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SPOTLIGHT**  
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TCH elder, Cali,  
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# THE CAT HOUSE Scoop

© Essence in a Flash by Kimberly McCarty

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## ADOPTION FACILITY

1935 Q Street  
Lincoln, NE  
Tuesdays & Thursdays 6–8 pm  
Sundays 1:30–4 pm

PO Box 23145  
Lincoln, NE 68542  
Hotline: 402-441-9593  
info@thecathouse.org  
www.thecathouse.org  
facebook.com/thecathouse

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Julie Dahlke *Treasurer*  
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*Consulting Veterinarian*

The Cat House is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, all-volunteer organization, funded entirely by donations and adoption fees.

## Medical care for a house full of cats

By Ann Stubbendeck

Have you ever wondered what it takes to keep all of the cats at The Cat House healthy? Anyone who has ever been fortunate enough to own a cat knows that, at the very least, it involves spaying or neutering, vaccinating and then following up with regularly scheduled vet visits to ensure proper pet health. There can always be unexpected illnesses that require vet attention as well, and at times this can become costly even for one cat.

The Cat House has 100-plus cats in its care at any given time and is run entirely on the generosity and hard work of volunteers and donors. Their combined efforts ensure that every cat available for adoption is spayed or neutered; microchipped; vaccinated for rabies and feline viral rhinotracheitis, calicivirus and panleukopenia (RCP);

as well as given a full physical examination.

Beyond this, TCH provides treatment for worms, ear mites and parasites as needed. TCH also provides the necessary medication needed for numerous medical conditions such as for high blood pressure, arrhythmias, kidney disease, hyperthyroidism, irritable bowel disease, nausea, pancreatic issues, diabetes, and oral tumors.

Some of the cats at TCH require prescription food because of allergies, chronic urinary tract issues, chronic kidney disease, digestive problems and obesity. TCH currently has three cats that are on a raw food diet. These specialized prescription diets often cost more than regular cat food but are necessary for the health of the cats.

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Chelsea giving Kovo fluids.

# Volunteer Opportunities

The Cat House has a very hard-working and dedicated crew of volunteers committed to improving the lives of cats in Lincoln and the surrounding area.

If you are interested in helping, you can fill out a volunteer application online at [www.thecathouse.org](http://www.thecathouse.org), come in during open hours to fill out an application, or e-mail at [volunteer@thecathouse.org](mailto:volunteer@thecathouse.org).

You're in for a rewarding experience!

## Opportunities to help include:

- Care, feeding, exercising, and socializing of cats
- Laundry
- Facility maintenance
- Newsletter articles, photography, and production
- Assisting with communication to volunteers and/or the public
- Adoption counselor
- Post-adoption follow-up calls
- Volunteer training program assistance
- Volunteer scheduling assistance
- Filing
- Grant writing
- Fundraising
- Feral/TNR program

## Happy Tails Stats

Here are the number of cats adopted in recent months.

October	21
November	25
December	26
January	38
February	32
March	16

# Featured volunteer: Martha Stoddard

By Jeff Kennedy

In 2002, Martha Stoddard replied to a newspaper advertisement from The Cat House looking for volunteers to show cats at PetSmart North on Sundays. It was the beginning of a long-term volunteer relationship that has greatly benefitted TCH and its furry residents ever since. Although that job at Pet Smart was Martha's first volunteer assignment, it is only one in a long list of duties Martha has taken on during her continuing tenure with the shelter.

Early in Martha's volunteering career, TCH leadership had been making plans for a new facility to house the cats. In 2003, a bad hoarding situation on South Street forced them into action. The birth of the C Street Cat House came into being. Martha was part of this transition and worked at the C Street shelter on Friday mornings, cleaning, feeding, and caring for cats.

During the early years, Martha began working on Tuesday nights in the "Little Cat House," a separate site housing the shelter's cats with feline leukemia virus. This has continued through each location of the Special Unit for FeLV+/FIV+ cats, including today's Q Street shelter penthouse where Martha still volunteers on Tuesday evenings.

One needn't look any further than a Tuesday evening in the penthouse to see how much Martha means to the special residents there. After chores are finished, she often spends time with individual cats, brushing them, trimming claws, removing matted fur, and petting them. They seem to know her voice and run eagerly to greet her, purring as she reaches out to touch them. As important as she is to them, it's evident they have a special place in her heart as well.

