to changes in routine, and in need of special reassurance when it is disrupted.

• Many senior cats develop geriatric-onset behavior issues. The earlier you catch these cognitive changes, the more you can do to help your kitty thrive.

• Cats are masters at masking medical issues, so be alert to subtle changes, which may be signs of treatable health issues. The AAFP offers a checklist of key signs.

• As your beloved senior ages, begin weekly "mini physicals." In addition to daily brushing, feeding a high-quality food, and encouraging exercise, these routines can help you pinpoint problems before they become serious. The Cornell Feline Health Center offers guidelines.

Like us, our cherished cats need a bit of "extra" TLC as they age. It's a small price to pay for affection and lifelong love.



Tender care is helping Special Needs love-bug Nuttin to thrive into his golden years.



Despite several age-related conditions, Mr. Grey is every inch a 'super senior' at Tabby's Place.



As our oldest cat at the moment, Mittens is the epitome of everything a happy, well-loved senior can be.

# Forever Loved: Desi

by Ginny Carhart, Administrative Assistant

I didn't know how to start this. It is with a very heavy heart that I do.

Desi was always one of the most precious cats to me. Don't get me wrong, I love them all; but once in a while, there is a certain cat that tugs just a little bit more. When Desi first came to Tabby's Place, I thought he looked like an owl with his wide

eyes. I also noticed that, if you looked quickly at Desi's nose, it looked like the Mickey Mouse icon. There was just something about Desi that made me visit him often.

When it became clear that Desi was losing weight and feeling poorly, we found out that he had stomatitis. Of course, all the Tabby's Place cats get the best of care, so after trying several things, I took him to The University of Pennsylvania. They worked their magic, and Desi flourished, toothless and happy, for the next few years at Tabby's Place.

Earlier this year Desi was diagnosed with renal failure. I usually do midday rounds at the sanctuary, and I gave Desi subcutaneous fluids every day. He didn't like it, but he would still purr in my lap. When I found out that there was nothing more we could do for Desi's quality of life, I felt my world come crashing down. When it was time to say goodbye, we all gathered around, and I held him for his

last breath. I know he was passing over the Bridge to a happier place, where he was feeling much better. I still think of him often, and I have Desi's picture hanging on my desk. So many people loved Desi, and he will always remain in my heart.



Desi



Desi left no heart untouched at Tabby's Place, where we will always miss and cherish him.

Interested in Volunteering at Tabby's Place?

Go to: [www.tabbysplace.org/volunteer.html](http://www.tabbysplace.org/volunteer.html)



# Happy Endings: Bellis

by Cindi Parker, Adopter

Ever since I adopted my sweet diabetic "Sugar Cat," Malcolm, from Tabby's Place four years ago, I have sponsored the Special Needs cats. The first two cats I sponsored were adopted, and little blind Bellis was my third.

From the first time I saw her sweet little face I was in love. Every month, when I received Bellis' update, I couldn't believe such a sweet, adorable girl had not yet found her forever family. I told Bellis' correspondent how much I wished I could be her forever home. Finally, everything fell into place, and my wonderful husband agreed to let me adopt Bellis.



Bellis loves her new siblings in her forever home.

Bellis easily figured out her new home and quickly made several new friends. She now spends most of her time with her feline friends Maggie and Happy. The three girls love to sleep together on my reading chair, especially if I turn on the electric blanket. I spend a lot of time reading there with all three of them on my lap.

Bellis also loves to play! Her favorite toy is jingle feathers. I swish the feathers back and forth and she follows them with her head. If you didn't know Bellis was blind, you would think she was looking at them. She is also truly fearless. She has no problem running up to my chair and taking a flying jump up onto my lap.

Bellis enjoys a tight squeeze with some of her new BFFs.



Bellis enjoys a tight squeeze with some of her new BFFs.



Bellis is having a ball with her adoring new family.

# Where are they now? Paprika

by Ginger Lavdas, Adopter

I never knew there was a color of cat called "tortoiseshell" until the day we met Paprika. We'd come to Tabby's Place after losing our cat Misty to kidney failure. Misty and her sister Lucy had been with us for over 10 years, and all of us - human and feline alike - were grieving. We needed a new love for our lives, not to replace Misty, but to put her own imprint on our family. Once Paprika came up to us, she captured our hearts.



Paprika, blessed by sunshine and love in her forever home.

She's been with us 16 months now, and transformed our home with her love-bug personality. Not only did she lift the spirits of her new humans, but Paprika brought Lucy out of her depression as well. A "Rubenesque" 18 pounds when she came, Paprika is now runaway-model slim at 10½ pounds. She and Lucy have bonded, and are often found sleeping together. The sound of Paprika's yowl and the sight of the tip of her pink tongue peeking out when she wants food never fail to bring us joy, and usually result in a big hug and many kisses for our precious girl.

When we first arrived at Tabby's Place that fateful day, we saw Paprika's picture in an article of the Tabby's Place newsletter, titled "New Beginnings." I remember thinking how adorable she looked, and hoping she would find a loving home. I still have that newsletter in her adoption packet. That article reads, "With her jolly personality, angelic face and zestful love for both people and other cats, we hope Paprika is soon bound to be the spice of a forever family's life." Hope realized: Paprika is indeed the joy and spice of our lives, and she has most certainly found her forever home.

## TABBY'S PLACE NEWSLETTER

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