



New Beginnings: Bear

Angela Hartley, Development Director

With her delicate frame and sweet stripes, she may not look like her namesake, but our new old girl is certainly as cuddly as a teddy bear.

For the first fifteen years of her life, Bear knew the blessings of a



Bear

cozy home and a cherished “mom.” But Bear’s world fell apart in slow motion as her owner disappeared into dementia. Through it all, Bear was devoted to her mom, sleeping on her bed each night. It soon became clear that Bear’s mom needed a higher level of care than her little cat could give. But who would care for Bear? At fifteen years of age, with high blood pressure and infected with FIV, Bear was a poor candidate for most shelters.

Happily, safe havens awaited both Bear and her owner. Bear’s mom went to an assisted living facility, and a happy series of circumstances led Bear to Tabby’s Place. Thanks to your generosity, we are able to embrace cats regardless of age or most medical issues, so Bear’s Special Needs were not a



Bear loves living in Jonathan's office

show-stopper. Today, Bear is thriving in what is arguably the sweetest spot in the sanctuary: Founder & Executive Director Jonathan’s office, which Bear shares with bashful Sherbet.

Are you moved to care for cats like Bear? Please click here to sponsor our Special Needs cats. Thank you for your love!

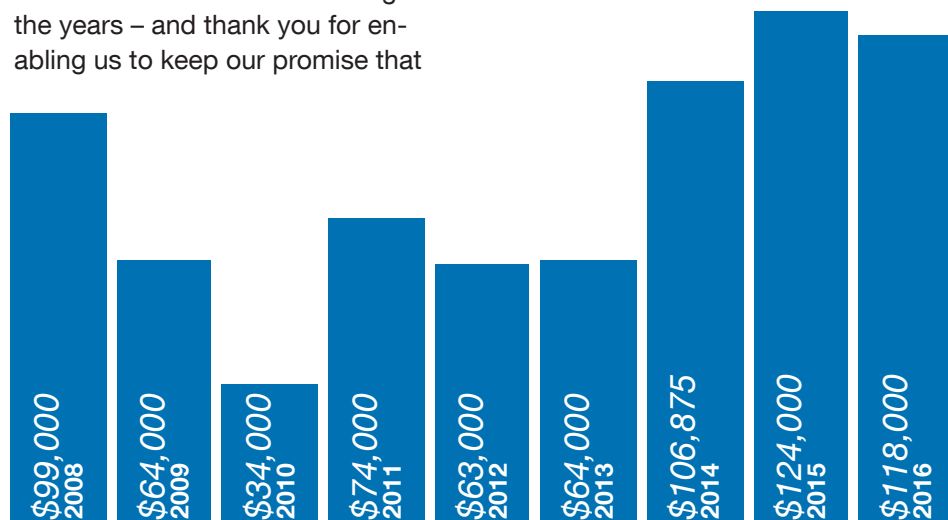
The Linda Fund

Year after year, you make it possible for Tabby’s Place to protect the true “undercats.” Our unique role in the animal rescue universe is to save those cats who, frankly, no one else wants or can handle. Accordingly, we embrace our role as the haven for the most “broken” cats.

Given our kitties’ huge needs, we make extensive use of emergency and specialty care. As you can imagine, this is costly – but it means the difference between death and life, suffering and thriving, for cats like little Linda, a kitten who came to us with devastating burns on her legs. In Linda’s honor, we established the Linda Fund, which raises

money for our cats’ emergency and specialty medical expenses. Check out our Linda Fund costs through the years – and thank you for enabling us to keep our promise that

each cat will always receive the care she needs to thrive, whatever the cost. – A.H.



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Can I Handle a Special Needs Cat?

If you've ever adopted a cat from Tabby's Place, you've encountered this question on the adoption application.

Are you willing to consider a cat with Special Needs? Yes/No/Maybe

What rolls through your mind when you read this question? Do you think you lack the time or financial resources for such a cat? Do you worry about having your heart broken by "goodbye" too soon? Or do you wonder, "what does 'Special Needs' mean, exactly?"

