

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

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FEATURED CATS

Jerry & Dolly
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Spartacus
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THE CAT HOUSE SCOOP

© Essence in a Flash by Kimberly McCarty

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ADOPTION FACILITY

3633 "O" 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
thecathouse.org

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The Cat House is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. TCH is funded primarily by donations and adoption fees and is staffed primarily by volunteers.

Help! My cat is missing!

By Kris Silva

What to Do When Your Kitty Gets Outside and Doesn't Come Back: Tips for Indoor and Indoor/Outdoor Cats

There's nothing quite as nerve-racking as realizing your cat is missing. Whether your feline friend is an adventurous indoor/outdoor cat or an exclusively indoor kitty, a prolonged absence can spark worry and anxiety. But don't panic! There are practical steps you can take to help bring your beloved pet home safely.

Stay Calm and Act Quickly

First, try to remain calm. Cats are incredibly resourceful and often closer than you think. A calm approach will help you think clearly and act efficiently.

For Indoor Cats:

When an indoor cat gets outside, they are likely to stay close to home, as the outside world can be overwhelming. Here's what to do:

- Search Nearby: Indoor cats typically hide within a three- to five-house radius of their home. Check under porches, in garages, in bushes, in window wells, and other hidden nooks. Bring a flashlight, even during the day, to spot reflective eyes.

Continued on page 2

Annie urges seniors to Foster a Feline Friend

By Ann Adams

The Cat House introduced the Foster a Feline Friend Program last fall, an initiative to bring joy and companionship to both seniors and cats. This program matches carefully chosen adult cats with applicants aged 60 and over.

The program is designed to make fostering accessible for seniors, offering them the chance to experience the love and companionship of a pet without a major financial commitment. Applicants simply complete an adoption application and go through the usual screening process to ensure a good fit between cat and caregiver.

For Annie, the program proved life-changing. At TCH, Annie was safe and had regular food, water, and a cleaning service. She also had a few favorite volunteer friends, while making it clear she didn't care for most people and wasn't happy with all the other cats surrounding her.

But within just 3 hours of arriving at her new senior foster's home, Annie was making biscuits on her foster mom's leg, a clear sign of trust and contentment.

Continued on page 6

Volunteer spotlight: Cindy Wenzl

By Ann Adams

For nearly two decades, Cindy Wenzl has been an invaluable part of The Cat House, dedicating time, energy, and passion to cats and the people who love them. With 18 years of service at TCH, Cindy has worn many hats, and her commitment continues to shape the success of our shelter.

Having spent years in law enforcement, Cindy was looking for a meaningful way to explore a new passion outside of her career. Volunteering at TCH turned out to be the perfect fit, providing not only a rewarding experience but also a chance to make a lasting impact on the lives of countless cats and adopters.



During her time at TCH, Cindy has contributed in numerous ways. Currently serving on the Board of Directors, she also assists with open hours, conducts follow-up calls with recent adopters, and even served as TCH's Interim President for a time. From her early days as a morning shift cleaner to later involvement in fundraising events, Cindy's dedication has been unwavering.

One of Cindy's favorite aspects of volunteering is working directly with potential adopters. Helping families find the perfect feline companion and guiding

them through the adoption process is an experience she loves.

Among many cherished memories, Cindy fondly recalls working alongside a dedicated team of volunteers to make the TCH garage sales a tremendous success. The teamwork, camaraderie, and shared commitment to helping the shelter made these events both fulfilling and impactful.

Thank you, Cindy, for your years of dedication and unwavering support for The Cat House. Your contributions have made a world of difference, and we are grateful to have you as part of our TCH family!

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.

Our volunteer needs change frequently. We encourage you to check our website at thecathouse.org for updates.

You can fill out a volunteer application online at thecathouse.org, come in during open hours to fill out an application, or e-mail questions to volunteer@thecathouse.org. You're in for a rewarding experience!

