

# League Links 2.0

A quarterly newsletter from the  
League for Animal Welfare



## Pet Survivor Program

*Planning for Your Pets' Future*

The League is excited to launch a new program that offers a plan for your pets, and peace of mind for pet parents - the Pet Survivor Program.

Though it's a topic none of us want to consider, planning for your pets' future when you die or can no longer provide that care is a critical part of the pet-parent process. Making provisions (both logistical and financial) for your pets after you pass should be as routine as taking them in for annual veterinary check-ups. But all too often, this critical plan is left up to fate or the good will of an overwhelmed and grieving family member.

In 2022 alone, the League has been asked to shelter 37 pets after their owners have passed away. Most of these requests have come from family members who were unable to keep the pets themselves.

The League, unfortunately, did not have space to accommodate all of these unforeseen, urgent requests. And so, in the middle of an already heartbreaking transition for these pets, their futures were up in the air.

The Pet Survivor Program helps change that.

# CURING THE INCURABLE

## *Pursuing Treatment Options for Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP)*

Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP) was, until very recently, one of the worst diagnoses a pet owner could hear. Incurable and fatal, without even any good palliative care options, FIP was guaranteed to be deadly to your cat within weeks or even days of a diagnosis.

FIP is a mutation of a coronavirus. The coronavirus is incredibly common in cats, and causes few and often no symptoms. In some cats, though - and research is still scant on when, why, and to which cats this happens - the virus will mutate into FIP.

Symptoms of FIP are vague and varied. The most apparent symptom is the accumulation of a viscous, yellow liquid in a cat's abdomen (known as the "wet" form of FIP). But symptoms can also present as fever, ataxia, lethargy, weight loss, stunted growth, inappetence. There is no diagnostic test for FIP; and often symptoms can go on for weeks before a diagnosis is made.



*Freddy, the first League cat treated for FIP, on day 3 of treatment. Freddy was treated in 2021, and was adopted into a loving home!*

And until recently, once that diagnosis was made, the recommendation was euthanasia. Symptoms would progress and could be painful; and no curative treatments were available.

But then, something of a (well-studied, scientific!) miracle happened. In 2015, Dr. Neils Pedersen, a veterinary researcher at UC Davis who has dedicated his 5-decade career to studying FIP, heard about an anti-viral drug, GS-441524. The drug was being developed for humans - an antiviral drug that works by preventing a virus from replicating in the body. Dr. Pedersen got in touch with a contact at Gilead, the firm developing the drug, and was able to get some of the drug to try on cats with FIP. He began trials right away and - *miraculously*- all 10 cats treated with the drug recovered. Since then, informally, thousands of cats who have been treated with GS-441524 for FIP have been cured.

But you won't be able to get it from your veterinarian.



*Chip is currently being treated for FIP at the League.*

GS-441524 was being developed for humans, not cats. Gilead tried the virus against Ebola; and recently, a similar anti-viral GS-5734 (also known as Remdesivir) has been used for Covid-19. The research being done to get FDA approval for human use has disallowed any formal testing and approval for use in cats. If the company were to start veterinary trials on cats, and any adverse results were noted, it could impede the approval process for human use.

So how have thousands more cats been treated for FIP? Chinese pharmaceutical companies began manufacturing a similar anti-viral to GS-441524. FIP is more common in purebred cats, which are popular in China; so the need for a cure was critical there. When US cat parents found out that a Chinese company could replicate the drug, a community grew up: FIP Warriors. Now, cat owners and cat rescues across the US have joined FIP Warriors 5.0 (a Facebook group) to gain access to the GS-441524 replica from China.

Though the treatment is expensive (typically between



*Max (left) was adopted from the League, and developed FIP two months later. With advice from the League, Max's mom treated him - and then fostered (and adopted!) Rhinegeist (right), a League kitty that was fighting FIP at the same time.*

\$2,000-\$5,000), and can be cumbersome (an 84-day course of subcutaneous injections), it's working - it is curing cats who were on death's door. This includes 12 cats at the League in just the last year-and-a-half since we have started pursuing treatment for FIP.

*Though the treatment is expensive and cumbersome, it has proved curative against a disease that is otherwise 100% fatal - saving the lives of 12 cats at the League since 2021.*



*Max and Rhinegeist after completing their FIP treatment.*

An FDA-approved, veterinarian-accessible option for FIP will, we hope, be on the horizon soon, so all pet parents can access this treatment.

In the meantime, for more information about this treatment, or if you have a cat who has been diagnosed with FIP, you can find more resources:

- For current and ongoing research about FIP <https://ccah.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/cats/resources/general-feline-infectious-peritonitis-resources>
- FIP Warriors 5.0 (a private Facebook group for owners dealing with FIP; this is the best source for information on how to access the antiviral medication if your cat has an FIP diagnosis).



## Pet Survivor Program: Planning for Your Pets' Futures (continued)



The Pet Survivor Program is a formal arrangement between a pet parent and the League to provide sheltering, care, and love to your pet(s) upon your death or incapacitation. The program allows pet owners to enroll their pets with the League, removing any uncertainty for both the League and the pet owner about space considerations when your pet needs us the most.

Enrolling in the Pet Survivor Program involves the following steps:

- Informing the League of your intent to include us in your end-of-life plans. We will provide you a tour of the facility, so you can feel comfortable about your pet(s)' care; and have you fill out a survey so we can get to know you and your pet(s).
- Creating a financial plan for your pet with the League as the beneficiary. You can establish a Pet Trust; or a provision in your will for a gift to the League.

- Naming a Pet Advocate to communicate with the League upon your death or incapacitation.
- Keeping the League updated about you and your pets. The League wants to provide the best possible care for your pet(s), and consistent communication helps us do that! Annually, we will ask you to update any information about your pet(s) – updated health records, notes on their behavior, new likes/dislikes, and any changes in your health status, your pet(s)' status, or your Pet Advocate's status.