That's a fair question. Depending on who you ask, "Special Needs" can encompass anything from missing an eye to paraplegia to end-stage cancer. So, before you're sure a Special Needs cat is not for you, consider the following:

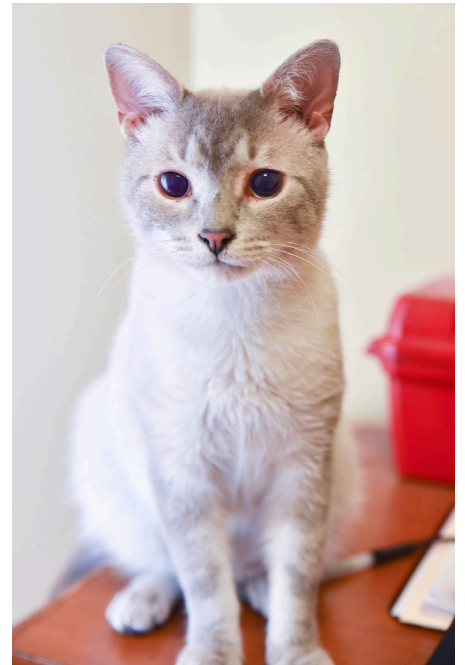
- **What's the need?** Many "Special Needs" require no extra care whatsoever. A cat missing an eye or a leg may look quirky, but she won't require anything more than a "normal" cat does in terms of care. Most FIV+ cats require no medication or special care other than prompt treatment for infections. Even blind cats generally require no additional medical treatment or special daily care.
- **What's the cost?** You're wise to consider your budget when considering future family members. A prescription diet for IBD or allergies may add a modest cost each month, while insulin and associated supplies for a diabetic cat can run several hundred dollars or more in a year. A cat with a condition prone to acute issues may need one or more visits to the emergency vet in a year.
- **What's the daily schedule?** Are you out of the home for ten hours a day? Some cats require a tighter schedule. That's no problem in many cases, but some Special

Needs require a tighter schedule. Cats with FLUTD do best on exclusively wet food, which means you'll need to be home (or have a cat sitter) at least twice a day. Diabetic cats require a reliable daily schedule for insulin and meals.

- **What's the prognosis?** Be honest with yourself. Are you willing to take on the soaring joy and crushing heartache of a cat who may be with you only a few months or years? There are few things more rewarding than helping a hospice-level cat live out her life in love and peace, but you need to know your own heart. On the other hand, are you committed for a marathon of hands-on care for a cat with a chronic condition? Cats with kidney disease or diabetes can thrive for many years, so long as you are faithful in providing intensive daily care.

Loving a Special Needs cat is one of the most joyful, heart-expanding experiences of a lifetime. Once you open your home to such a courageous kitty, don't be surprised if you find yourself "addicted" to doing so again and again.

Not presently in a position to adopt a Special Needs cat? You can still "virtually adopt" such a special kitty as a [monthly sponsor](#). Click [here](#) to learn more. – A.H.



Sidewinder's Special Need, blindness, didn't slow him down at all -- nor did it stop him from getting adopted quickly



Rogue's FIV is a Special Need that requires very little extra care



With diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease and cancer, sweet Meatball is a bundle of high-maintenance Special Needs -- and we're grateful for the honor of caring for him

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Is My Senior Cat Going Crazy? Part I

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

Is your senior cat going crazy? It's not likely...but she could have Cognitive Dysfunction Syndrome (CDS).

Age-related changes in a cat's brain and nervous system can cause various behavioral issues. Some of the more common signs can be represented by the acronym DISHA:

- **Disorientation:** "Where am I?" Despite living in her home for years, your cat seems to be getting lost.
- **Altered Interactions:** If your cat was somewhat independent, she might constantly seek your attention; a friendly cat may become withdrawn. These new behaviors can also be directed towards other pets.
- **Altered Sleep-wake cycles:** A night owl now sleeps the night away, or a once sound sleeper



Some senior cats, like [Chloe](#), play like kittens, but it's still important to keep close tabs on any changes in their behavior



At age 15, [Max](#) is experiencing both cognitive and physical changes, so we monitor him especially closely

now wanders and vocalizes during the night.

- **House soiling:** This can involve urine and/or feces. When younger cats experience house soiling, there tends to be some pattern to it. Many times there is a location or substrate preference. Not so with CDS; with seniors, this behavior often is random and "makes no sense."
- **Altered Activity levels:** Laid-back cats can become more energetic, while active cats can become lethargic.