Martha has been a newspaper reporter for 27 years, first with the Lincoln Journal



and currently with the Omaha World Herald, covering State Government. It seemed like a natural fit when Martha started writing for the Cat House newsletter. Her first newsletter cover story, "A Hero for Maddie," appeared in the April 2005 edition of the newsletter, known then as The Cat House Chronicles, and her articles have appeared

regularly in the newsletter ever since.

Martha also volunteers during the shelter's Open Hours, times during the week when the Cat House is open for the public to come visit the cats and adopt them. Martha says she likes working during Open Hours because she gets the opportunity to see the cats adopted and taken to their forever homes.

Three or four years ago, Martha began a new volunteer role. She fosters young kittens until they're old enough to be brought into the shelter. When asked about this assignment, Martha stated that she loved it because she could get her "kitten fix" during the foster period before relinquishing them back to the shelter. President Faye Stevens said "Martha is willing to take on challenges like fostering feral kittens (and even an injured feral adult cat), and is not even deterred when the kittens have ringworm or other medical issues. Her dedication to the cats helps TCH to give these more challenging felines a chance at finding loving homes."

In addition to her newspaper work and multiple volunteer commitments, Martha enjoys running (she's qualified for this year's New York City Marathon), knitting, and making jellies. She has two handsome black DSH cats, Freddie and Pickle. Martha grew up in Lincoln and her folks still live here.

# Donations in memory & honor of...

## In memory of

Punky from Lynne Nevin  
Joseph Cuva from Denise Cuva  
Spook from Jim Wiemer  
Lorra Richards from Cotton & Rita Bentley;  
Helen & Robin Sell; Betty Jo Olney; Rob,  
Jenny, Addison, & Ava Bentley  
Blake, Merry, Midnight & Sloopy from  
Christopher Greene  
Delta One from Diana Harris  
Sloopy from Jeffrey Kennedy  
Phebe Waterman from Mollie Baldwin  
Sasha from Dr. Robert & Susan Dobberstein  
Helen Leishman from Angie & Mike  
Armstrong & friends from Doane College  
Radar from Deb & Kent Lammert  
Bubba from John & Pam Marchant  
Kimberly McCarty's Rose the Rat from Sally  
Carter  
Hardy from Suzie Meierdierks

Sophie R. O'Donnell from Joe, Nancy, Mike, &  
Pat O'Donnell  
Pat Frey from Burdetta Thrapp  
Punkin from HL Franey  
Scott Hawks from Kristi Hawks

## In honor or celebration of

Daryl Lauber from Marcia Straatmeyer  
Josie Morie from Cynthia Miller  
Ric & Daria from Timothy & Sandra Maxa  
John, Brenda, & Martin from John & Brenda  
Roby  
Nova from C Stuart  
Bucky & Maybe from Bonnie Whitmore  
Patrick from Leeza Struwe & family  
Richard Barnes & Kathy Wolfe from John &  
Ann Barnes  
Trudy from Harvy & Wanda Dreke  
Sophie, a 15-year-old Cat House alum, from  
Anita Friehe  
London from Angela & Cory Clark

London Klein's 3rd birthday from Jeffrey  
Kennedy  
Jessica Hoburg's Christmas gift from Robert &  
Joan Hoburg  
Marilyn Chaffin from Scott Chaffin  
Stacey Stringer from Jon Springer  
Karen Isaac from Jeanie and Randy Steinkuhler  
The marriage of Allison Koch & Kevin  
Workman from Vivian Brittenham

## Special thanks to

Dr. Shelley Knudsen  
Dr. Kelly Jordan  
All Feline Hospital  
Wachal Pet Health Center  
Oak Creek Pet Care  
Vondra Veterinary Clinic  
Pitts Veterinary Hospital  
BK Pet Necessities  
Cause For Paws  
Nature's Variety  
Petco  
PetSmart

## Medical care continued

*continued from page 1*

In some instances, over-the-counter medication is added to canned cat food. Some of these additives include Miralax, Benefiber, Viralys for eye problems, probiotics for digestive problems, and Cosequin for joint or bladder issues.

