

CAT CARE QUARTERLY



MEET
OLIVIA

OVERSTIMULATION
IN CATS

ALL ABOUT
CAT ENRICHMENT

www.catcaresociety.org

SUMMER 2024



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Cover photo by Purfect Pose

Our Mission

To be a safe and enriching place for all cats on their journey to a loving home. We do this by providing compassionate care, shelter, adoption services and community engagement.

UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY

26-Aug 9 | Virtual Art Sale
Online | Details TBD

**27 | Free Seminar:
Resolving Litter Box Issues**
10 a.m. – noon | CCS Shelter

AUGUST

2 | KONG Day
4 p.m. – 8 p.m. |
Denver Beer Co.
South Downing location

23 | Paws on the Green
8 a.m. shotgun start |
Homestead Golf Course
11500 W Hampden Ave, Lakewood

**24 | Free Seminar:
Senior Cats**
10 a.m. – noon | CCS
Shelter

SEPTEMBER

**8 | Clear the Shelters:
Waived-Fee Adoption Day**
Noon – 6 p.m. | CCS Shelter

**29 | Free Seminar: The
Benefits of Play**
10 a.m. – noon | CCS

Learn more and sign up for these events and more at www.catcaresociety.org.

RECAPS & HIGHLIGHTS



KITTEN SHOWER | CAT TAKEOVER


Thanks to everyone who attended our kitten shower in May! We received lots of donations to support our amazing fosters, and many kitties found their forever homes. We also thank New Terrain Brewing and KONG for hosting a cat takeover fundraiser; we received proceeds from their cat-themed glassware (that is still for sale on their online merch store!).

FOLLOW OUR SOCIALS FOR UPDATES AND CUTE CAT PICS

 catcaresociety.org

 facebook.com/catcaresociety

 instagram.com/catcaresociety

 tiktok.com/@catcaresociety

 youtube.com/catcaresocietyofficial

Letter From the Executive Director

It's another busy summer season here at Cat Care Society. As is typical for this time of year, we are seeing a rise in requests to take in cats as we — and many other shelters — navigate the influx of kittens. As we head toward the final peak of the season in the fall, we also have several irons in the fire for CCS' future. You may have noticed some construction recently as we install a new elevator. More special projects are in the works to ensure our building can best serve the cats in our care.

On the following pages of this newsletter, you will see several articles about cat behavior and enrichment — two topics that we've been focusing on lately that you will hear more about! It's so important to us to offer experiences that help build the minds and bodies of our feline friends so that they are happier, healthier and more adoptable.

But there are actually some common misconceptions about why exactly enrichment matters. In fact, research about cats has been significantly behind what has been done for behavior modification in dogs. Why? Much of it is related to the idea that cats are more independent and not as social as dogs. Posing a potential risk to the public, animal welfare policy has been directed at statutes focusing on dogs, as well as the creation of animal shelters to house them. This is partially why they've received the bulk of behavioral research! Cats haven't had the same level of support until recently.

Throughout my time working in shelters, I've seen a few trends play out. Dog owners experiencing unwanted behaviors often think about working with a professional to resolve an issue. After all, it's easier to find a dog trainer than a cat behaviorist. Cat owners are more likely to view a problem as too hard to fix and rehome or surrender their pet.



Some shelters can't offer formalized enrichment to the cats in their care. The flip side of this is that cats are more at risk for health issues in shelters because they don't handle stress well. That's what we're trying to change. By building a comprehensive cat enrichment and behavior program, we hope to slowly even out these trends. Cat Care Society has been dedicated to supporting cats and their owners through education and seminars. But now, we're ready to take it a step further. When we take in unsocialized or fearful cats, we'll now have a system for them to gain confidence faster, to address their needs in meaningful ways and create opportunities they wouldn't have access to otherwise.

We have seen countless animals who weren't thriving elsewhere completely transform in an environment with the space and support to blossom. No shelter is the same as a home, but the closer we can get to that, the better a cat will do. And every time these cats go home, we'll be able to help one more have that same opportunity.

EC MICHAELS

Where Are They Now?



"She is a spunky but beautiful old lady that has a lot of love in her!"

Gopher

Back in November 2022, 10-year-old Gopher came in as a transfer from another area shelter with degenerative joint disease, feline herpes virus, chronic conjunctivitis and upper respiratory disease. She was immediately treated for ear mites and badly needed dental work.

Gopher was sweet and loved pets but did not like other cats. She went into a foster home for a calmer environment and regular medication schedule. After some health ups and downs, she unfortunately was returned after her first adoption.