Opportunities to help include:

- Open hours
- Daily care, feeding, room cleaning, and socializing of cats
- Facility maintenance
- Newsletter articles, photography, and production
- Assisting with communication to volunteers and/or the public
- Adoption counselor
- Post-adoption follow-up calls
- Filing
- Grant writing
- Fundraising
- Retail events
- Feral/TNR program
- Foster care

Help! My cat is missing, continued from page 1

- **Use Familiar Sounds:** Gently shake a treat bag or use a calming, familiar voice to call for your cat. The sound of your voice may help coax them out of hiding.
- **Set Out Familiar Scents:** Place their litter box, a favorite blanket, or a piece of your clothing outside. The scent can guide them back home.
- **Create a Safe Space:** Leave a carrier or box with a blanket near the door, along with food and water. The comfort of a safe space can attract them.

For Indoor/Outdoor Cats:

Although keeping your cat indoors only is the safest for your cat, if your indoor/outdoor cat doesn't return as expected, it's important to assess whether this is typical behavior or if something might be wrong.

- **Check the Usual Spots:** Cats with outdoor access often have favorite hangouts. Visit these spots, calling your cat's name and listening for responses.
- **Ask Around:** Talk to neighbors and ask them to check garages, sheds, and under decks. Sometimes cats get accidentally locked inside.
- **Expand Your Search:** While indoor cats usually stay close, indoor/outdoor cats might roam further. Widen your search to a few blocks.
- **Use Technology:** If your cat is microchipped, notify the chip company immediately. Post on local lost pet websites and social media groups, including Nextdoor and Facebook.

For All Cats:

- **Make Posters:** Create clear, eye-catching posters with your cat's photo, name, and

your contact information.

- **Alert your neighbors:** Inform them about your missing cat and share your flyer with contact information.
- **Post Online:** Share in local lost and found groups, such as Lincoln Nebraska and Surrounding Areas Lost and Found Pets, Lincoln Nebraska Lost Pets, and the local animal control page as well as websites like PawBoost and Petco Love Lost.
- **Visit Shelters and Vets:** Check with local shelters, veterinary clinics, and rescues regularly. Sometimes cats are brought in as strays.
- **Keep Looking:** Don't give up! Cats can return days, weeks, or even months after going missing.

Prevention is Key

Once your kitty is back home (yay!), take steps to prevent future escapes:

- **Microchip Your Cat:** This permanent ID can help reunite you if your cat is found.
- **Update ID Tags:** Make sure your cat's collar has an ID tag with your current phone number.
- **Create Safe Outdoor Options:** If your cat loves being outside, consider a catio (cat patio) or leash training for safe outdoor adventures.

At The Cat House we know how much your cat means to you, and we hope these tips help you feel prepared and empowered if your kitty ever takes an unexpected adventure. If you need support or advice, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

Stay safe, and may all lost kitties find their way home!

Featured cats: Jerry & Dolly

By Kris Silva

At TCH, every cat has a unique story, and today we're excited to share the heartwarming tale of Jerry and Dolly. Both of these wonderful felines live with FIV (Feline Immunodeficiency Virus), a condition that definitely doesn't define their spirited personalities or their capacity for love.

Jerry, whose approximate date of birth is January 2022, is no ordinary cat. Known for his mischief and legendary escapades, he earned the title of "escape artist" among our team. Before meeting Dolly, Jerry was famously hot and cold when it came to giving affection—one moment showering you with love and the next letting you know in no uncertain terms he was done with human interaction. Yet, everything began to change when he met Dolly, marking the start of a transformative chapter in his life.

Dolly, a 1-year-old gentle soul, entered Jerry's life just a few months ago, and her calming presence has had a remarkable impact on him. Her playful, affectionate nature has helped channel his abundant energy into more relaxed pursuits. Although Jerry still shows off his impressive escape skills from time to time, his days now include plenty of quiet moments sharing snuggles and purrs with his newfound friend.

Both Jerry and Dolly live with FIV, and their journey is a testament to the resilience of our feline friends. Their story serves as a reminder that every cat, regardless of health challenges, has the potential to bring joy and transformation into our lives. With proper care and a loving environment, FIV-positive cats can thrive and continue to bring endless



love and happiness to their families.

