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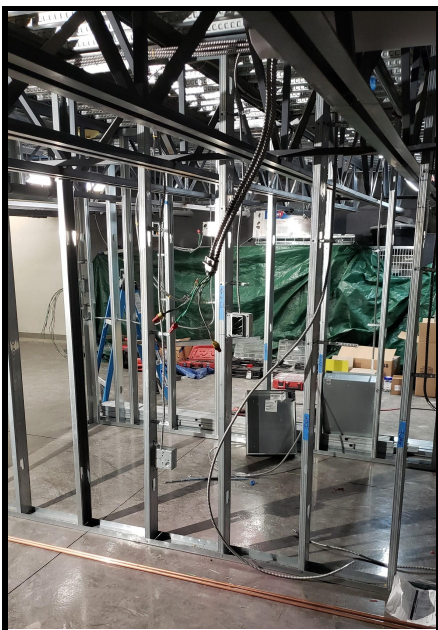
The Cat Connection Annual Report 2020

Mission

The Cat Connection is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit no-kill organization whose primary mission is to rescue abandoned, stray, abused, neglected, unwanted, and injured cats, and to facilitate their adoption into responsible permanent homes. The second part of our mission is to control the feral cat population through our Trap-Neuter-Return-Maintain (TNRM) program, and trapping and socialization of feral kittens. To reduce cat abandonment, surrender, and unwanted breeding, we support low income families through spay/neuter assistance, financial assistance for vet care, food, and supplies. We serve the towns of Waltham, Watertown, Newton, Belmont, Arlington, Lexington, Allston, and Brighton.

Summary for 2020

As a result of our programs, The Cat Connection has made great progress reducing the feral and stray cat population in Waltham and surrounding cities over the past 20 years; however, there are more stray or abandoned cats needing rescue and cats in our foster system needing permanent homes. 2020 was a year like no other. Every TCC activity was touched by the challenges of the COVID pandemic. Despite this, TCC signed a lease on a space in Brighton and started construction on a shelter to add to our foster home network. In preparation, the TCC Board of Directors and staff have been working to develop policies and procedures for the operations of the shelter. Part of this preparation was hiring a Shelter Director, Stephanie Yemma. Because in-person gatherings were limited, TCC had to cancel two fundraisers, Cat Connection in the Courtyard and the Garden Party. To make up for this, TCC started a new pet art fundraiser that brought in nearly \$3,000 (\$2,996). The annual silent auction and gala, Whiskers & Whiskey, was transitioned to a virtual event and brought in a record amount of profit. The pandemic challenged our ability to do our work and put an extra strain on the communities we serve as the economy worsened. To meet this challenge, TCC is continuing the CatNAPS spay/neuter assist and medical assist programs and joined the Pet Food Task Force to help low-income families keep pets in their homes and reduce cat abandonment during these difficult times. The greatest expenses for this year were for shelter construction (\$59,236), veterinary care (\$56,080), and payroll (\$48,288).



TCC 2020 Achievements

- The TCC Board Development Committee professionalized the Board of Directors policies and procedures and recruited a new board member who specializes in public relations and social media marketing. Its goal is to build the Board to 12 members.

- Reduced the number of colonies and colony cats, continuing TCC's long-term reduction of homeless cats.
- TCC did more adoptions and had higher intake than in 2019 despite the pandemic.
- The TCC Grant Committee brought in \$17,400 in grants for CatNAPS, shelter renovations, and veterinary care.
- TCC now has a licensed pet chaplain certified by the Association for Veterinary Pastoral Education who can provide grief counseling and pastoral care for people who have lost their pets.
- TCC was selected as a partner shelter for the NY Cat Film Festival. This resulted in additional monetary donations and increased marketing.
- TCC had two virtual volunteer social events despite the difficulties of the COVID pandemic.
- The CatNAPS program was continued and spayed or neutered 12 owned cats from low-income families. This was funded by Jones Partnership and GoFundMe donations.
- TCC is a partner in the Pet Food Task Force that distributed thousands of pounds of pet food to low-income families in MA through 130 human food pantries.
- TCC was the recipient of a Watertown Savings Bank People's Choice Award and received \$3,500.



Future Improvements

The shelter will open in 2021, allowing TCC to greatly increase the number of cats it saves every year, including developing partnerships with rescues out of state.

Funding Sources

The largest income sources in 2020 were from Whiskers & Whiskey (\$41,573), general donations (\$34,506), and the adoption fees (\$15,490). We are so grateful to all our donors and the vendors who support us, including Pet Supplies Plus, Watertown Savings Bank, PetSmart, Pet World, Loyal Companion, Star Market, Stop & Shop, Shaws, Whole Foods, Polkadog Bakery, Petco, Brookline Grooming and Pet Supply, and to our vets who give us discounted service for cats, including, Pet Haven, Blue Pearl, Kindness Veterinary Hospital, VCA City Cats, and VCA Rotherwood and all the individuals and businesses who donated items for our raffles and silent auction. TCC received grant funding from an Anonymous Foundation, the Jones Partnership Fund (through First Parish in Waltham), the Humane Society of the United States (funding for the PFTF through TCC), and the Shirley Shattuck Windsor Trust.

Volunteer Spotlight (by Sarah Eckert)

Alyson Czelusniak, a Chicopee native, has called Waltham home for sixteen years now. She has certainly been an animal-lover her whole life, and The Cat Connection is lucky to have her on board. Alyson has her own kitty, Phyllis Merry. Phyl, as they call her, is about five years old, and she came into Alyson's life just around Christmastime, hence the name "Merry."