While Gopher struggled to find her perfect home, she quickly was growing on the CCS team. Our lead veterinarian, Dr. Cecily Palamara, called her "one of her favorites."

Finally, one full year after coming in our doors, Gopher — who now goes by Elise — found her forever home. Her adopter Ed was happy to share this update: "Elise is doing well. Her favorite spot is probably my lap! Or in front of the fireplace. True to form, she likes a certain food for a while then opts out and I have to change. She slept with me one night but seems to prefer the living room. I have a fuzzy cat bed she latched onto and sleeps in when I'm gone or it is cool overnight."

"I'm so glad I found her. She hasn't had a great life and really needed and deserved someone to be her champion and give her a good, safe home where she's loved and taken care of. She's got that now. I think she struck gold!"

Meet Olivia

"Hello, my name is Olivia! I am a stunning, 3-year-old FIV+ brown tabby cat with the most beautiful eyes.

Not to brag, but since I've been here over a year, I'm Cat Care Society's longest staying resident (a title I am desperately trying to get rid of!). I'm an independent lady who loves to play and climb in high places. I'm food-motivated and not afraid to tell you how I feel. I enjoy gentle pets and get along fine with the other FIV+ kitties in my room.

Olivia is available for adoption as of this newsletter going to print. We'd love for you to come meet her!



In Loving Memory



Gail Tinianow

August 27, 1951 – April 3, 2024

A long-time Cat Care Society supporter and leader, Gail Tinianow, passed away this spring, leaving behind a commitment to cats and a love for travel.

Her retirement from federal government marked the start of a 10-year dedication to Cat Care Society, when she began looking for volunteer opportunities. Jane Dorsey interviewed Gail to work in Cajun's Closet, Cat Care's thrift shop, in 2008. In 2011, she joined the board of directors to help ensure the financial success of CCS.

Over the next several years, she would go on to hold roles of secretary, vice president, and president. In those days, CCS had a working board, recalled board member Ken Dobrovolny, so Gail was hands-on in the day-to-day operations of the shelter "and ran a tight ship."

Jane Dorsey recalls Gail's enjoyment of the Santa Paws Festival and the role she played in the planning committee. "I remember her bringing detailed records of everything from the prior year and challenged us to make it even better," she said. "She was so enthusiastic about everything she took on, and that made it fun to work with her."

Gail eventually stepped back from the board in 2018, but we will remember her for many, many more years to come.



Leanne Eckel Emm

December 16, 1961 – March 26, 2024

A woman full of life, love and light, another Cat Care Society supporter, Leanne Emm passed away this past March.

Leanne served on CCS' board of directors in 2017, and after retiring from her career in 2018, stepped into a larger, critical role as interim executive director. "Leanne was such a positive, steadying influence," remembers Clyde Dawson, another long-time board member. "And what a sense of humor!"

"The most important contribution she made to CCS was conducting the search for a permanent ED. She was an avid whitewater rafter and had been looking forward to river-running nearly full time in retirement while remaining a strong supporter of the organization."

Leanne's daughter Charlotte says that her mother loved cats her whole life, that they were a really grounding thing for her. "She just loved all animals, and cats were her favorites — that and baby goats and horses!" she said. "She loved CCS and seeing how happy people were when they got to bring a cat home."

Leanne's last update in the summer 2018 Cat Care Quarterly oozed her warm, bright personality and gratitude. For everything that she brought to CCS and the world, we're grateful for her, too.

Inside CCS' Enrichment Efforts & Team

Enrichment is an important element in caring for cats, especially in the often-stressful shelter environment. CCS has always had a dedicated team of volunteer socializers and animal care technicians to support cats. But when two current staff members started, they saw an opportunity to increase the impact.

One animal care tech took an interest in feline enrichment and laid the groundwork. Kelly Cunningham, now our lead enrichment specialist, created an "enrichment calendar" to use with the cats. However, with few supplies, she had to get creative, collecting paper towel rolls, crinkly paper and pipe cleaners to provide enrichment.

Once Sonia Holmstrom, CCS' foster & behavior supervisor, joined the team last year, things took off. With a background in animal behavior in zoos, she has been hard at work creating our own behavior & enrichment program. Thanks to our recent partnership, we've implemented KONG's toys in the shelter to create specialized enrichment experiences for the cats.

"The kitties are spoiled with the coolest and newest cat toys on the market!" Kelly said. "Everything we use for enrichment now benefits the cats by allowing them to feel safe, comfortable and confident enough to express their natural behaviors. We've already seen such an improvement in the overall happiness of our cats."