For those considering adopting a feline friend with FIV, here are some helpful tips:

- FIV affects the immune system, but with proper care, FIV-positive cats can live long, happy lives.
- Reducing stress is key to maintaining a strong immune system. Ensure your home is a calm and secure space for your new companion.
- Regular check-ups, vaccinations, and a tailored health plan are essential to monitor and support your cat's well-being.
- A balanced, nutritious diet can boost your cat's overall health and help it manage its condition effectively.

The bond between Jerry and Dolly has not only enriched their lives but has also brought smiles to the faces of our staff and volunteers. Their companionship highlights the power of love and understanding in overcoming obstacles. We invite you to come visit them, share a moment of calm, or even help us spread their inspiring story of change and hope. Both cats love to play with their toys, adding joyful energy to every moment they share.

Together, Jerry and Dolly remind us that every cat has the capacity to change, to heal, and to love. They are true examples of how friendship and dedicated care can transform even the most spirited mischief-maker into a mellow, affectionate companion.

Helping adopters protect their new feline friends

By Laura Wong

At The Cat House, we strive to provide the best possible care for the cats and kittens while they are with us, but their care journey truly begins when they are adopted. One of the best ways to safeguard a cat's health and well-being is through pet insurance—and we are excited to announce our partnership with MetLife Pet Insurance!

Through this partnership, adopters at The Cat House now can get 30 days of free pet insurance from MetLife, which they can activate at any time. This invaluable benefit allows new pet parents to focus on bonding with their feline without worrying about unexpected veterinary costs. Even better, for every adopter who signs up for the free 30-day coverage, The Cat House receives a \$5 referral donation from MetLife, helping TCH continue to care for the cats still waiting for their forever homes.

We all want our feline companions to live long, healthy lives, but just like humans, they can face unexpected medical problems. From routine check-ups to urgent surgeries, veterinary care can be costly. Pet insurance helps offset these expenses, ensuring that financial concerns don't become a barrier to getting a cat the care they need.

Continued on page 6

These cats are looking for forever homes.

More cats can be found on page 4! Visit our shelter on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6 to 8 pm and Sundays from 1:30 to 4 pm.



Sylvester (FIV+) – 2 years



Quincy – 5 years



Luna – 4 years



Kumara – 8 years



Spring (FeLV+) – 1 year

New drug saves Walter from once-untreatable FIP

By Martha Stoddard

Five months ago, Walter was a very sick little kitten. His temperature soared. He barely nibbled on his food. Instead of growing, he was losing weight. Instead of having the usual kitten energy, all he wanted to do was lie in his bed.

His future looked bleak. Hospitalization didn't help, as signs increasingly pointed to a fatal disease called feline infectious peritonitis, or FIP.

But a ground-breaking medication, along with the dedication of The Cat House and expert care from Pitts Veterinary Clinic, saved Walter's life and has restored him to health.

Walter came to TCH from another rescue organization because he tested positive for the feline leukemia virus (FeLV). That virus weakens a cat's immune system and typically shortens their life. TCH has been a leader in adopting out cats with the feline leukemia virus in Nebraska.

It was another virus, however, that caused Walter's illness. FIP begins with infection by a feline coronavirus. Although the virus is from the same family that causes COVID in humans, this one only affects cats.

This feline coronavirus is widespread, and many cats get it with few signs or symptoms. Only a few develop the mutated form of the virus that leads to FIP. The risk of developing FIP is higher for kittens, immune-compromised cats, certain pedigreed breeds, and senior cats. It is also higher for cats in multi-cat living situations. The mutated virus triggers an intense inflammatory response, which can affect the abdomen, kidneys, brain, eyes, or other organs.

Until recently, there was no effective treatment for FIP. Having the disease almost always meant a heart-breaking end for a cat.



But research over the last 7 years or so has opened the door for hope.

The research showed that a type of drug, classified as a nucleoside analogue, could stop the FIP-causing virus from multiplying in a cat's body. One such drug, labeled GS-441524, was developed in 2018 by the Bova Group, which is based in Australia.

Clinical trials in Australia and the United Kingdom showed the drug to be safe and effective in treating cats with FIP. Those trials showed that about 85 percent of cats respond to the treatment and appear to be cured.

