



New Beginnings: Cisco

Angela Townsend, Development Director

“Should I just put this one down right now?”

Those were the words from the first veterinarian who examined Cisco. You can't blame her, either; the weak old tabby was in terrible shape. As one of the oldest survivors from a horrific hoarding situation, Cisco was emaciated, ravaged with ringworm, and FIV+. Would a cat like that ever find a home?

You bet he would. Together with twelve other cats rescued from that tiny apartment, Cisco found a haven at Tabby's Place.

When our skinny old boy came to us, he was understandably angry. But once he realized that food and love were unlimited here, Cisco began to settle in. Our staff bathed him and treated his ringworm, and Cisco began packing on much-needed pounds.

Today, Cisco is still a bit of a curmudgeon, but he's happy – and he's well on his way to restored health. Thank you for helping to make Cisco's future bright enough to outshine his painful past.

You can support Cisco's recovery by clicking [here](#) to sponsor him.



Cisco

Ask the Behaviorist

Bust Behavior Myths

Nancy Meyer, Feline Behavioral Consultant, [Adopter](#), [Benefactor](#) & [Volunteer](#)

This holiday season, you can give your cat the greatest gift of all: respect and understanding. Do this by avoiding common myths about feline behavior:

- **“Belly up” is an invitation for a belly rub:** This is a very vulnerable



Grace isn't meowing for food – she just wants attention

position for a cat in the wild. Severe injuries can occur if a cat gets flipped on his back during a fight. When you walk past your cat and she flips on her back, she is saying, “I feel safe, and I trust you.” Take this as the highest compliment a cat can bestow, but resist the temptation to touch that tender belly – doing so would be a betrayal of her trust.

- **A swishing tail means “I'm happy to see you:”** Your cat is highly stimulated by something in the environment. It could be a bird in the yard...or your hand while you are petting your cat. It is never a good idea to pet a cat exhibiting this behavior. Most importantly, if you are petting your cat, stop when she starts swishing her tail.
- **Cats do bad things out of spite:**

Cats do not share our sense of right and wrong. A cat who is house soiling is under physical or emotional stress. Schedule a vet visit, and assess the environment for potential sources of your cat's stress.

- **A meowing cat is a hungry cat:** Human social gatherings tend to focus around food. Cats, however, eat to survive. Next time your cat meows at you, hold the treats and instead shower your cat with attention!

Take the time to understand your cat's behavior, and you'll share a bond that blooms long after the holidays.

RECOMMENDED READING:

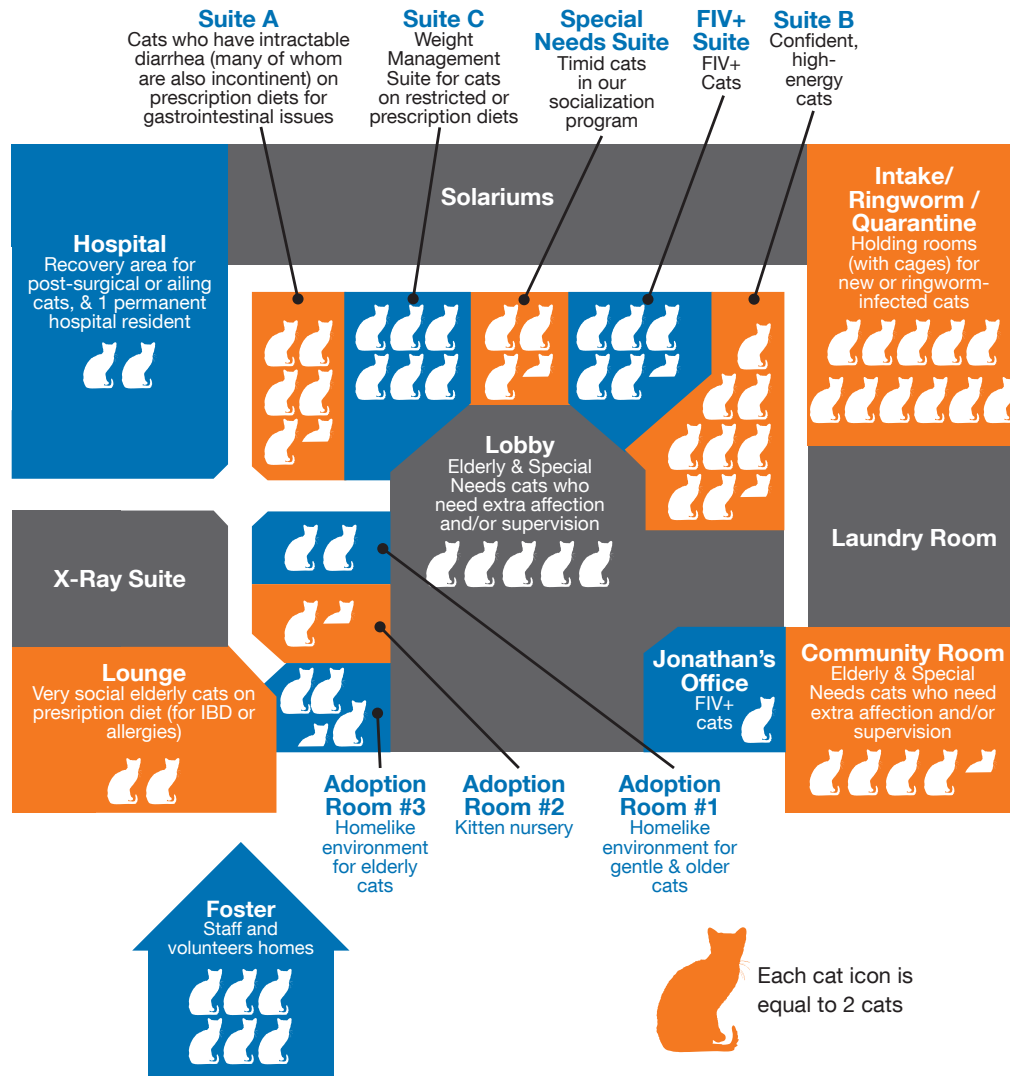
- Mikkel Becker, [5 Keys to Decoding Your Cat's Body Language](#)
- Adriane Bishko, [What Your Cat's Body Language Is Saying](#)
- Bruce Fogle, [If Your Cat Could Talk](#)
- Humane Society of the United States, [Cat Chat: Understanding Feline Language](#)
- Pam Johnson-Bennett, [Think Like a Cat](#)

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The Geography of Tabby's Place

Where in the sanctuary do we keep (up to) 135 cats? It all depends on their personalities and needs.

At Tabby's Place, each room develops its own "vibe." If you've never had a chance to visit Tabby's Place, you can virtually visit by clicking [here](#). Meantime, here's the breakdown of where our residents live:



Our largest suites all have adjoining enclosed outdoor areas, and **Carrot** especially delights in solarium sunshine



Wilbur is one of the biggest personalities in Suite B

All totals as of 9/29/2016

Give Joy, Save Lives

Your chance is here to pre-order the happiest holiday gift of the year. When you give a gift sponsorship of a Special Needs kitty – like **Cisco** or **Faye** – you'll make this a joyful winter for a lucky cat and your loved one.

Your recipient will get a beautiful printed card and photo of the cat you choose, plus updates and pictures of their kitty every month. And, you'll be helping to nurture a cat who truly needs you.

If you'd like, we can even send the card and photo to you to wrap and hand-deliver. Let our cats be your holiday elves this year – please sponsor a cat. Questions about sponsorship? Please contact Angela at at@tabbysplace.org or 908-237-5300 ext 235. – A.T.



← Your sponsorship of **Felix** (or any of our Special Needs cats) will make the holidays happy for at least two species

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What Kind of Cat is That?