Overseeing the effort to keep cats healthy is Suzie Meierdierks, a volunteer who serves as TCH medical coordinator. She works with four medicators (part-time, paid staff) who come to the facility twice a day to medicate cats, administer subcutaneous fluids, syringe-feed as needed, and perform other duties necessary to keep the cats and kittens at TCH as healthy as possible.

Vital assistance is also provided by Dr. Shelley Knudsen from All Feline Hospital, who volunteers her time to visit The Cat House once a month and perform physical examinations and give inoculations for RCP, rabies, or feline leukemia. Dr. Kelly Jordan from Wachal Pet Health Center has been filling in for Dr. Knudsen at recent vet visits.

The veterinarian also monitors cats with heart murmurs, allergy issues, and high blood pressure, in addition to microchipping cats, testing for feline leukemia or feline immunodeficiency virus and drawing blood for testing at a diagnostic laboratory. A TCH medicator also assists during these vet exams.

In addition, four other TCH volunteers help at vet visits, which have been known to last as long as 7½ hours. These volunteers record the vet's findings, retrieve cats and assist in their handling.

Not every cat that enters TCH does so in the best of health, but the medical volunteers and medicators do everything they can to ensure that even these cats have the opportunity to leave TCH in good shape and find happiness in their

adoptive homes.

Some cats entering TCH need extensive dental work, amputations and other surgeries, or special care for chronic conditions like feline leukemia virus or feline immunodeficiency virus. The Cat House was founded on the belief that no cat should ever be killed so long as a good quality of life is possible. Cats are family members; just as with human family members, treatable conditions are treated.

TCH is able to provide this high level of care due to the generosity of donors and volunteers who believe that cats are not disposable and that they deserve loving homes regardless of age or health conditions.



*Alisha medicating KC.*

# Calendar of Events

Please join us in participating or celebrating the following events.

## Catsino Night

**April 13** / 6:30-9 pm

Fundraiser for TCH.

Scottish Rite Temple, 16th & L Streets

## PetSmart Adoption Event

**May 4-5**

Meet cats and talk with TCH volunteers.

5200 N 27th Street

## Give to Lincoln Day

**May 16** / 12 am-11:59 pm

[givetolincoln.razoo.com](http://givetolincoln.razoo.com)

## Wine & Howl

**June 8** / 11 am-5 pm

Fundraiser for Lincoln Animal Ambassadors. TCH will have a vendor table.

Deer Springs Winery, east of Lincoln

## Adopt-a-Cat-Month

**June**

The purr-fect month to find your new furry forever friend.

## Haymarket Farmer's Market

**Saturdays, June 29-August 3**

8 am-12 pm

TCH volunteers will be selling cat beds, catnip stix and other goodies.

## PetSmart Adoption Event

**September 14-15**

Meet cats and talk with TCH volunteers.

5200 N 27th Street

## Meow & Chow

**October 26**

Fundraiser for TCH and Lincoln Animal Ambassadors.

Scottish Rite Temple, 16th & L Streets

# Fun for all ages

By Ann Stubbendeck

Cats and Crafts, the fundraising brainchild of art teacher and Cat House volunteer Jodi Heiser, is still going strong with the addition of adult nights. The first adult Cats and Crafts session took place in February and was a great success, raising \$600 for The Cat House. The adult art project involved painting wine glasses. Clip art was provided to help trace designs on the glasses, or participants could choose to paint freehand and come up with their own design ideas.

Just as with the Cats and Crafts classes for kids, all necessary materials for the project were provided and time was set aside for the adults to play with the adoptable cats at TCH. Participants had a blast, helped cats and got to take home a fun (and functional) keepsake.

Be on the lookout for the upcoming Spring Adult Cats and Crafts session, which Jodi says may include canvas paintings. Also, from June through August, there will be a return of the Cats and Crafts Summer Art Nights for students. The plan is to offer five sessions featuring new cat-themed art projects and basic cat care information to the young participants.



## Catnip stix, pet beds, and carrier liners!

To purchase, stop by the shelter, or call the hotline at 402-441-9593.



