



New Beginnings

## New Beginnings: Jonathan

Angela Hartley, Development Director

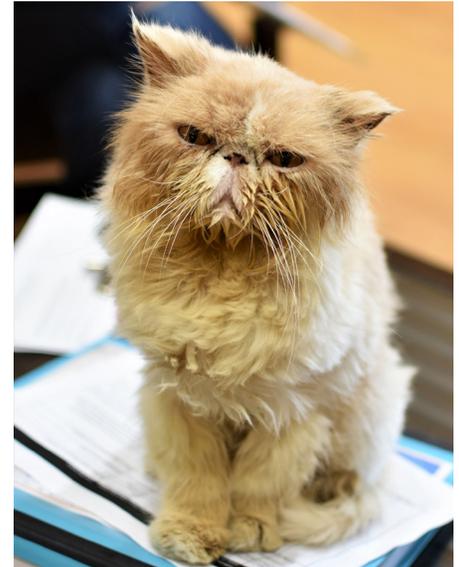
He looks like a magical mop. He acts like he just landed on this planet. He's Jonathan...and we're smitten. Rescued from neglect, Jonathan



Jonathan

comes by his confusion honestly. Since coming to us, he's gone from lonely days of hunger to a ceaseless smorgasbord of snacks and snuggles.

Our five-pound phenomenon may be a bit confused (how does the cat fountain work, anyway?), but don't let his perpetually-dripping beard mislead you: Jonathan knows some things for certain. He's found the happiness of his life at Tabby's Place, and this new world has put a sprightly spring in his elderly step. Elderly and afflicted with polycystic kidney disease, a serious condition common among Persians, Jonathan will need stellar care to continue thriving. We're giddy to have him with us – and ever so grateful to you



Jonathan loves holding court in the Tabby's Place lobby

for making it possible.

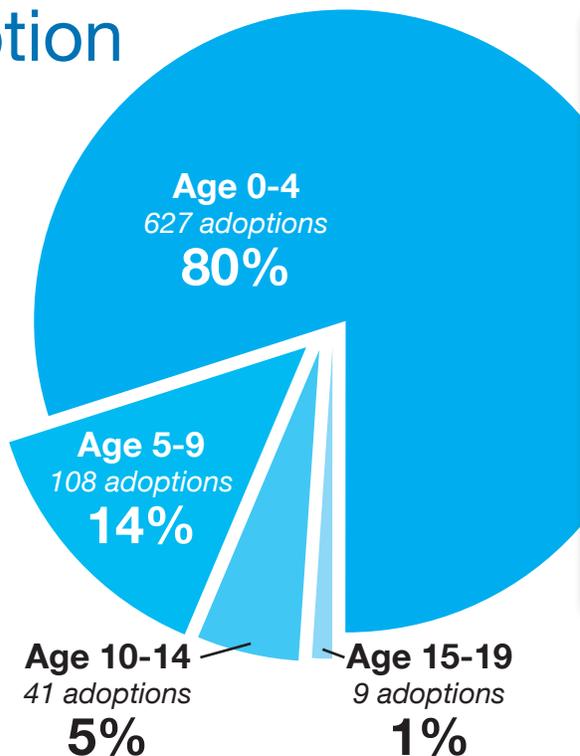
Are you smitten with Jonathan, too? Click [here](#) to become his sponsor.

## The Age of Adoption

This quarter, let's take a look at the ages at which our cats have been adopted over the past five calendar years\*. Young or old, home-going day always comes right on time. – A.H.



At age 15, Diaz can still find a forever home



| Age of Adoption | Number of Cats |
|-----------------|----------------|
| <12 Months      | 450 (57%)      |
| 1 Year          | 67 (9%)        |
| 2 Years         | 34 (4%)        |
| 3 Years         | 37 (5%)        |
| 4 Years         | 39 (5%)        |
| 5 Years         | 37 (5%)        |
| 6 Years         | 29 (4%)        |
| 7 Years         | 16 (2%)        |
| 8 Years         | 11 (1%)        |
| 9 Years         | 15 (2%)        |
| 10 Years        | 14 (2%)        |
| 11 Years        | 6 (1%)         |
| 12 Years        | 11 (1%)        |
| 13 Years        | 7 (1%)         |
| 14 Years        | 3 (<1%)        |
| 15 Years        | 1 (<1%)        |
| 16 Years        | 4 (1%)         |
| 17 Years        | 1 (<1%)        |
| 18 Years        | 2 (<1%)        |
| 19 Years        | 1 (<1%)        |

**Total Adopted Cats: 785\***

\*08/29/2013 - 08/29/2018

# Why Are Cats So...Weird?

We've seen a lot of funny business in fifteen years of saving cats at Tabby's Place. We've had cats who eat cardboard, cats who catch lizards in the solarium, and at least a half-dozen cats who cuddle up in sinks.