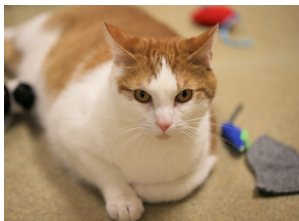
Most likely, your cat is a marvelous mutt. But don't let that diminish your pride in her beauty. Do you know the official name for your cat's cool coloring? Let Tabby's Place cats, past and present, help demonstrate:



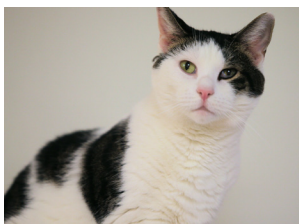
Solid Black, red or their dilute (lighter) versions, "blue" (grey) and cream
← [Iman](#)



White Even pure white cats are another color under their white "pajamas;" the gene that results in a white cat masks the cat's true color. Any spot of color on a white cat's head or tail will tell you her true color
← [Ali](#)



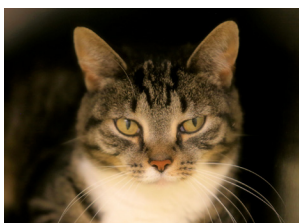
Bicolor Mostly white with patches of color on his head/body
← [Carrot](#)



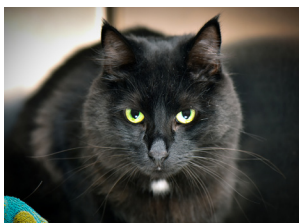
Harlequin Primarily white with large splashes of color
← [Leila](#)



Van Mostly white, with color only on his head and tail
← [Casper](#)



Mitted Any color, with white on chin, chest, feet and tummy
← [Dolce](#)



Locket Solid, with small white dot on his chest
← [Gumby](#)



Tuxedo Solid, with white paws and bib
← [Padme](#)



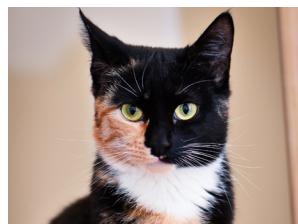
Mackerel Tabby "Tiger" with stripes from her back to her belly, like a fish skeleton
← [Smitten](#)



Classic Tabby "Tiger" with swirled patterns resembling a marble cake
← [Miriam](#)



Ticked/Agouti/Abys-sinian Tabby Doesn't appear to have stripes, thanks to a gene that masks them. Every hair on his body has distinct bands of color, which gives him a "salt and pepper" look
← [Rusty](#)



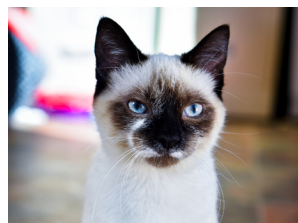
Tortoiseshell Random-ized distribution of red, black and cream patches; also comes in "dilute," with cream, pale "blue"/grey and white patches
← [Tortini](#)



Calico Tortoiseshell with large white patches; also comes in "dilute"
← [Piddy](#)



Torbie Tortoiseshell with tabby patterns interwoven with tricolor patches
← [Raja](#)



Pointed Light-colored, with darker shading on nose, ears, tail and paws
← [Tanzy](#)

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Dodge the Winter Doldrums

With an ever-changing cast of characters and visits from volunteers and visitors (like you!), life for the Tabby's Place cats is never dull. But with steady rhythms and routines, our cats at home may be at risk of boredom. How can we keep our kitties content when we're away during the day?

- **Recognize the signs of boredom:**

If your cat is "acting out" – say, knocking things off shelves, meowing like mad or pouncing on your feet – she may simply be under-stimulated. Indoor cats need enrichment to stay happy, healthy and out of "trouble."

- **Provide a treasure hunt:** It's no myth that cats are curious. Give your kitty an outlet for exploration by "hiding" surprises around your home. Paper bags (with the handles cut off) and cat condos provide nooks and crannies to investigate, and treats and toys in unexpected places encourage exploration.

- **Make foraging fun:** Cats (like humans) often overeat out of bore-

dom. Satisfy your cat's munchies and her curiosity by placing treats inside puzzle-like toys that require her to "work" for her reward. Such toys are available for purchase, or you can make your own with such basic supplies as cardboard toilet paper rolls or plastic food containers. Click [here](#) for great ideas of make-your-own toys.

- **Trade those toys:** Your cat may love her toys, but if the same mice and jingle balls sit out every day, they'll lose their excitement. After all, what kind of prey would wait placidly in the same place? Keep a rotating supply of toys, and each morning, leave out a different selection for your cat (and "hide" a few in her nooks and crannies). This will help satisfy her natural hunting instinct.

- **Supply sights and sounds:** If at all possible, give your cat a (literal) window to the world. Place her favorite perch near a window that looks out on wildlife or human passersby.