Word of that success spread quickly across the globe. Desperate cat-owners in the United States created informal networks to share information about the treatment and find black-market sources of the drug. Those efforts saved many cats.

But the treatment only became widely available last June, after the federal Food and Drug Administration announced it would not stand in the way of GS-441524 being sold in the U.S. Meanwhile,

Stokes Pharmacy, a New Jersey-based compounding pharmacy, announced it had partnered with the Bova Group to compound the drug in the U.S. Stokes offers its Bova GS-441524 in tablet form or as a liquid suspension.

Foster kitten Penelope was the first from TCH to try the new drug. For her, it was a last-ditch effort to counter months of intestinal problems and lack of appetite. On the new medication, prescribed by The Pet Clinic in Omaha, Penelope started gaining weight and seemed to be finally doing better. In the end, she did not survive. But it was other health problems, not FIP, that cut short her life.

So when Walter was struggling and FIP was suspected, TCH Blue Unit Coordinator Julie Dahlke asked the veterinarians at Pitts about trying the new drug. They researched the drug and decided to make Walter their first patient on the treatment.

The change was dramatic. Within a couple days, Walter's temperature had dropped to normal and his appetite picked up. Volunteers and medicators said he was "spunky" and "acting like a kitten, very playful." The good reports continued as the weeks went on.

By the time Walter finished his 84 days of treatment, he was at a normal weight for his age. His bloodwork was completely normal, very different from how it had looked nearly 3 months earlier. In February, his vet pronounced him "treated for FIP" and ready to be adopted.

While Walter may be ready to go on with life as an ordinary cat, TCH is hoping to spread the word of his success and save other cats. Already, another TCH kitten with suspected FIP has started on the new treatment. Results so far appear promising.



Grace – 7 years



Matty (FeLV+) – 11 months



Gladys – 7 years



Kitaro – 7 years



Dash (FIV+) – 7 years

Donations in memory & honor of...

In memory of

Stitch from Analise Alloway
Sheri Dean from SP Group PC, Cinda Hughes, Vicky Moore, and Bruce and Kathleen Baker
R. Scott Furman from Kelly Jirovec and Pamela Grabowski
Shirley Zink from Darla Zink
Hedwig Clark from Alice Flowers and Beth Honnen
Wendy Francis from Shirley Flynn
Betty Miller from Sharon Miller and Barbara Haack
Faye Loreen Pearson from Karl Skinner
Stitch from Diana Zetterman
Vada and Pearl from Connie Wolfe
Shade from Gerald Wilkins
Nanna and to honor Sarah, Rick, and Jobson for finding Nanna's beloved cat Christie a loving new home from Carrie Richardson
Kay Werblow from Patrick Werblow
Keith Root from Pat Raikes
Mary Bahns from Theresa Bahns
Cindy Wehrwein from Michael Roth and Sandra Hisakuni
Walt, Vic, and Martini from John and Brenda Roby
Wesley "David" Crabb from NDOL Adjudication Team and Annette Johnson
Siam and Jemini from Duane Cooper
Jim and Muffy from Sandra Mertlik
Muffin from Craig Herman
Olive from Rebecca Heinzman
Carol Ann Langston from Charles Langston
Susie Laws from Leanne Nordquist
Grandma Shirley and Mandy Cat from Melody Shults
Alma Vlasak's cat Tiny from Jeanne Lillich
Shari Aldrich from Jeff Zugmier
Myrna Bailey from Kaywin Sohl
Patty Killman from Kathi Killman, Susan Kinyon, David Stempson, Mary Jane Dunn, James Rowoldt, Richard Stolz, and Judith Parks and the Stolz family
Purrcy from Marge Anderson

In honor of

The Cat House from Nicole Brandtjen
Pitts Veterinary Hospital's 50th Year Celebration from Kyle Kyster
Sandie and Robin McConnell and John and Melissa Pedersen for Christmas from Theresa Wagner