"It has been fun to build a program that targets improved mental stimulation, exercise and socialization for cats in the shelter, as well as for adopted cats," Sonia said.

"Our shy kitties come around at a much quicker pace than before," Kelly added. "Many of the anxious and fearful cats come out of their shell faster, and it's because we have a dedicated team of staff and volunteers who make sure these cats are enriched and happy. Before the program, it would take some cats months to show any behavioral improvement. Now, most of them improve in weeks! This can drastically reduce the length of time they spend in the shelter. Confident cats are adoptable cats!"



Sonia Holmstrom (left) and Kelly Cunningham (right)



What's the difference?
Cat enrichment enhances overall well-being, while behavior modification targets specific behaviors for improvement.



A cat's enrichment is tailored to their needs based on factors like age, diet, medical needs, behavior and personal preference. A successful tailored enrichment program provides:

- Safety, predictability and consistent, positive interaction with humans
- Easy access to resources
- Personal space and vertical territory
- The choice for a cat to interact, avoid or hide
- Play/exercise opportunities & sensory stimulation

There can be misconceptions about what enrichment means for cats. Though cats can be independent or aloof, that doesn't mean they don't need interaction. "Enrichment is necessary for the physical and emotional well-being of cats, which is more than just playing with them," Kelly said. "Enrichment gives cats the confidence to be their best selves!"

Volunteer Spotlight: Vicky G

In 2022, retired hairdresser Vicky was driving down 6th Avenue when she noticed the Cat Care Society sign from the road. That prompted her to look us up online, find an opening for a volunteer cat socializer, and apply. We are so grateful Vicky saw that sign!

For Vicky, it all started with Garfield. A big orange tabby who had just come in from another shelter proved incredibly hard to handle. From the start, Garfield hissed and swatted everyone away. We began to worry about his adoptability and his future. But Vicky saw past that and asked for a chance.

Vicky began by just sitting near Garfield to get him used to people. She then used an extendable back scratcher to begin touching him, at first simply putting the end of it near him. He'd hiss and snarl. But she kept at it. Day after day. Slowly but surely. Once he tolerated it from a distance, she touched it to his paw. And then his head.

"I knew he was changing, that he was opening up his little heart," she said. "[Garfield] completely transformed and became a loving cat. I could see it in him, that he wanted to be loved but was afraid. When I saw the success with Garfield, that's when I realized how much I can really help a cat who needs it. To see the transformation was huge for me. I look at these kitties and feel so sad that they've isolated themselves out of fear. That's what drives me, I want them to be loved."

"I would recommend volunteering to others because it's bringing love to an animal and bringing love to a person," she added. "It brings more love to the world!"



Garfield was a Lonely Hearts Club member!

If you're interested in volunteering, watch our website for when applications open at catcaresociety.org/volunteer.

Overstimulation in Cats

Like some humans are more sensitive to certain stimuli than others, some cats too have limits for how much physical interaction they can handle at any one time. Often perceived as aggression, overstimulation is a common reaction cats have in busy shelter environments, and sometimes in their adoptive homes even after they've adjusted. But what's behind this behavior and what can you do about it before it escalates?

Understanding “Aggressive” Behavior and Finding Solutions

Overstimulation Overview

Cats experiencing overstimulation often act out, resulting in a bite, scratch, hiss or attack that may seem unprovoked. However, cats often exhibit warning signs through their body language that some of us may miss. What we think is innocent petting may actually hurt your cat more than you realize.

Overstimulation (sometimes shortened to “overstim”) is when cats experience sensory overload from too much petting, caused by a painful nerve reaction, stress or built-up frustration. It has nothing to do with a cat’s temperament, but a physiological response to touch. Basically, their nervous system goes into overdrive, and they feel significant discomfort.

Most often, cats become overstim during petting, but it can also occur during play time, when the cat is engaged with another animal or sees another animal outside.

Unfortunately, in many cases, it is the cats who solicit attention who tend to become overstimulated. If you’ve ever had a cat approach you, then gets mad when you give them attention, this was likely the case!

Recognize the Warning Signs

- Restlessness
- Tail twitching
- Ears flicking back
- Skin rippling
- Becoming “mouthy”
- Whipping its head toward your hand during petting
- Increased vocalization
- Dilated pupils

Often the first sign a cat is overstimulated is subtle; a small ripple or twitch in their skin. This makes being closely attuned to their physical micromovements so important. All thresholds are different, though, and no two cases are exactly the same.