In addition to monetary donations, you can donate items that we use in the day-to-day care of our feline friends. To arrange a drop-off time and location, you can call us at 402-441-9593 or email [info@thecathouse.org](mailto:info@thecathouse.org).

### DRY CAT FOOD

- Any dry cat food
- Royal Canin Baby Cat
- Science Diet Original, W/D, R/D, C/D or K/D\*
- Purina NF\*

### CANNED CAT FOOD

- Science Diet or lams – kitten & adult – turkey, chicken, salmon (ground or minced)
- Fancy Feast – turkey, chicken, salmon (ground or minced)
- Science Diet A/D, W/D, R/D, C/D, or K/D\*
- Purina NF\*

### CLEANERS

- Scent-free liquid laundry detergent (sensitive skin)
- Scent-free dryer sheets (sensitive skin)
- Clorox bleach (regular type)
- Anti-bacterial hand soap
- Dawn dishwashing soap
- Dishwasher detergent
- Clorox disposable wipes
- Swiffers
- Hand sanitizer

### CAT LITTER

- Non-clumping, regular clay litter (no clumping, pine, or newsprint type litter)

### SUPPLIES

- Brooms
- O'Cedar Light 'N Thirsty cloth mop refills
- Paper towels & bathroom tissue
- Large trash bags (heavy duty)
- Kitchen and office size trash bags
- Copier/printer paper

### MISCELLANEOUS

- Shallow, stainless steel food/water bowls, 16 oz or larger, with a wide bottom and low sides to accommodate whiskers!
- Meat flavored baby food (chicken, turkey, beef, ham)
- Small chenille or cotton reversible bath rugs (no rubber backs)
- Rotating teeth combs for cats
- "Slicker" brushes for cats
- "Cable Cuffs" or "Cable Clamps" cable management tool
- Pet carriers, hard plastic with metal doors
- Large litter boxes without covers
- Aluminum trays (no smaller than 8"x13")
- Lint rollers

\* sold at vet clinics

# Max

By Ann Stubbendeck



Max is a gorgeous flame-point Siamese. His eyes are a dreamy blue and his coat is creamy perfection. It would be a challenge to find a more beautiful cat than Max.

Your first impression of Max will no doubt be that he is stunning to behold, but it is his subtleties that will make you fall in love.

You'll notice that his

eyes are ever so slightly crossed. This offers you a hint of his silly side, and he does have a silly side.

Max can go from calm to crazy at the drop of a mouse toy. After giving the mouse toy a good and thorough lashing, Max will be ready for his upper body massage. He really is the perfect mix of calm beauty and comic relief.

Max came to The Cat House because he had a hard time adjusting to changes in his previous family. He is 11 years old, front declawed and ready for a quiet home of his own where he can max out on love.

# Abby

By Ann Stubbendeck



Abby is one spunky little redhead with a fun and friendly demeanor. When you look into her beautiful sand-colored eyes, you'll see she's also one smart cookie. Abby looks right back at you in a way that lets you know she's got you figured out. She is highly attentive to people and would definitely be an interactive pet. At just 2 years old, Abby would make an excellent family cat or a perfect companion.

Although you wouldn't know it by her attitude, Abby had a rough start at life. She came to TCH after she and 28 other felines were removed from a hoarding situation. Like Abby, many of

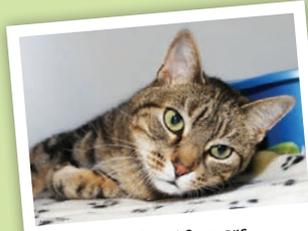
the cats in the home had feline leukemia, also known as FeLV. Cats with FeLV have a compromised immune system, which puts them at risk of developing other illnesses, but with proper care, the disease can be managed and cats can live many healthy years. FeLV is incurable and can be transmitted to other cats through prolonged exposure to saliva and other body fluids.

Abby currently lives in The Cat House's Penthouse with other cats that have either FeLV or feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV), which causes an infectious disease in cats similar to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV infection) in humans. Abby currently serves as the social director at the Penthouse.

## These cats are looking for forever homes.



Diamond - 3 years



Heidi - 10 years



Mad Max - 1 year



Neenah - 6 years



Jag - 10 years



Dexter, FIV+ - 4 years



Digit - 10 years



Louie, FIV+ - 6 years

Visit our shelter at 1935 Q Street on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6-8 pm and Sundays from 1:30-4 pm. You can also visit The Cat House kitties at the PetSmart adoption center located at 5200 N 27th Street.