Amy Bartolome's birthday from Nebraska Hearing Center
Don Alvord's birthday from Janice Walker Maxwell and Sophie from Robert and Shirley Wiggins
Geoff Balliet and Karin Dalziel from Sandra Black
Big Kitty and Joni Sutherlin from Brooke Downing
Gina and Sally from Eyde Olson
Alice Jolene from Benjamin Bohall and Pretty Boy
Mama Bear, NW 14th Street Colony, from Sheri Zimmerman
Elise and Garrett for Christmas from Kim Ehlers
Mallory DeVol from Consortia Consulting Inc.
Ralph, Beth Scott's cat, for Christmas from D. Ann Soukup
Veronica and Mike Cammarata from Gina Cammarata Smith
Bob and Joyce Howe for Christmas from Andrew Elmore
Bobbie Abbott from Darren Abbott
Lynda Hames' birthday from Geoffrey Hames
Dave and Michelle Hemsath for Christmas from Alex Hemsath
Ryan Bauer from David Roberts and Martha Roberts
Amy Law from Mirabella Pisani
Ginny Czechut from Anita Friehe
Prue Coccodrilli from Joan Krick
Suzan Connell from Judith Gibson

Special thanks to

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Dr. Kelly Jordan | Cause For Paws |
| Dr. Shelley Knudsen | Nature's Variety |
| All Feline Hospital | Petco |
| Driftwood Vet Clinic | Tractor Supply |
| Pitts Veterinary Hospital | |
| Tomorrow's Veterinary Care | |
| Vondra Veterinary Clinic | |
| Wachal Pet Health Center | |
| Creature Comforts Mobile Veterinary Service | |

Wish List

DRY CAT FOOD

- Any dry cat food
- Science Diet Optimal
- Science Diet C/D Stress*
- Royal Canin Baby Cat
- Science Diet Metabolic*

CANNED CAT FOOD OR PACKETS

- Science Diet or Iams – kitten & adult – turkey, chicken, salmon (ground or minced)
- Fancy Feast – turkey, chicken, salmon (Classic); Grilled Delights with Cheddar; or Broths sold in pouches
- Fancy Feast Kitten
- Hartz Delectables – sold in packets
- Science Diet Metabolic or Z/D*
- Royal Canin Baby Cat Loaf

SUPPLIES

- Brooms
- Paper towels
- Kitchen and office trash bags (13 gallon size)
- Copier/printer paper

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/pods
- Clorox disposable wipes
- Swiffers

CAT LITTER

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

MISCELLANEOUS

- Meat flavored baby food (chicken or turkey)
- Small chenille or cotton reversible bath rugs (no rubber backs)
- Aluminum trays (no smaller than 8" x 13")
- Lint rollers
- Purina Pro Plan Hydra Care Supplement
- Purina ProPlan Calming Care Supplement
- Gift certificates to entirelypets.com
- Gift cards to Tractor Supply, Walmart, Target, Petco, or PetSmart

* sold at vet clinics

Calendar of Events

MOAGS (Mother of All Garage Sales)

April 4 / 5 to 9 p.m.

April 5 / 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Sandhills Global Event Center, Lincoln

Give to Lincoln Day

May 29, 2025

Midnight to 11:59 p.m.

Donate at givetolincoln.com.

Donations accepted May 1-29.

Farmer's Market

Check our website, thecathouse.org, Facebook, or Instagram for further information.

Helping adopters protect their new feline friends, continued from page 3

Pet insurance offers several key benefits for pet owners. By helping cover unexpected vet bills, it allows owners to focus on their cat's health rather than on their budget. Coverage for emergencies ensures that accidents and sudden illnesses receive prompt medical attention. Additionally, pet insurance supports the management of chronic conditions like diabetes or kidney disease by helping with ongoing treatment costs. Some plans also encourage preventative care by covering routine check-ups, vaccinations, and dental care, promoting long-term health for cats.

While this program directly benefits adopters, it's not limited to them. Any pet owner can sign up for MetLife Pet Insurance, and if they mention The Cat House when enrolling, we'll receive a \$5 referral donation. That means if you or someone you know is considering pet insurance, this is a great way to support our shelter while ensuring their pet's health is protected.