Cats can also accidentally overstimulate themselves. Watch out that they’re not rubbing extensively!

What to do With an Overstim Cat

When touching a cat who becomes overstimulated, try to focus petting on the head and chin, not down the body toward the tail — and never the belly. Pets should be brief. Watch the cat’s body language to see if there are subtle cues that he has had enough. If the cat is signaling that its limit has been reached, it’s time to back off. Give it some time and space before attempting to touch your cat again later.

The best way to help cats with overstimulation is by providing daily enrichment, scheduled play/hunt sessions, and even trying to clicker train your cat.

When you see “overstim release” listed on select cats’ bios, now you’ll know what it means! To learn more about this and other topics, visit the CCS blog.



PAWS ON THE GREEN

GOLF TOURNAMENT

FRIDAY | AUGUST 23 | 2024



Sign ups are open for CCS' biennial golf fundraiser! Register as an individual or put together a group of four feline-loving friends (we can also pair you up with others). Prices include a golf cart, continental breakfast and a buffet luncheon after the tournament. There will be fun contests on the course and an awards ceremony and raffle at 2 p.m.

Want to sponsor the tournament? All Individual Hole Sponsors receive your name and a picture of your cat(s) on a custom sign that will be placed at a hole on the course (you can keep the sign afterward!).

Registration ends August 9 at noon.

Questions? Email Kellie Johnson at kjohnson@catcaresociety.org.
Visit catcaresociety.org/golf for more information!



Save the Date!

Sunday, August 8, 2024
Noon to 6 p.m. | CCS Shelter

All adoption fees waived for all cats – one day only! Stay tuned to CCS' website and social media for more information on events and plans.



Calling All Artists!

We are seeking artists to paint animal sculptures to be sold at auction as a fundraiser for CCS' shelter cats. Fiberglass animal and supply stipend provided. This is a juried project.

2025 Tails of the Painted Cats Gala
Saturday, September 20, 2025

The Arvada Center, 6901 Wadsworth Blvd

For more info, visit catcaresociety.org/topc

Sign up for the Cat Care Society e-Mewsletter at catcaresociety.org/publications to receive heartwarming stories and be the first to know about upcoming events and shelter news!

GIFTS MADE WITH LOVE



JAN 1-MARCH 31, 2024

Thanks to everyone who has made donations *in honor of or in memory of* someone special!

Gifts not listed here will be credited in the next issue. Please send corrections or questions to aleader@catcaresociety.org.

FROM IN HONOR OF

Erin Autrey.....Kathy McChesney
Jessica Bernard.....Evelyn's Kitty for her Birthday
Diane Timothy & Neil Broome.....Rusty
Megan Burd.....Mojo Cat
Linda Cameron.....Linda Cameron
Monica Coffman.....Annabel
Familia Domanguez Martinez.....Havana, Phoenix and Misha
Jon and Terre Donaldson.....Jake the best cat ever
Cathy Fiedler.....the staff, volunteers, and the many special
cats and Kittens I've met in my time at Cat Care Society
Jessica Finlay-Schultz.....Stray Strong
Monica Flaim.....Monica Flaim
Lori Freedman.....All passed and present fabulous
Freedman felines
Michelle Gill.....Linda Ferraro
Ann Hall.....Luca
Gary and Kristin Hathaway.....In honor of our CCS
rescues Mr. Pibbets & Tempest
Jane Hedlund.....Maverick
Janine Helton.....Mia (formerly Sprinkles)
Kathleen Heymans.....Eliza f/k/a Tootsie
Susan Jiron-Garcia.....Lucy
Susan Krepel.....my sweet rescue cat, Chester
Janet Ludwig.....All the kitties needing help!
Susan J McCaffery & Lawrence Mangum.....Pumpkin
Kim Medsker.....Betty White's birthday
Les Ottolenghi.....Hamster Marie
Abby Parker.....Mojo
Michelle Parsons.....For Pepper and Buffy, in loving
memory of Moab
Elizabeth A and K Douglas Riggs.....Jimmi, Slinky, Mochi
Gabriela Senatore.....April Hrenya-Wood
Laura J Smith.....Bertie
Rodolfo Sosa Cordero Camacho.....Frida Gato
Steven and Kristina Stern.....Saint
Lori Wilson.....Saoirse, Surya, Aria, Jeté and Gremlin
Angela Zadro.....Binky Boo and Sir Runtly