- **Look skyward:** Especially if you



[Parker](#) and his friends in our Kitten Room enjoy lots of stimulation from interactive [playtime](#)

live in a small home, vertical space can be a big blessing to your cat. Shelves, cat trees, or kitty stairs can offer your cat the opportunity to climb, play and take refuge from your other cats.

With a few simple and inexpensive steps, you can be there for your cat – in the form of fun and enrichment – even when you're not home.

– A.T.

RECOMMENDED READING:

- [Cat Enrichment](#), Best Friends Animal Society
- [What Is Environmental Enrichment and Why Does Your Cat Need It?](#), Pam Johnson-Bennett
- Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine's [Indoor Cat Initiative](#)
- [Entertainment for Cats](#), Jennifer Sellers of Petfinder
- [How to Avoid Kitty Boredom](#), W.R. Shaw of Petfinder

Forever Loved: Toya

Jonathan Rosenberg, Founder & Executive Director

Toya arrived at Tabby's Place in January 2004. She was a large, robust calico who could kick some serious butt. Our employees are brave, but we used to draw straws to see who would clean Toya's cage during her quarantine period. She was that scary.



[Toya](#) delighted in her golden Lobby years at Tabby's Place

Amazingly, after five years with us, at age ten, Toya was adopted by a kind older woman. Toya had mellowed some, but she was still a "handful." We were elated for Toya and her adopter, and they lived together happily for a year.

Then, suddenly, Toya's owner died. We welcomed her back, of course. In her time with her adopter, Toya had become a sweet old lady. We installed her in the Lobby, where she was the perfect house guest: clean, polite and quiet.

Over the years, Toya became a favorite of employees, volunteers and visitors. She was always up for a nice brushing or petting.



[Toya](#)

Then we noticed that Toya was losing weight. There was also the occasional blood in her stool. Diagnostics showed a tumor wrapped around her colon. Fortunately, the tumor appeared operable, and Toya was otherwise in good health.

But, appearances can be deceiving, and the surgeon could not resect¹ the tumor. Toya came home to Tabby's Place, and we hoped for

[continues on the next page](#)

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the best.

Sadly, the best was not much. She declined quickly. We watched her carefully, and when we saw the time for suffering was near, we knew

we had to let her go.

I've been through this many times, but this loss was particularly hard for me. Toya's composure during her last few minutes was heart-rending. She looked around at the

people who had gathered to say goodbye, making contact with each of us. She then lay down gently.

I still see Toya every time I walk through the Lobby.

¹Resect: cut out (tissue or part of an organ).

TNR: What Comes Next?

Dr. Laura Collins, Veterinarian

In our [last newsletter](#), we discussed trap-neuter-vaccinate and return (TNR). But what happens once feral cats return to their colonies? It all depends on the colony caretaker.

Being a good caretaker means making the cats' outdoor life as safe and comfortable as possible. This largely comes down to two main areas: shelter and food.

Shelter from the elements :

- Some caretakers (including me) can leave a garage open at all times, so the cats can go in and out at will.
- Inside the garage, or outside where the cats tend to congregate, provide a smaller shelter. [Ready-made and do-it-yourself options abound.](#)
- If the cats' shelter is near an electrical outlet, they will appreciate a [heated platform](#) that stays slightly warm all winter.
- The best insulation material, whether the shelter is heated or not, is straw. Unlike blankets or towels (which are not recommended), straw will dry quickly if it gets wet in the rain.
- Outdoor shelters should be painted in dark colors to camouflage them, and placed in areas where they will be less noticeable to predators and unfriendly people.
- The entrance to the shelter should be small, about 6 to 8 inches, to discourage larger predators from entering, and to keep the heat trapped inside. You can also provide a flap that will close once a cat enters, to trap the heat more

effectively. If using a flap, keep it propped open until you are sure the cats are familiar with and using the shelter, so as not to discourage them initially.

- It may take some time for the cats to discover their shelter, and putting catnip or food inside it may be helpful.

Daily feeding:

- Cats are naturally excellent hunters, but prey can be scarce, particularly in the winter.
- Feed the cats once or twice daily, at the same time every day, so the cats know when to show up. They will quickly learn the sights and sounds surrounding feeding time.
- The food should not be left out all the time. Clean up after feeding time to discourage predators, and to make the feeding station less noticeable to ill-disposed humans.