This partnership with MetLife is an exciting step forward in supporting our adopters while also helping to fund The Cat House's lifesaving mission. Not only does it give new pet parents a financial safety net, but it also raises money to care for the cats who are still waiting for homes.

Give to Lincoln 2025

By Alma Vlasak

Making a difference is what the Lincoln Community Foundation is all about. The Foundation is holding its 14th annual Give to Lincoln (G2L) fund-raising event on Thursday, May 29, 2025. This is an opportunity for you to help the cats of The Cat House (TCH), Lincoln's only no-kill cat shelter.

Registered non-profits include TCH, a 501(c)(3) organization. The event will end at 11:59 p.m. on May 29. After all donations for the month of May are totaled, each organization will receive a proportional amount of the \$650,000 matching funds raised by the Lincoln Community Foundation.

Your donation to TCH is especially important this year as we work to extend our outreach to help more cats in our community. Quality of life for a cat begins with being born as a healthy kitten that is then spayed or neutered at the appropriate age. All cats adopted through

TCH are spayed/neutered, vaccinated, and microchipped. Other TCH programs supporting cats include Foster a Feline Friend, a new program that was started in 2024; Trap, Neuter, and Return (TNR); and Cat Therapy, which is being brought back. All programs require volunteer and monetary support.

G2L is a major source of funds for TCH along with adoption fees, retail sales, and other fund-raising events. Funds are used to maintain our shelter and also to support the TNR program that is dedicated to community or feral cats.

TCH is thankful for all those who support our work and care for cats. We appreciate all donations, which will help us care for cats that enter our shelter in search of a forever home. Join us in making a difference this year.

Your generosity and willingness to help TCH will always be remembered. Thank you for your support.

Foster a Feline Friend, continued from page 1

She wasted no time settling in—climbing her ladder, snuggling up at night, and even rolling onto her back for tummy rubs.

Her foster mom reports that Annie has proven to be a loving and intelligent companion. She enjoys perching on the back of the sofa to watch the world go by. She's also a little spoiled—gently tapping her foster mom on the arm to remind her when the litter box needs cleaning. She even recognizes the nightly routine, heading straight to the bedroom as soon as the TV is turned off.

For Annie and her foster mom, the TCH senior foster program has proved to be a unique opportunity. It allows seniors to make a lasting impact on a cat's life while enjoying the joy, comfort, and companionship of a pet.

Here are some details, if you or someone you know is interested in fostering a cat through the Foster a Feline Friend program:

- Matchmaking: TCH volunteers carefully guide each senior applicant to an adult cat that best suits their needs and personality.
- Provided essentials: TCH supplies all necessary items for the cat, including

food, litter, and any prescribed medications.

- Transportation support: TCH can arrange transportation if a senior is unable to take their cat to the vet or shelter appointments.
- Vet care costs covered: All veterinary expenses are handled by TCH, ensuring the health and well-being of the fostered cat.
- Flexible commitment: If a match turns out not to be ideal, TCH will make arrangements to bring the cat back as soon as space is available, making the program as flexible as possible for seniors. The Cat House encourages interested seniors to get in touch by phone or email to begin the application process. Once a match is determined, participants will sign a foster family agreement and welcome their new feline companion into their lives. Contact The Cat House today to learn more!



Dear Advice Cat,

My new kitten is 4 months old and so much fun! I waggle my fingers, and she pounces and tries to catch them. So cute! But lately she has started grabbing my hand and biting it with her little sharp teeth. Ouch! How do I get her to stop?

Signed, Pincushion

Dear Pincushion:

First, let me offer congratulations to you on your new kitten. It is the nature of youth to be energetic and to enjoy exploring their world, which can be quite entertaining for those who are observing them. Second, I empathize with your frustration over her new biting and grabbing behavior. Experience has taught me that kitten bites can be quite painful.

Apropos of both items, however, I must issue a strong warning against using your fingers to play with your kitten. Wagging your fingers, as you describe it, is not

advisable with kittens for that matter. The same precaution applies to moving your fingers, hands, or feet under a blanket or rug to encourage a kitten to pounce. By the same token, I would warn you against using your hands or feet to roughhouse or wrestle with a kitten.