FROM IN MEMORY OF

Sally and Laura Angell.....Alvin
Jill Aul.....Keeten
Bonee Barecki.....Casper, Sebastian, Caspian, Stuart,
Cassandra, Chauncy, Little Girl, Leroy, Louie, Princess,
and Madison
Douglas Beeman.....Sweetie
Janice Behm.....Cosmo
Mary Ann Blitt.....Kristy Winfrey

FROM IN HONOR OF

Carol Campbell.....Calvin and Daisy
Connie Chrane.....Merlin
Connie Chrane.....My Friends - Tigger
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Jessica Comerata.....Tipper
Susan "Sue" Corbeil.....Penry
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Cathy Cross.....Mary and Peter Shultz
Caryn Cupach.....Samba Hines
Jill Dalke.....Kirby, Ginger, Barney and in honor of Jill
Jack and Nickie Donnell.....Cruiser and Ms. Bubba
Tamara Drumright.....In Memory of Pouncer (18
years) Jan. 10 2024
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Elizabeth Dymkowski.....Lala, Amy, and Samantha
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Mark Denekas and Kathryn Fouse.....Zeke
Jeffrey French.....Maggie
Gregg Friedlander.....Micky, Sheba, Prindis, Scooter and April
Maiorani-Stuart Fund.....Our beautiful mom, Barb Stuart
Robert and Ann Greenbaum.....Tiffany and Buddy
Donna Hamilton....."The gentleman who did the
blocks cat drawing 2 (last?) with you"
Joseph Hendricks.....Onyx
Darlene Howell.....Kittyboy, Coco and Gizmo
Glenda Hower.....Sugar, Gino & Maggie. In honor of Shasta
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Brian Lewis.....Popoki
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Robert List.....The Maxxx
Claire Long.....Tiki Long
Sherman and Colleen Marsh.....Daphne
Charlie and Paulette Marshall.....Ziva
Kyle Miller.....Terri Miller
Mary Norbury-Glaser.....Sophie
Ashley O'Leary.....Wivi

FROM IN HONOR OF

Christine (Chris) Orr.....Tootsie Roll and in honor of
Katherine J Orr
Stephen and Julianne Pacetti.....Heidi and Tucker
Geoffrey Peck.....DeeDee and Basket
Linda Pierce.....Toby beloved kitty who lived in our community
Elizabeth A and K Douglas Riggs.....Miki, Mew and Dori
Kevin Ripper.....Rosa
Sonny Risley.....Mr. Socks and Ms. Kitty Boots
Patricia Roe.....Francie
Dorothy Ruxton.....Burt, Hamish, and Roobarb
James Sampson.....Miel (Adopted 2003 from CCS)
Michael and Kari Sanders.....Chloe Sanders
Wendy Shattil.....Sufi
Carolee Shaw.....Jann B and Thor and in honor of Hannah C
Susan (Sue) Silverman.....Onyx and Purl
Shaundel Smathers.....Little Girl and CJ
Laura J Smith.....Bertie
David Smith.....Catherine V. Mitchell
Anthony Tamburello.....Liz Sutliff
James Tyler Jr.....Zuess
Loma & Don VanMeter.....Miss Blackie
Paula Vories.....Punkin
Andrey Vyetchnost.....Noma my baby girl
Ann Waite.....Inga
Laura Watt.....Alexis Krystek
Mallory Weeman.....Sharon Berger
Suzanne Westgaard.....Corey
Melissa Wittler.....Zoe Brown 1/30/2024
Jean Wulf.....Wulf cats
Carol Yamamoto.....Tommy (the best cat ever)

FROM ON BEHALF OF

Tasha Moore.....Debe Alikchiho



CommunityShares

Colorado's Community Giving Fund

www.cshares.org or call 303-239-9680

WORKPLACE GIVING

Check with your employer to see if they accommodate payroll deductions or if they participate in Community Shares of Colorado. Cat Care Society has been a member of Community Shares of Colorado since 1997.



CCS participates in the Combined Federal Campaign annually, as a Community Shares member organization.



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HOW TO HELP

BECOME A FOSTER

We are in need of foster families for our kittens, pregnant mothers, temporary care cats and cats who need special attention.

VOLUNTEER

Give back by donating your time! We have many volunteer needs and roles available.

SPONSOR A CAT

Support any of our available cats by sponsoring their adoption fee!

MEOW MART

Visit our Meow Mart in person for all your cat necessities, from treats and toys to stickers, bags and shirts! All profits help the shelter cats.

For more ways to help, visit
catcaresociety.org/how-to-help.

amazon
wishlist



Visit our Amazon Wishlist for a convenient method of supporting our cats without leaving your home.