Although these symptoms can be just part of aging, it's very important to rule out other causes rather than simply accepting them. Many diseases, such as hyperthyroidism, diabetes and kidney dysfunction, share some of the signs of CDS, so a vet visit is imperative. Through lab testing and taking a behavior history, your vet will determine the proper treatment plan.

In Part II of this article next quarter, we will explore how changes in your home environment can help your cat cope with CDS.



Your company can help care for cats like lovely [Luna](#)

CALLING ALL COOL COMPANIES

Do you own or work for a business with a big heart?

Would you like to make a splash for Special Needs cats this spring?

Tabby's Place is looking for fabulous companies to serve as our Linda Fund Corporate Sponsors. By donating \$250 or more to the Linda Fund, your company can catch the eyes – and hearts – of a compassionate community of cat lovers. Sponsorship entitles your business to promotional opportunities in our newsletter, website and social media.

Of course, the greatest "perk" of sponsoring the Linda Fund is the guarantee of lives saved and loved. In just this past year, Linda Fund beneficiaries have included tiny [Grace](#), a kitten crushed in a garbage truck; and gentle [Sam](#), a long-haired love bug with cancer.

Please consider being a corporate hero this spring. For more information about Corporate Sponsorships of the Linda Fund, please contact Angela at at@tabbysplace.org or 908-237- 5300 ext 235.

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Linda Fund Case Study: Puzzle

Dr. Laura Collins, Veterinarian

Executive Director's Note: With an in-house medical facility and an exceptional medical team, Tabby's Place provides the bulk of hours spent on medical care for our feline residents. But, it is not uncommon for them to run into situations outside of their capabilities, in terms of experience, skill or equipment.

As you know, good medical care is expensive and outpaces inflation. The Linda Fund provides an endowment of sorts, allowing us to pay for external, specialty medical care when necessary. This fund is essential to our mission of "saving cats from hopeless situations."

The case study of Puzzle is a recent example of an apparently simple case that required the use of Internal Medicine and Oncologist veterinarians, relying on the Linda Fund. – J.R.



Puzzle

Puzzle is a timid but personable cat who came to Tabby's Place in 2008. He was adopted in 2009, but returned when his owner passed away in 2016. He acclimated well to being back here and was healthy until March, 2017.

At that point, we noticed Puzzle was losing weight despite a good appetite. There was one episode of vomiting in February, and some gagging noted in March, but aside from that, he appeared healthy. We placed him on a short course of anti-nausea medication in February. Physical examination, blood tests, urine sample and X-rays were all normal in March. An abdominal in April showed one focal¹ area of mild bowel thickening. We started Puzzle on a hypoallergenic diet and dewormed him in case of an undiagnosed parasite.

By the end of April, Puzzle had lost three pounds. We decided it was time to take him to the specialty hospital for a thorough work-up.

Puzzle had an abdominal exploratory surgery, in which several areas of his small intestine were biopsied, including one area where the small intestine was grossly thickened². Puzzle's biopsy revealed small cell, low grade *epitheliotropic lymphoma*³. Lymphoma is the most common cancer in cats, although Puzzle's type of

lymphoma is unusual. Unlike most tumors, gastrointestinal lymphoma frequently does not have an obvious enlarged mass. The cancer cells are more diffusely throughout the gastrointestinal tract, and cause the cat to be unable to absorb nutrients from the food he is eating. Poor Puzzle was eating normally but not getting the nutrition that he needed from his food, resulting in weight loss.

Puzzle is now on daily medications including prednisolone (a steroid) and leukeran (chemotherapy), and his weight has stabilized. He is still not the overweight cat he was when he first returned to us, but he is at a healthy weight, with a good appetite and comfort level. We will be tapering his medication as his weight continues to improve, although he will be on medication for the rest of his life.

We are grateful that we have the ability to provide the highest quality of care for cats like Puzzle. When a cat comes to Tabby's Place, we make him the promise that he will always get what he needs to thrive, regardless of the cost. For Puzzle, this was a life-saving promise. Thank you for making it possible through your generosity.