All photos courtesy Patrice for Sisters Photography.

# What color is my cat?

By Alma Vlasak

So you say you learned your colors in pre-school? You know raspberry from mauve and royal blue from navy? But you still don't know your blue cats from your torbies? Here's a quick guide to have you talking like a cat show veteran.

All colors in a cat's hair, skin or eyes are the result of genetic pigmentation and can present a bewildering variety of combinations. Common color names used by the Cat Fancier's Association (CFA) have helped standardize descriptive language. Describing cats other than red, white, black and blue can prove to be a challenge. Here is a brief guide.

Red is the color used to describe orange, marmalade or ginger cats. Blue is the term used to refer to cats that appear to be grey or Maltese. If a cat appears to be one color all over, then it is called solid. Solid white cats lack any pigmentation. Eye color may be green, gold or blue and in some cases present as odd-eyed where one eye is blue and the other eye is either green or gold. Blue-eyed white cats may be prone to deafness. Whether or not they will be deaf is determined by genetic factors.

A tabby is a cat with stripes. Tabbies have

thin dark stripes extending back from the eyes and an "M" pattern on the forehead. (Note: The "M" does not mean that your cat is a specific breed called a Maine Coon.) Tabby patterns are distinctive and come in four patterns. The mackerel tabby has narrow stripes running parallel down from the spine on either side of the cat. Classic tabbies exhibit a bullseye or swirled pattern on their sides. The spotted tabby has what are really broken mackerel tabby lines and appear as spots. A ticked tabby does not have stripes on its body but has tabby facial marks. The proper color name for a tabby cat is based on its stripes. Cats may be brown, blue, red or cream tabbies and may vary in intensity from dark to light.

Smoke refers to coloration of the hair where the root is white. Cats may be black or blue smoke if the color is solid but the hairs have white roots.

Clearly defined white markings on a cat might be large or small. A proper description would be to say a cat is black-and-white or a brown mackerel tabby-and-white. A solid color cat with only a white spot on its chest may be

referred to as having a locket. A bi-color is approximately half and half such as a red and white bi-color. A van cat is almost completely white except for color on its head and tail. A blue van would have blue patches on its head and tail and the rest of the cat would be white. A black cat with white on its paws, chest and belly is sometimes called a tuxedo. White may appear on the face as well.

Other color combinations include tortoiseshell, or tortie, and calico cats. Tortoiseshell cats are random patched all over with red and black fur. Colors may be mixed together or colors may appear to be more distinct. Blue and cream coloration is called dilute. Calico cats have distinct patches of white, and red and black colors appear as distinct areas on the cat. Calicos are really tricolor cats. Tortoiseshell cats with visible tabby markings may be referred to as a torbie.

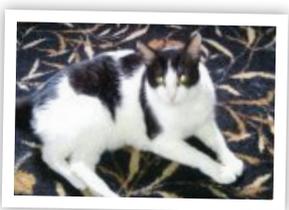
The terms should help anyone wanting to more accurately describe a cat. For example, this article was prepared with the help of Rusty, a red mackerel tabby-and-white.

## A Christmas angel

By Jeff Kennedy

When Chris Nelson and his mother, Norma Jean Dunklau, decided to adopt a new cat, The Cat House was recommended to them by a friend of theirs. They came across Suzanne, a beautiful black-and-white female and asked a volunteer about her. "They told us she had just had surgery on her foot," Chris said, "and that she'd be good as an only cat."

Suzanne had, in fact, had surgery on her feet three months before. The eight-year-old cat had bone fragments removed from her front feet—remnants of a botched declaw procedure. Prior to the operation, Suzanne had been in pain and even chewed on her front feet. She was often irritable.



No one knew the extent of her discomfort. After the surgery, though, she came back to The Cat House with a new disposition. The source of her pain having been removed, she was a happier, more affectionate cat. Her new attitude helped her catch Chris' eye.

He adopted Suzanne on December 23 and took her home. The mother and son renamed her Angel. "She never looked like a Suzanne to us," Chris recalled. An Angel had entered the household just in time for Christmas. When asked if she was a Christmas present to his mom, Chris said, "She was a Christmas present for both of us."