Every year, tens of thousands of pets are left homeless after the death of their owner. In many cases, the owners hoped and assumed surviving family members could care for their beloved pets - but their family and friends were unable to fulfill these wishes.

Unfortunately, public pet care options, like municipal shelters, are limited - often they cannot take cats at all, and can only take dogs on a limited basis. Your pet(s) are already facing the fear and grief of losing the one person they know and trust; they deserve to have this transition be planned and as seamless, stress-free, and loving as possible. The Pet Survivor Program is a way to ensure that your pet receives quality care and a loving advocate at the most vulnerable time of their lives; and top-notch care until the League is able to transition them into a loving, adoptive home.



### Plan for Your Pets' Future!

*Creating a plan for your pets should include these considerations:*

- Where will my pet live? Do I have family or friends who can take them, or will I need help from a shelter or rescue?
- Will my pets' future home need additional funding to provide the kind of care I hope my pets will continue to get?
- Have I clearly communicated my plan to all parties involved? Have they considered how they will handle the logistics of transitioning my pets into their care? Have I confirmed this plan recently?
- Is there a backup plan, if my pets are unable to transition into the care of the person or organization I have designated?

**Email us at [info@lfaw.org](mailto:info@lfaw.org) for more information about the Pet Survivor Program!**

# Accessible Veterinary Care

PROVIDING AFFORDABLE CLINICS FOR OUR COMMUNITY'S PET PARENTS



For more than two decades, the League has helped community members spay/neuter their pets. LFAW's voucher program helps 1,000 cats and dogs each year by offsetting the cost of this surgery at local veterinary offices - a service that is critical to the health of pets, as well as the well-being of overcrowded animal shelters!

In 2022, the League has also been able to provide additional public services for low-income pet owners: a semi-annual vaccine clinic, offering free vaccines for Clermont County pet owners; and a free monthly spay/neuter day for Clermont County cats. The goal is to keep pets happy, healthy, and in their loving homes where they belong.

*Keeping pets healthy and with their families is critical to animal welfare.  
Public outreach keeps pets out of shelters.*

The vaccine clinics, funded by Petco Love (Petco's charitable foundation) will serve more than 500 cats and dogs in Clermont County this year. The first clinic, held in April in partnership with Pets in Need of Cincinnati, served 137 dogs and 88 cats, offering Rabies, FVRCP, and DA2PP vaccines. In October, the League will provide an additional 300 vaccines for cats and dogs, as well as heartworm preventative for dogs donated by Elanco.

The League has also provided free spay/neuter and vaccinations for owned cats of low-income Clermont County residents, thanks to a generous grant from the Joanie Bernard Foundation. In partnership with Ohio Alleycat Resource, the League helped fix 93 cats from May-August; and another 116 cats are scheduled to be fixed between September - December at the League. This program is for families whose financial situation is critical enough that our regular voucher program (which partly subsidizes, but does not cover the entire cost of spay/neuter surgeries) still does not make the service accessible for them.

It has been such a pleasure to serve the pet parents of Clermont County, and expand our services to meet the needs of pets and their people.



# Labor of Love

## SHORT-TERM FOSTERING A GREAT WAY TO VOLUNTEER!

Have you been looking for a way to make a big impact on a shelter cat's or dog's life, but are limited on time?

Have you been missing the kinship of a furball in your home, but aren't in a position to adopt?

Have you been craving an adventure, or a good social media story to share with friends, but can't muster up the energy for a skydive?

### SHORT-TERM FOSTERING IS FOR YOU!

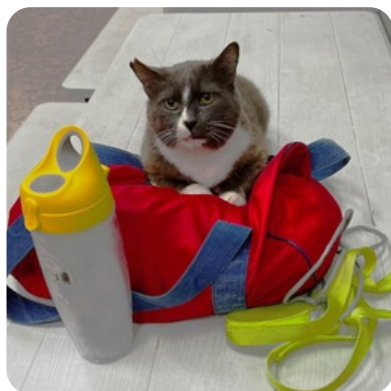
The League offers lots of opportunities to foster a dog or a cat for a long weekend - including this Labor Day! You do not have to be a previous League foster to participate, or be an active volunteer. All you need is a loving home, and a weekend where you can show a shelter furball a good time.



If your Labor Day plans are already set (and didn't include a shelter fluff eating all your cook-out burgers), never fear - we have opportunities to weekend-foster throughout the year! You pick a weekend, and we'll find the perfect pooch or purr-ball for you.

For information on how to try short-term fostering on for size, just email us at [niki@lfaw.org](mailto:niki@lfaw.org), and include in the email if there are other pets or small children in the home. Let the fostering begin! 🐾

## ADOPT ME



### Grove - 7 years old, male

Grove is one of those cats that really should have been adopted by now. Old enough to have kitten antics out of his system; young enough to get into just the right amount of mischief (usually food-related), Grove has a personality and spirit that will delight you at every turn. Grove is a laid-back cat, who will do just fine in any environment you put him in (including, we recently found out, a "Yoga with Cats" event with a roomful of kittens and stretchy humans!). The person who gets this big guy hits the jackpot!



### Governor - 6.5 years old, male

Governor - or, "The Guvnah" as we all call him in a southern drawl, is a pint-sized charmer. At just 30lbs, the Gov is about half the size of most of the dogs at the League - but he packs a ton of personality in that little body! Governor \*loves\* all people, especially kids; and loves toys and sticks. He would prefer to be the only dog in the home, but seems pretty chill about sharing space with cats.

[View all the cats and dogs available for adoption at LFAW.org/adoption-center](https://www.lfaw.org/adoption-center)