Phyl was a very shy little kitten when she came into Alyson's life, but little by little, she started to come around. Alyson and her husband adopted Phyl from Quincy Animal Shelter where she had been brought in after being found outside. She lived under the bed at first, but slowly, but surely, she started to get

comfortable at home. She is Alyson's shadow now and just loves the new work from home lifestyle. Phyl came into Alyson's life at just the right moment, a few months after Alyson and her husband lost their cat Goat after a two year battle with feline diabetes. Alyson was not sure she was ready to adopt another cat, but when she saw Phyl, she knew she had to meet her in person.

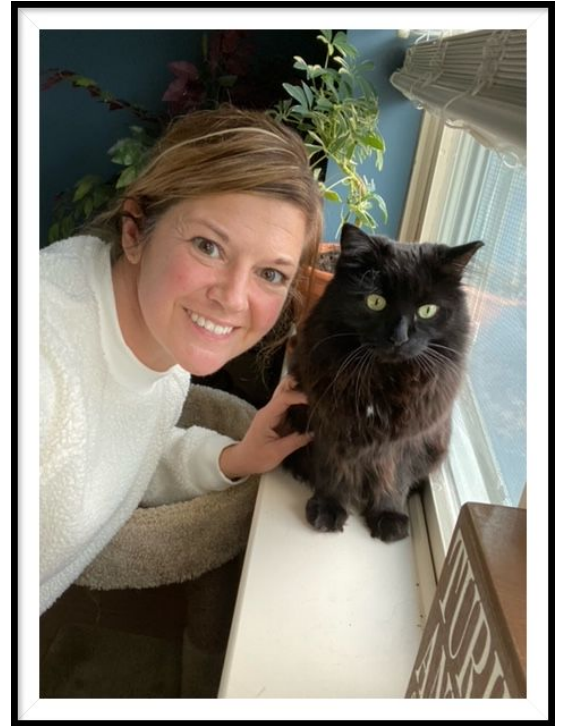
It turned out that Phyl was found on the same day that Goat took a turn for the worse, and Phyl just reminded Alyson of Goat so much that she knew it was meant to be. Lucky for Phyl, Alyson and her husband had more love to give to another beautiful black cat!

Alyson first found out about TCC when she was looking to donate some toys Goat never used, and she kept up with TCC on social media and through newsletters over the years. With long hours at her job at Emmanuel College and the commute into Boston, Alyson knew she needed to add something relaxing and rewarding to her schedule. Alyson currently writes our (fabulous) cat profiles for adoptable cats, and she absolutely loves talking to all of our dedicated foster parents.

She says it is just heartwarming to hear about the love our foster parents give to the foster cats over and over again. They give the cats such a great start to life, in many cases learning to live in a house and be cats with people around. She continues to volunteer because she feels it is just something happy to do!

While she has enjoyed hearing about all of the great cats that come through TCC, Merry stood out to her the most. She struck a chord with Alyson right away because of course, Merry is Phyl's middle name, but even more importantly because, like Goat, Merry is diabetic. Merry's story was very sad, she lost her person during a very difficult time early on during the pandemic, but with TCC's help, Merry found her way into a loving forever home where she has been able to overcome diabetes.

When not volunteering or working, Alyson is an avid sports fan, having coached youth basketball in the past, and she and her husband enjoy cooking and dining out to support local restaurants. Alyson also does dog walking in her spare time for local families. She loves getting to know the dogs and uses her story telling skills to write "report cards" for the families to know how the dogs do each day! She also enjoys doing yoga and spending time with her niece. Her niece just loves Phyl and hopes to one day be good friends, even though Phyl remains wary. Alyson's niece comes for what they call "coronacations" now, so just maybe Phyl will come around soon!



Officers and Board of Directors Dec 31, 2020

Morgan Ritz, President
Anne Thessen, Vice President
Deni Auclair, Treasurer
Gabrielle Cunningham, Director

Elise Ryan, Director

TCC Cat Report 2020

Category	Quantity
Cats on hand Jan 1	39
Total Cats Received	136
Average Cats in Colony	1.9
Total Colonies	14
Total Adoptions	103
Total Cats Euthanized or Died	9
Total Behavior Consults	>800
Cats on hand Dec 31	14



TCC Event Sponsors 2020 (in alphabetical order)

Brian Fitzpatrick at Coldwell Banker
CN Marchionne Insurance Agency
Colvin's Inc. Aerial Trucks
Commonwealth of Massachusetts Employees
Charitable Campaign
Elia Business Solutions
Green Phoenix
Hannaford
Highway Twenty Eight
Kindness Animal Hospital
Lamplight Bio
Loretta McClary Law LLC
Marilyn & Company
Mindfulness in Blue Jeans
MK3 Creative

Parker Keough LLC
Rachel Geller Cat Behaviorist
Robert Bishop & Michelle Perez
Rosette & Tony Antico
Susan Bergman
Susan Lowe, CPA
Telecom Consultants LLC
The Castle Group
The Data Detektiv
The Dog Retreat & Spa
Village Bank
Watertown Savings Bank
Zeus Communications

TCC Donors 2020 (in alphabetical order)

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Amy Oppenheimer
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Christopher Doane
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Cynthia Vachino

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Danielle Doody
Danielle Hunt
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David Kindler
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David Thomson
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Dawn Frazier
Dawn Mullins
Dawn Ringel
Dawn Robinson
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Deborah Teman
Debra Alpert
Debra Obinna
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