Angel has since become the boss of the house. In fact, in e-mails Norma Jean refers to her as "Angel (Queen of the House)." When Norma Jean gets up from her chair to get something, she'll return to find Angel contently curled up where she had previously been sitting. "And it's not easy getting her to move once she's in Mom's chair," Chris added.

Chris admits Angel has taken more to his mother and will sleep with her or outside her door. But while Norma Jean is the recipient of many of Angel's cuddles, Chris gets a lot of Angel's conversation because he feeds her. Angel has settled in to being a normal housecat, often running up and down the stairs, sleeping for long stretches, and playing with toys. The crabby cat with painful feet is long gone.

# TCH celebrates its 15th anniversary with 'Catsino' Night

By Jeff Kennedy

Do you like to push "all in"? Do you want to "double down"? If so, you'll want to check out Catsino Night, an evening of fun and games, hosted by Lincoln's only no-kill feline shelter, The Cat House.

The fun is slated for Saturday, April 13, in the Scottish Rite Temple at 16th and L streets. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., and gaming will begin at 7:00 p.m. Cost of entry is \$20, which includes \$5,000 in gaming chips, snacks, a token for a free bar beverage, and unlimited non-alcoholic drinks. The event is open to all ages, but you must be 21 to buy alcohol at the cash bar.

The event, which celebrates The Cat House's 15th anniversary of providing cat shelter and adoption services in Lincoln,

will feature many casino-style table games, such as Texas hold'em poker, black jack, roulette, craps, chuck-a-luck, and a fun trivia game.

There will be a raffle and an auction as well. Some exciting prizes include an iPad, many gift cards, a beautiful quilt donated by the Quilted Kitty, a 42" television, an iPod nano, a one-hour airplane ride around Lincoln, a Barnes & Noble Nook, and many others. Raffle tickets prices are \$1 each or 6 for \$5.

So whether you hope to "catch a full boat on the river" or want to "let it ride," come to the Scottish Rite Temple on April 13 to join The Cat House in its anniversary celebration for a fun night of games and prizes.

## Give to Lincoln Day 2013

By Martha Stoddard

The second Give to Lincoln Day is coming up May 16. It is 24 hours of giving to nonprofits, made possible by the Lincoln Community Foundation and partner sponsors. Last year, The Cat House supporters came through amazingly.

The money that TCH raised on this day went a long way in improving the lives of cats in Lincoln. It helped with veterinary bills to keep our cats healthy; spay and neuter services for feral cats; and an addition to the TCH Penthouse area for cats with feline leukemia or feline immunodeficiency virus.

Let's do it again this year. Gifts can be given from 12:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. online at [givetolincoln.razoo.com](http://givetolincoln.razoo.com). Gifts also will be accepted in person during regular business hours at the Lincoln Community Foundation, 215 Centennial Mall South.

All donations will be matched with a proportional share of a \$200,000 challenge match fund provided by the foundation and the partner sponsors. The foundation also is offering three types of prizes to encourage participation.

Participation bonus grants of \$1,000 will go to each of the five nonprofit organizations with the most online donors during the 24 hours. Power hour grants of \$1,000 will go to each of the three organizations with the most online donors from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Ten donors will be chosen at random between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. to receive additional bonus grants of \$200, which will be added to the amount they donated to their nonprofit organization.

Mark your calendar NOW and log on (or drop in) May 16.



## Make a Difference Fair helps TCH

By Alma Vlasak

When 180 sixth graders recently participated in a Language Arts research project called "Make A Difference" who knew that it would result in The Cat House's very own Princess being the star of a Make A Difference Fair recently held at Scott Middle School.

Students divided into work groups with each selecting a cause, charity or non-profit organization to research. Allison Harless and Haley Ulrich chose TCH. Their research included interviewing Sara Laney, Scott Middle School Media Secretary and volunteer for TCH. Allison and Haley visited TCH, studied the webpage and read information provided by Laney regarding TCH's mission and goals. The girls then made a display board with pictures of cats up for adoption and a picture of the Tuesday TCH team members. They also made flyers to hand out at the school's Make A Difference Fair.