Plan For Your Cat's Future

You've always been there for your cat. Your devotion goes "til death do you part." But sometimes, you find yourself worrying what would happen to her if you should leave this earth first.

We've had the same worries at Tabby's Place, which is why we created the Guardian Angel Program. Through this special offering, you can plan for your cats

to come to Tabby's Place if you should predecease them. There is no fee due unless your kitties actually come to us, and you can rest easy knowing there will always be a safe haven for your feline family.

Click [here](#) to learn more, or contact Angela at at@tabbysplace.org or 908-237-5300 ext 235. Your cats will be blessed by your compassion that outlives a lifetime.

¹In a specific, localized area

²Visible to the naked eye

³A specific, uncommon type of lymphoma. It is a term based on a microscopic diagnosis, which refers to the characteristic homing of neoplastic T cells to the mucosal epithelium of the intestinal tract.

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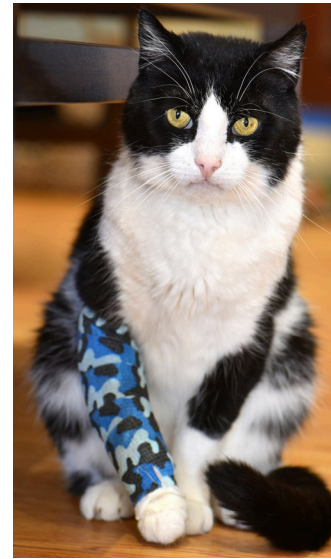
Is My Cat In Pain?

Nothing hurts more than seeing your loved ones suffer. But the cats we adore can't always tell us when they're hurting. Subtle and stoic, our feline family members count on us to know the signs of suffering and act accordingly.

Concerned that your cat may be hurting? Consider these symptoms, identified by the University of Lincoln (UK) as "sufficient" signs indicating that a cat is in pain:

- Not grooming
- Lameness
- Difficulty jumping
- Abnormal gait
- Reluctance to move
- Reaction to palpation
- Hiding
- Playing less
- Decreased appetite
- Decreased overall activity
- Less rubbing on people
- Change in overall mood
- Change in general temperament
- Hunched posture
- Shifting of weight
- Licking a particular part of her body
- Lowered head
- Involuntary blinking or eyelid spasm
- Change in feeding behavior
- Avoiding brightly-lit areas
- Growling
- Groaning
- Keeping her eyes closed
- Straining to urinate
- Tail twitching

You are always the best judge of your cat's normal, happy, healthy behavior, and any sudden change is cause for concern. When in doubt, contact your vet right away; your beloved cat counts on you to read her subtle signs. – A.H.



←
Trey's 'ouch' is obvious, but most cats are all too skilled at hiding pain

RECOMMENDED READING:

- Elizabeth Allen, [New research reveals 25 signs your cat could be in pain](#)
- Jennifer Coates, [How to Know When a Cat is Hurting](#)
- Carla Herreria, [25 Signs Your Cat Is Actually In Pain. According To Science](#)
- Pam Johnson-Bennett, [10 Signs That Your Cat may be in Pain](#)

Forever Loved: Raja

Jonathan Rosenberg, Founder & Executive Director

When Raja came to Tabby's Place from a shelter in 2008, she was an emaciated torbie with chronic diarrhea. Unable to absorb nutrients, Raja was so fragile we feared she wouldn't survive for long.

I recall sitting in front of Raja's cage in the Quarantine wing, petting her and coaxing her to eat. In one of her greatest medical miracles to date, our supervising vet, Dr. Collins, diagnosed Raja with Inflammatory Bowel Disease and turned her from



Raja loved nothing more than wrapping herself in a blanket and snoring the afternoon away

an emaciated feline to a...well, a decidedly Rubenesque feline.

That girl was seriously plump and just as happy. She lived in the Lounge, spending most of her time sleeping, wrapped in multiple layers of blankets. Despite the thickness of her bedding, she snored like a truck driver, which had us in stitches during lunch.

And although she had the get-up-and-go of a sloth, Raja would get a burst of energy once each day and zip around the room like Sonic the Hedgehog. It was a sight to behold. Just as suddenly, she would wrap herself up again and doze off.