You've surely loved cats who do delightfully daft things, too. Let's see if we can make sense of some feline follies:

## Why do cats...

- **Sit in sinks?** Cats may enjoy the cooling effect of sitting on a smooth ceramic (or stainless steel, at Tabby's Place) surface. Your savvy kitty may also realize that you spend a lot of time over the sink, and place herself there to lap up your attention. Many cats enjoy the sense of security they find in an enclosed space (like a high-sided bed or cardboard box), and a sink makes a cool "cup" of comfort.
- **Chew plastic bags?** Many bags



[Greyson](#) is one of several sink aficionados at Tabby's Place



[Leah](#) is her reliable rival

are coated in such tasty substances as cornstarch, stearates, or gelatin. In addition, the crinkle of plastic excites cats' urges to hunt and play. More seriously, some cats chew non-food items due to anxiety, boredom or underlying medical problems. Always prevent your cat from chewing plastic, and consult your vet.

- **Look like Elvis after sniffing something?** Your cat isn't sneering at you; he's allowing air to travel through the vomeronasal organ, located between his mouth and nose, which has receptors for pheromones. This is called the flehmen response. Scent is of the utmost important to cats, and they're spectacularly equipped to analyze it carefully; while dogs have only 9 types of receptors in the vomeronasal organ, the average cat has 30.
- **Roll back and forth?** This one was intriguing enough to inspire a formal study at Cambridge. Scientists found that most rolling takes place in the context of mating, but your spayed or neutered housecat is likely rolling as a form of subordinate behavior. Rolling reveals your cat's deep trust in you, but it's likely not a request for a tummy rub – though it may be an invitation to play.
- **Jump sideways ("Halloween cat")?** Cats arch their backs, fluff up the fur on their spine, and bounce towards other kitties – or you! – in order to look larger. Nothing is cuter than a two-pound kitten playing "Scary Cat," attempting to intimidate her playmate, but this is actually natural body language. With nearly 60 vertebrae (compared to our 34), cats can arch their spines dramatically high for this move.
- **Carry socks?** Your little predator may enjoy the texture of your



Yes, cats are wonderfully weird – and [CornPop](#) says, embrace it!

socks...but she's probably especially excited about the scent. Our feet carry a high concentration of sweat, and, therefore, scent, and cats find familiar odors comforting. In addition, your cat can deposit her own scent by rubbing and playing with an object, reclaiming your socks with her personal smell.

- **Run after using the litter box?** Some believe cats flee the litter box at cheetah speed as a survival instinct, so predators can't track the odor back to the source. It's also possible that relieving herself gives your cat a burst of energy, or that she simply feels good after "going."
- **Stare at nothing in particular?** No one, absolutely no one, knows.

*Stuff you already know but we have to say anyway: None of this is intended as medical advice, and you should always contact your vet if your cat's behavior changes or seems distressing. —A.H.*



[Trillian's](#) rolling is joyful and jumbo

# Fearful Stray or True Feral?

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

Before beginning to socialize a scared feline friend, we must understand the difference between “stray” and “feral” cats.

This is not a black-and-white distinction, and cats can fall anywhere along a spectrum. But, for the purposes of this article, we’ll adopt the following definition: a stray cat once had a home but is now lost or abandoned. She is socialized to humans and usually can be reintroduced to an indoor home successfully. But, it can take some time and patience for a stray to make that transition, especially if she has been living outdoors for a long period of



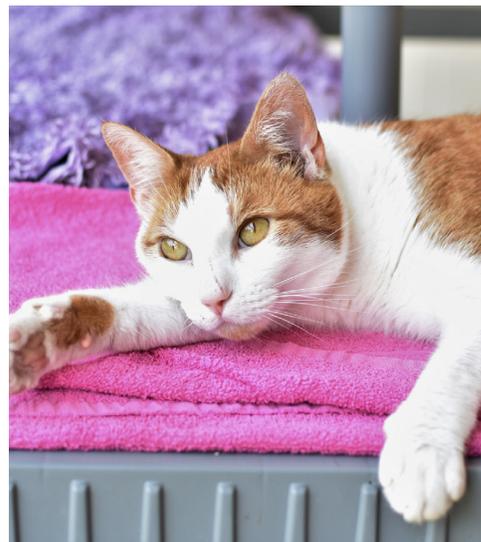
[Grey Poupon](#) is scared... but is he truly feral?

time. When caught in a trap, a stray cat can be terrified and “act feral.”

In contrast, a feral cat is not so socialized to humans. She has never had contact with humans, or has not had such contact in that all important window of time before eight weeks of age. As little as five minutes of handling per day from two to eight weeks of age can make a feral-born kitten a candidate for living a happy life indoors, but most adult ferals will be miserable living indoors. They are best suited to Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) programs.