Prior to the event students advertised the event and invited the public to attend. They were also interviewed by Channel 10/11.

The night of the fair Laney brought TCH cat Princess to the fair so that people could meet one of the cats up for adoption. According to Laney, Princess was "quite a hit." The event was covered by Channel 10/11 news. In addition to getting information and petting a cat, people were able to donate money to the cause of their choice. Laney accepted \$115.00 on behalf of TCH at a ceremony where organizations received monies donated.

Laney summed up the event when she said that "...the kids not only learned a lot but had so much fun and learned what it means to give back and maybe change the world."

## Cali's column

Dear Cali:

Recently, I noticed that my cat can't jump as high as he used to and he spends more time sleeping. I'm afraid he's getting old. What can I do to make his life easier at an advanced age?

Signed, Doting Cat Dad

Dear Doting:

Congratulations to you and your cat. You obviously understand the proper order of things, which is a credit to your cat. So many humans these days are not satisfied with their station in life. Why, some even fancy themselves the owners of cats. Imagine! Unfortunately, some cats contribute to the problem by not enforcing standards. They should follow my lead. I may be advanced in my years, but I still make my wishes known to my faithful servants, sometimes known as Cat House volunteers.

I am forgetting myself, though. You may have been expecting the last advice cat, Jerry. He has moved on. I cannot say much for his demeanor, but I have to admire that he found some humans to serve him properly. As for myself, I am the oldest cat at The Cat House, so I have an ample store of wisdom to share.

Now for your excellent question. I would first counsel patience and attentiveness. Those attributes will carry you a long way toward making your cat properly comfortable in his older years. Here are some ideas for dealing with common concerns of older cats:

- We may suffer arthritis or lose muscle tone and have difficulty jumping, getting into the litter box or squatting properly. Try putting a step by our favorite spots. Get a litter box with low sides or a low



entrance. One with high sides can keep things contained if we overshoot. Add another litter box if we have trouble getting to the box in time. A heated bed or a cozy sleeping spot can ease those old bones.

- We may lose some hearing or sight. Find ways to compensate. Flick the lights or nudge the bedding to get the attention of a cat with hearing loss. Keep furniture in the same place for a cat with waning eyesight.

- We may not groom ourselves as carefully. Brush regularly to prevent matting but be careful brushing over old bones. Get cat wipes or use a damp washcloth for a quick bath. Schedule an appointment with a groomer if need be.

- We may lose some sense of smell or taste, or develop mouth problems. Try warming up the food slightly. Not too hot, mind. Taking the chill off is sufficient. Mounding up canned food or making a soup by adding water can make it easier to eat. Serve it in wide, shallow dishes. Let your cat drink from the faucet or try bottled water or water with chicken broth added to encourage drinking.

- We need more medical care. Pay attention to any changes in your cat's weight, litter box use, eating habits and behavior. Changes can mean a health problem that needs vet care. When brushing your cat, look for lumps and lesions. Get your cat in for a checkup twice a year; more often if your veterinarian recommends it. Kidney disease, diabetes and hyperthyroidism are common among aging cats but can be managed with good care.

Now, remember. Keep a stiff upper lip, and you will do fine caring for your cat.

Sincerely, Cali 



5700 Old Cheney Road  
402-420-5758  
causeforpawslincoln.com  
Monday, Tuesday & Saturday 10 am-5 pm  
Wednesday through Friday 10 am-6 pm  
Closed Sunday

# Licensing your pet

By Steve Beal, Animal Control Manager

There are nearly 62,000 licensed dogs and cats in the Lincoln city limits. Two questions remain, however, what is the pet population in Lincoln and how many of these pets are unlicensed?

These are important questions, and the first answer, while difficult to define in exact numbers, can be estimated by using The American Veterinary Medical Association (AMVA) and national pet ownership statistics. There are approximately 105,000 households within the Lincoln city limits, and based on a formula provided by the AMVA, it is estimated that there are approximately 66,360 dogs and 74,225 cats, or about 140,585 dogs and cats, in Lincoln. That means that more than half of the dogs and cats in Lincoln are unlicensed.