After about 7 years, Raja began to slow down. Kidney disease, followed by mammary cancer, began to take a toll. We added Raja's name to the list of cats for people to spend extra quality time with, as her stay with us would likely be "short." But after about 6 months, this felt silly, so we



Raja

removed Raja's name from the list.

Sure enough, Raja soldiered on for another 2 years, before it became clear that she was ready for the next phase of her journey. It was so hard to imagine being without her. She had been in our lives for so long and was loved by so many people.

I would like to say she went gently, but to the end Raja retained a feisty streak. She bit us when we restrained her, which made us happy – she was still there. And she did go gently, embraced by loving kindness. A being couldn't ask for more.

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Happy Endings: Sunshine & Cashmere

Peggy Lefkin, [Adopter](#), [Sponsor](#) & [Volunteer](#)

On a cold winter's day, the best thing you can have is warmth, perhaps in the forms of sunshine and a cashmere blanket! On second thought, it doesn't even have to be cold out to enjoy that kind of warmth. Several months ago, our family had the honor of welcoming warmth to our home in the forms of 18-year-old Cashmere and 17-year-old Sunshine.

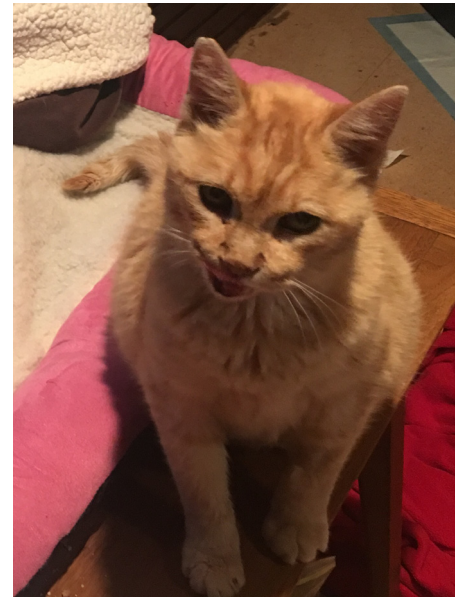
I heard Cashmere and Sunshine's [sad story](#) in the course of volunteering at Tabby's Place. Last year, the cats' home burned to the ground, and they found themselves living outside among the rubble and broken glass. Fortunately, Cashmere, Sunshine (and younger "brother" [Bud](#)) found a haven at Tabby's Place.

Given their age, Sunshine and Cashmere would be best off in

a home. The Tabby's Place staff sought a permanent foster situation for them. I couldn't stop thinking about these two cats. Before even meeting them, I offered to take Cashmere and Sunshine into our 5-cat, 1-dog, 4-person family.

Integrating the elders into our home has been a challenge! It has taken months to get to a place of, um...a somewhat manageable lifestyle for all involved. You might think that, at their ages, Cashmere and Sunshine would be quiet and unassuming. That couldn't be farther from the truth!

Our resident three male cats and two female cats weren't putting up with any nonsense. However, Sunshine showed them who is boss; he wasn't letting any whippersnappers tell him how to behave. Meanwhile, sweet, beautiful Cashmere kept all five at paw-plus-claws length, followed by a loud hiss and growl. It took some patient juggling, separating, planning and rearranging, but the love that we (humans) receive from Cashmere



[Sunshine](#)

and Sunshine is priceless.

As you might expect, Sunshine and Cashmere do have some challenges. Cashmere has chronic ear infections. It's good to know that, since she's part of the foster program at Tabby's Place, I can bring Cashmere to see Senior Veterinary Technician Denise and Veterinarian Dr. Collins any time she's not herself.

Sunshine's issues are more serious. Recently, our golden boy started to cough. I thought it was a just a stubborn hairball, but Denise and Dr. C discovered that Sunshine has a tumor on his lung. Given Sunshine's age, the kindest and best plan is to keep him comfortable. Sunshine's favorite thing, besides eating, is hanging on the couch with the family.

We'll continue to just sit and enjoy the sunshine and warmth.



[Sunshine](#) loves being a fabulous foster cat



[Cashmere](#)



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No. 15.2 | 2nd Quarter 2017
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Published quarterly by
Tabby's Place: A Cat Sanctuary
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