Those of us with a soft spot for our feral friends enjoy seeing them basking in the sunlight, or cozying up in their warm shelters. It is a small



Tabby's Place cats like [Mango](#) enjoy heated "dogloos," which are also excellent options for feral cat colonies

amount of effort on our part to transform their difficult lives into happy and healthy ones. My oldest feral cat was over eighteen when he passed away, and even though he never let me pet him, I still miss him.



Feral cats like [Zola](#) depend on loving caretakers - and Zola's happens to be Dr. Collins

Share This, Save Cats

Did you know that one of the easiest ways you can help our cats is to [share this newsletter](#)? Our cats are always in need of new friends – your friends. If your loved ones love cats as much as you do, please share our kitties with them [here](#). Thank you for being our kitties' BFFs!



Jessy hopes you'll share our cats' stories with your friends

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Happy Endings: Dwayne

We've met a lot of weird, wonderful cats at Tabby's Place. But we'd never, ever met anyone like Dwayne.

From the moment he landed at Tabby's Place, FIV+ Dwayne seemed to have come from another planet.



We couldn't be happier for wacky, wonderful Dwayne

His meow made him sound like a cross between Bea Arthur and a bullfrog. His wild, brown-tinged grey hair gave him a finger-in-the-electric-socket appearance.

And then there was Dwayne's tongue. He seemed incapable of keeping it in his mouth, which caused him to slobber food everywhere, and to somehow make himself look even sloppier when he attempted to groom himself. This quirk was due to an odd but harmless partial facial paralysis.

Despite all his oddities, Dwayne was a delight from the day he arrived. A constant chatterbox, he rejoiced in human affection, and we hoped someone would see through



Dwayne

his strangeness to love him just the way he is.

That someone came along as summer turned to autumn. Today, Dwayne is loving life in his dreamy forever home.

We're so grateful for Dwayne's new family. Thank you for seeing the beauty in our quirky champ! – A.T.

Where Are They Now: Dobro & Gorgonzola

If you've read this newsletter through the years, you've seen the stunning faces of Dobro and Gorgonzola. But massive Dobro and his best girl Zola aren't just two of our most beautiful cats...they're also two of our longest-time residents.

Or at least, they were.

To be honest, we'd come to think that Zola and Dobro would be "lifers" at Tabby's Place. That was OK; they were happy, and we were happy to love them. But, most adopters aren't looking for a feral cat. Years of patient socialization had no impact on Dobro and Zola's



Zola greets her family from her safe, happy outdoor home

desire to flee from human touch – and, in Dobro's case, to bite any hand that tried to feed him. Hard.

But how did two feral cats end up at Tabby's Place, anyway? As discussed in Dr. C's article last quarter, when we conduct TNR, sometimes it's not in a cat's best interest to return to an outdoor colony. Dobro first came to us with life-threatening injuries (most likely due to being hit by a car). Zola, meanwhile, was nursing a litter of kittens.

Over the years, Zola and Dobro became inseparable. Adopters seeking a single barn cat didn't want to split such a bonded pair, and so our adorable, untouchable Dobro and Gorgonzola stayed together at Tabby's Place.

We loved them as they were, and we loved taking photos of these exquisite cats. We'd love them all their lives if they needed us.

But this summer, Dobro and Zola finally found their way to a forever home – and we couldn't have dreamed of a better choice.

None other than our own veterinarian, Dr. Collins, has adopted our



Dobro and Zola were always at ease with each other...but not so much with us

fabulous, fractious pair. Dr. C has a safe and inviting outdoor environment for her feral cats, and Dobro and Zola are flourishing. Roly-poly Dobro and big-eyed Zola show up faithfully each day for their meals.

As befits their long history of glamour shots at Tabby's Place, Zola and Dobro continue to cooperate for the camera. Dr. C's husband, a gifted photographer, took these photos of Zola.

Every cat is different, so "the perfect forever home" is slightly different for each one. We couldn't be happier that Dobro and Gorgonzola have found their meant-to-be life of love. – A.T.

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