Animal Control is responsible for enforcing the Lincoln animal ordinances, which include the requirement for

licensing of dogs and cats. Nearly all pet owners agree rabies vaccinations, spaying and neutering, microchipping and licensing pets help to protect both people and the animals they care about. All owners must show current proof of rabies vaccination from a licensed veterinarian to license a pet in Lincoln, an important public health measure.

Fewer dogs and cats are being impounded in Lincoln than in the previous 3 years. It is difficult to say if a specific action is the cause of this positive trend, but getting a pet licensed is a big factor in avoiding impoundment. Animal Control officers will return a pet to its home when the pet has its license on its collar. Lincoln also has worked to decrease irresponsible pet ownership. In May 2010, a city ordinance was passed that defines an irresponsible owner and the consequences.

Unfortunately, there are thousands of

unwanted pets, and it is difficult to find homes for them. There are advocacy and shelter services in Lincoln that address this problem daily. However, all of the best intended and most supported programs will never succeed without owners taking responsibility for their pets. Unwanted pets should not be “put out to fend for themselves.” Finding the pet a new home, contacting a rescue group for assistance or taking the pet to a shelter where it will be put up for adoption are preferred humane alternatives.

If you would like know more about the services provided by Animal Control, you can call 402-441-7900. For a complete overview and several online services, including pet licensing, reporting lost and found animals and more, visit [lincoln.ne.gov](http://lincoln.ne.gov), keyword animal control.

# Jackpot and a marriage proposal

By Martha Stoddard

Some guys have rented billboards to propose to their girlfriends. Some fly banners over Husker football games. Some have dropped to their knees in the middle of marathons or in the state legislative chamber. Some enlist family or friends or school children in the surprise.

Derek Wiejes popped the question with the help of a black-and-white kitten named Jackpot and a couple of Cat House volunteers.

The proposal was a first for The Cat House, which is more used to matching cats with people than people with people. But TCH was happy to help when Derek asked if he could adopt a kitten and get engaged at the same time.

A Kearney native, Derek had been talking about marriage with his girlfriend, Jessie Winter, of Hastings, since last



summer. By then, the two had been dating for close to a year.

They met one night at a downtown bar. It was before Thanksgiving break at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where they were students. Derek came in with friends and

he and Jessie struck up a conversation. They were still talking at last call. Two weeks later, they went on their first official date. The next day, they went to a movie.

“It was really natural, like the best experience I’ve ever had,” Derek said.

It seemed natural, too, when they moved in together and Bob, the cat, joined them. Originally Derek’s cat, Bob had been adopted from Dumb Friends League in Denver. He had stayed with Derek’s father when Derek went off to college. Jessie’s childhood cat had died a couple of years earlier.

As 2012 wound down, Derek and Jessie talked about getting another cat. Shortly before Christmas, Derek took the first step. He stopped in at TCH open hours, met cats and filled out an adoption application. Once approved, he started plotting.

And on a Saturday afternoon, he brought Jessie down to the shelter for a specially arranged visit. “She didn’t have any idea what was happening,” Derek said. But she was overjoyed when she realized they were getting a cat. The two agreed on the happy-go-lucky Jackpot.

Volunteers Belinda Gilliam and Christine Neiman went off to clip the kitten’s claws. When Jessie saw him next, he was sporting a rhinestone collar with a special addition. It took a few seconds before she realized it was an engagement ring. Jessie burst into tears, while the kitten purred and Derek popped the question. She said yes, of course. Then she looked at the kitten. “I definitely hit the Jackpot today,” she said.

The Cat House needs your support so we can continue helping our feline friends. To donate food, toys or supplies, please call 402-441-9593 for an appointment. Contributions can also be made with a credit card through Paypal. Please consider donating, or visit our website to learn how you can help!

The costs to operate the facility continue to grow. One way of reducing costs is to minimize the number of newsletters that are printed and mailed out to our supporters. We are, therefore, asking if we can send future issues of The Cat House Scoop to your email address instead of mailing you a printed copy. Rest assured though, if you don't have access to a computer, we will continue to send the newsletter to you by mail!

If you'd like to receive The Cat House Scoop by email, please send your name, home address, and email address to [info@thecathouse.org](mailto:info@thecathouse.org). Please use "Newsletter" as the subject of the email.

# We need your support!



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