Key differences in behavior and body language can help us determine whether an outdoor cat is stray or feral:

1. A feral cat won’t approach strangers, but might approach a familiar caretaker. A stray might approach people more generally and feel comfortable in close proximity to a house.
2. A feral might be part of a colony of cats; a stray cat might travel alone.
3. A feral cat does not exhibit friendly body language. She will avoid eye contact and slink along the ground, trying to stay unnoticed. A stray cat might hold her tail high while making eye con-



[Carrot](#) was found as a stray in New York City, but there’s nothing feral about him

tact, both signs of openness to a friendly interaction.

4. Feral cats generally don’t vocalize and tend to move around mainly at night. Stray kitties might purr or meow and are seen mainly during the day.
5. Feral cats are accustomed to living outdoors and generally have a clean appearance (they know how to take care of themselves outdoors). A stray can look unkempt.

In our next issue, we’ll explore how best to socialize a fearful feline.

### Recommended Reading:

[Feral and Stray Cats – An Important Difference](#), [Alley Cat Allies](#)

## Love Now, Give Later

Your love for cats transcends time. There will never be a day when you don’t want to do everything you can to help cats in need. And by working with Tabby’s Place, you can make sure you’re **always** here for the kitties.

By including Tabby’s Place in your estate plans, you can ensure that your love will last beyond your lifetime. A few simple plans now can save hundreds of cats’ lives in the

years ahead. You can plan today to make sure you leave a legacy that shows what matters most to you.

Estate gifts are generally the most significant, life-saving donations Tabby’s Place receives. Please plan to leave a legacy of compassion. The cats are counting on you for love beyond this lifetime. Contact Development Director Angela Hartley at [ah@tabbysplace.org](mailto:ah@tabbysplace.org) or 908-237-5300 ext 235 for more information.



You can plan now to nurture cats like [Anka](#) for decades to come

# Why I...Foster Kittens

Susan McGee, [Volunteer](#)

Fostering is like being a grandparent. You get all of the fun stuff with a fraction of the responsibility.

Tabby's Place is like the parent. When you pick up the "kids," they give you the playpen, the baby food, and all the supplies you need. Then you get to get to spoil these adorable creatures and return them later.

Think about it. With the sad reality of cat overpopulation, where else can you indulge in the fun of tiny kittens in the comfort of your own home? Or how about the challenge of a reticent tween, or the gratitude of an elderly sweetheart, with no strings attached? Plus, since you keep them separate, you don't have to worry about rattling your existing



[Talia](#) welcomes her fifth kitten into the world

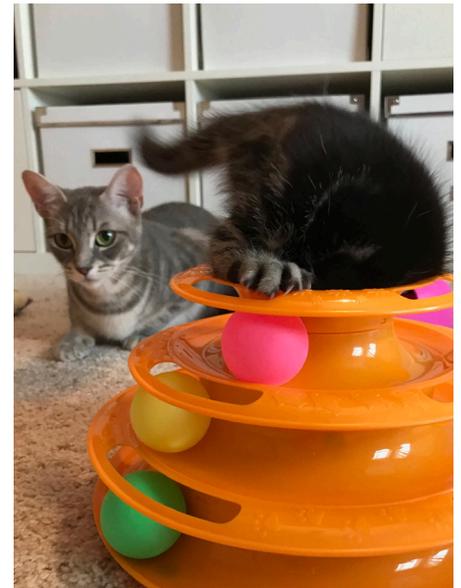
household cat karma.

As a foster parent, you will build your animal care skills. During my assignments, I've learned how to administer subcutaneous fluids, manually "potty" and bottle-feed kittens, and even assist a mama cat during labor. The Tabby's Place staff usually has more confidence in my ability than I do, and welcomes me at the examining table, where I get to live out my veterinarian fantasies. I find it fascinating, and it helps demystify what happens when my own cats are at the vet.

People ask me how I get anything done when I have fosters, especially kittens. Well, sometimes I don't. Often, my "to do" list takes a back seat, and that's okay.

There is something spiritually uplifting about fostering. Caring for your kitties requires dedicated time spent in a closed-off room. It forces you to step away from the fast pace of your life and spend quiet time with cats. I would argue the benefits rival those of yoga, meditation and therapy.

Of course, I love cats and want to help out Tabby's Place. But after I started hosting kittens, I realized



[Talia](#) and [Bernadette](#) - er, half of [Bernadette](#)

the giving goes two ways. Whenever a staff member thanks me profusely for my time spent fostering, I smile and reply, "You're welcome." But there's always a quiet voice inside me saying, "No, thank you!"



[Talia](#) and her tiny treasures

## Forever Loved: [Jackie](#)

Jonathan Rosenberg, [Founder & Executive Director](#)

It would be impossible to overestimate the place of [Jackie](#) at Tabby's Place. She arrived in 2006. Tabby's Place was three years old. Jackie was four.