Let me explain. Kittens are impressionable creatures, who are at a stage of life where they are learning what behavior is acceptable and what is unacceptable. A kitten can easily absorb the wrong lesson when humans use hands or other body parts during play. As your experience demonstrates, kittens can learn that it is acceptable to unleash their hunting instincts on body parts. When she grabs your hand and bites, she is simply treating your hand as prey. This behavior may leave you feeling like a pincushion now, pierced by tiny teeth and claws, while resulting in more serious



and painful injuries when she grows up.

My suggestion would be that you embark on teaching your kitten more wholesome lessons. Rather than using your fingers, hands, arms, feet, or other body parts for play, substitute toys meant for cats. Waggle a wand toy or a string to encourage pouncing or give your kitten a catnip stick, such as those made by my friends here at The Cat House. (As a precaution, however, only use string toys under supervision to ensure your kitten does not eat the string.) On the occasions that your kitten bites, you can stop play and ignore it for a while to avoid reinforcing the behavior. As an alternative, you can redirect it with an appropriate toy.

I sincerely hope this advice proves useful. Remember that kittens may be cute, but they also need to learn to be good cat citizens.

Regards, Spartacus

Can cats understand us?

By Ann Adams

Cat owners often talk to their feline companions, whether giving commands, offering praise, or simply chatting about their day. But how much do cats actually understand? Research suggests that cats are more perceptive than they often get credit for.

Studies have shown that cats can distinguish their owner's voice from that of a stranger. Studies have found that cats react more strongly to recordings of their owner's voice compared to unfamiliar voices, indicating a level of recognition. This suggests that, while they may not understand specific words, they associate their owner's voice with familiarity, safety, and possibly food!

Some cats appear to learn certain words, especially those that have direct consequences for them. Many cat owners report that their pets respond to words like "treat," "dinner," or "play." This is likely due to associative learning—cats link specific sounds to specific outcomes. Unlike dogs, who have been bred for thousands of years

to respond to human commands, cats are more independent learners and tend to respond based on their own motivation.

While words themselves may not hold much meaning for cats, tone of voice and body language play a significant role in communication. A cat can tell the difference between a gentle, soothing voice and an angry or frustrated tone. Many cats respond positively to a soft, high-pitched voice but may react negatively to loud or harsh tones. Likewise, body language—such as eye contact, slow blinking, or an open, relaxed posture—can convey emotions to a cat even without spoken words.

Research suggests that cats do recognize their names, but whether they choose to respond is another matter. One study found that cats could distinguish their names from other similar-sounding words, even when spoken by strangers. However, a cat's response may vary based on their personality—some may meow or look toward the speaker, while others may ignore the call entirely.

2024 Stats

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| Cats and kittens who received care | 760 |
| Adoptions completed | 322 |
| TNR's (Trap-Neuter-Return) | 287 |
| Spay/neuter surgeries completed | 479 |
| Vaccinations given | 1,676 |

While cats may not understand language the way humans do, they are skilled at picking up on vocal cues, tone, and associations with words. They can recognize their owner's voice, learn to associate words with actions, and respond to names—when they feel like it. Ultimately, communication with a cat is about more than just words; it's about tone, body language, and building a bond of trust. So, while your cat may not understand your every word, rest assured they are listening in their own unique way.



THE CAT HOUSE
 THE NO-KILL ALTERNATIVE
 PO Box 23145
 Lincoln, NE 68542

**A NO-KILL SHELTER WHERE THE
 PHILOSOPHY IS THAT EVERY CAT
 AND KITTEN DESERVES A CHANCE!**

NON-PROFIT ORG
 US POSTAGE
PAID
 PERMIT NO. 800



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THE CAT HOUSE | THE NO-KILL ALTERNATIVE

Make checks payable to: The Cat House
 Mail to: PO Box 23145, Lincoln, NE 68542

Please select your contribution amount:
 Other \$ _____
 \$25 \$50 \$75 \$100 \$250 \$500



We need your support!

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@thecatshouse.org. Please use "Newsletter" as the subject of the email.