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## The Cat Connection Annual Report 2021

### 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 2021

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. The chaos of 2020 continued into 2021. Every aspect of TCC continued to be affected by the challenges of the COVID pandemic. Despite this, TCC finished construction and opened the shelter. 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 doubling the size of the Board of Directors and expanding the Advisory Board. Because in-person gatherings were limited, TCC once again had to cancel the Cat Connection in the Courtyard fundraiser. To make up for this, TCC started a new virtual run/walk fundraiser called Rescue Catwalk that brought over \$4,000 (\$4,161). The annual silent auction and gala, Whiskers & Whiskey, was an in-person event. 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. Expenses for this year included shelter construction (\$89,895 - unamortized), veterinary care (\$47,779), employment costs (\$52,050), rent (\$50,400), and cat supplies (\$54,441).

## **TCC 2021 Achievements**

- The TCC Board Development Committee (Catherine Tate and Susan Lowe) recruited four new board members who specialize in Development, Operations, and Volunteer Relations and added three new Advisory Board members.
- TCC continued to control the number of colonies and colony cats, continuing TCC's long-term reduction of homeless cats.
- After nearly 10 years of preparation, TCC opened a shelter at 167 Chestnut Hill Ave Brighton. Our Shelter Director, Stephanie Yemma, and our two Shelter Volunteer Managers, Sue Willard-Kiess and Melissa Saporetti trained and managed nearly 60 shelter volunteers.
- The TCC Grant Committee (Co-Chaired by Elisif Brandon and Susan DeLellis) brought in \$20,128 in grants for CatNAPS, veterinary care, spay/neuter, and the Pet Food Task Force.
- TCC was selected as a partner shelter for the NY Cat Film Festival. This resulted in additional monetary donations and increased marketing.
- TCC had an in-person volunteer social event in an outdoor space despite the difficulties of the COVID pandemic.
- The CatNAPS program spayed or neutered 35 owned cats from low-income families, almost triple the number from last year. This was funded by Jones Partnership Fund, matching funds, a grant from the Mass Animal Coalition, and GoFundMe donations and organized by Audrey Benevento.
- TCC continued to partner with 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 hired a part-time shelter vet, Dr. Aimee Dalrymple
- TCC raised \$11,850 using legacy naming opportunities in the shelter, with another \$52,050 deposited in 2022
- TCC implemented a successful social media campaign under Elise Ryan that caused our Instagram followers to increase by 20%, and our best performing post of the year was the announcement that we had our first shelter cat, Hunky Dory.
- Developed a partnership with Tabby Tales Rescue in Savannah, Georgia to transport cats to Massachusetts for adoption

## **Future Improvements for 2022**

- The TCC Board of Directors and Advisory Board will hold another strategic planning retreat in March 2022.
- Increase internal communication with an internal Volunteer Newsletter
- We set a goal to increase the number adoptions in 2022 to 200, which is double our average
- Bringing back Cat Connection in the Courtyard
- At least five new fundraisers in 2022, simultaneously aiding the marketing and brand awareness of TCC's shelter by building relationships with community partners
- Increase Board size by recruiting new board members for Marketing, Communications, Data Management, Non-profit Law, and Veterinary Medicine.
- Streamlining operations by training administrative support staff
- Transitioning from deficit years (2020, 2021) back to profitability with over \$100,000 in the bank in 2022

## Funding Sources

The largest income sources in 2021 were from Whiskers & Whiskey (\$41,573), general donations (\$34,506), and the adoption/surrender fees (\$17,669). We are so grateful to all our donors and the vendors who support us, including Pet Supplies Plus, PetSmart, Pet World, Loyal Companion, Star Market, Stop & Shop, Shaws, Whole Foods, 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, VCA Metro Cats, PetMedic, 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 Massachusetts Veterinary Medical Association (funding for the PFTF through TCC), the Mass Animal Coalition, and the Shirley Shattuck Windsor Trust.

## 2021 Shelter Stars!

TCC could not achieve its life-saving mission without its army of volunteers. These Shelter Stars went above and beyond for the kitties in the shelter.

Anthony Westendorf  
Patricia Emery

Lidia Graziano  
Rachel Schlow

Gaby Shpilsky

## Officers and Board of Directors Dec 31, 2021

Morgan Ritz, President

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Deni Auclair, Secretary/Treasurer

Gabrielle Cunningham, Director

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Ann Varghese, Director of Development

Susan Pugliani, Director of Volunteer Relations

Kerie Verneuil, Director of Operations

Greg Pugliani, General Director

## TCC Cat Report 2021

Category	Quantity
Cats on hand Jan 1	18
Total Cats Received	124
Average Cats in Colony	2
Total Colonies	14
Total Adoptions	50
Total Cats Euthanized or Died	2
Total Behavior Consults	>300
Cats on hand Dec 31	43



**TCC Event Sponsors 2021 (in alphabetical order)**

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**TCC Donors 2021 (in alphabetical order)**

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