From the beginning, Jackie was a force to be reckoned with. She was a hefty girl who did not "suffer fools gladly." And, Jackie seemed to think all beings were fools. She surrounded herself with an invisible force field. Crossing this field meant

risking injury, for felines and humans.

But, this is Tabby's Place, so we loved Jackie. You had to admire a girl who did not mellow as she aged, despite acquiring arthritis, diabetes and mammary cancer in her later years. Her "disabilities" did not stop her from enjoying a bite during her daily insulin injections.

Over the years, Jackie set several records:

[continues on the next page](#)



[Jackie](#)

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- Longest resident (12 years)
- Bit every employee at least once
- Was a resident of every available room (we moved her as her needs and medical condition changed)

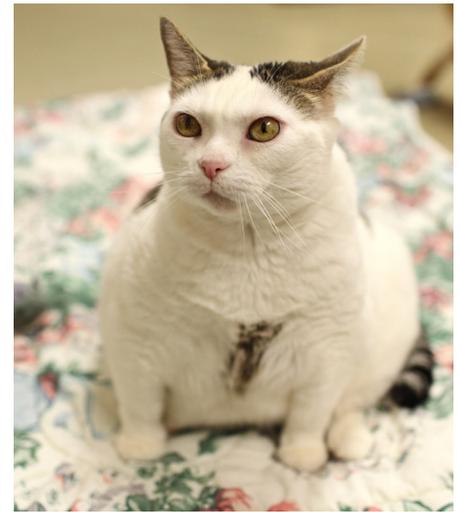
Jackie barreled through her diseases with barely a falter. Even two surgeries for mammary cancer did not slow her down. Within hours of each surgery, she was eating like a champ and showing her characteristic irascibility. She was, in the words of our Senior Vet Tech, Denise, a "rock star."

But, death finally summoned the nerve to approach her, and she faded quickly. When she stopped biting us, we knew it was time<sup>2</sup>. She went peacefully, surrounded by the love (and respect) of many friends and fans.

I still find it hard to believe the old war horse is gone. I still see her swaggering around. I will miss her forever.

<sup>1</sup> A phrase coined by St., Paul in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 11. It is a common phrase meaning to tolerate to people who you think are stupid.

<sup>2</sup> This is only a slight exaggeration.



Jackie at her most "robust"

## Happy Endings: Mona

Mona first came to Tabby's Place in a time before Snapchat, Stranger Things and *Frozen*. The world has changed a great deal since 2011, but one pastel tortie has quietly bided her time, growing wiser and sweeter over seven-plus years.

We never imagined it would take so long for Mona to find her forever home. Although she had feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV), the quiet cat with the downy-soft coat was beautiful inside and out, a fount of gentleness in our often-rowdy FIV+ Suite. But as many of her room-

mates were adopted, Mona waited, and waited, and waited.

History has proven that "forever" was worth the wait.

Mona's new mom was specifically seeking an FIV+ cat. She writes:

*"I came into Tabby's Place looking for a friend for Beau, because he seemed lonely. Mona has definitely made a difference for him. He doesn't feel the need to meow as much when I'm home, and he's not as 'needy' at night. It was nice to be needed, but I felt bad I*



Mona cuddles up in her forever home

*wasn't there during the day. Mona doesn't need as much human attention, but loves cat attention, so she's a good match for Beau."*

As for Mona's life of love, things are sunny-side up:

*"Mona loves sitting in the window sill and will sometimes fall asleep in the sunlight. She and Beau will often fall asleep together at the foot of the bed. And she never stops requesting licks from Beau. She's started rolling around on the mats in the kitchen to stretch and scratch, which is cute."*

Mona made off with many hearts when she left Tabby's Place, but we're gleeful to wave goodbye through happy tears. – A.H.



Mona's new life is beautiful



Mona with new best buddy Beau





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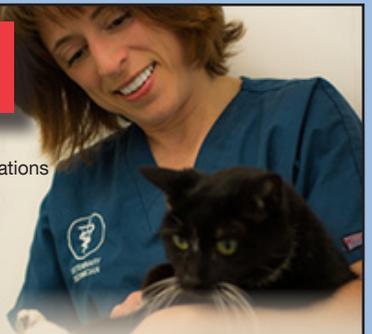
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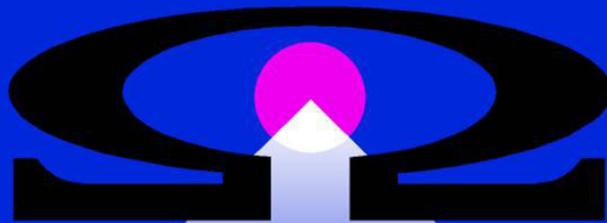
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