



the Blue Bell
FOUNDATION FOR CATS
ENSURING YOUR CAT'S FUTURE

Blue Bell
MEWS

SUMMER 2023

Letter from the Assistant Director

Dear Friends,

In our last newsletter we shared some of the miracles that happen here at Blue Bell. To ensure that daily miracles continue, we have invested in facility improvements, staffing and community engagement. This summer's letter highlights accomplishments from 2022 and the first half of 2023 as we build on our past success and look toward the future.



Providing a homelike environment for the cats entrusted to us means we must care for both the residents and the houses they live in. In 2022, we installed a central AC unit in the Anderson-Wentzel House, a much-needed upgrade as summer temperatures in Laguna Canyon continue to rise. The heavy rains in early 2023 revealed leaks in the roofs of both the Bertha Yergat Cottage and the Anderson-Wentzel House. After 25 years, Blue Bell was due for new roofing. The roofs on both houses were completely torn off and new roofing was installed this spring. We were also able to add a layer of insulation under the new roof of the Bertha Yergat Cottage, an important modernization to this nearly 100-year-old building.

The Blue Bell gardens are part of this home. Here too, we've continued to invest in beautification projects. In 2022 we repainted the monument sign facing Laguna Canyon Road, installed a trio of original totems by artist Velvet Cook entitled "Taking Flight" (sponsored by Jeff and Barb Zakaryan), and created a memorial space inviting visitors to "Rest, Reflect & Recharge" in honor of longtime Blue Bell supporter, Susan Lane. In 2023, we replaced the Welcome Fountain retaining wall with a new brick one, added strategically placed solar lighting to highlight our garden art, and had the paths re-graded and sealed to help prevent erosion. Our wonderful garden curator and professional horticulturist, Sue Brown, has been busy implementing a garden redesign plan, including a reinvigorated pollinator garden sponsored by the Laguna Beach Garden Club. We invite you to stop by to enjoy all the improvements!

In 2022, we welcomed 10 new resident cats! So far this year we have already placed eight cats, with several more on the waiting list. Blue Bell cats receive personalized care from our loving staff, and in 2022 we filled all open Cat Caregiver positions. New residents require additional time and attention during their acclimation period, which can take from several weeks to several months. With so many new residents, we realized the Caregivers needed an additional level of support and created a new position to fulfill that need. In 2023, we welcomed our newest hire, Supervising Cat Caregiver, Sarah Bottum, who joined the team at Blue Bell after several years of running her own pet sitting business. As the need for the unique service that Blue Bell provides continues to grow, our staffing additions help ensure we can fulfill our mission and vision.

One final area where we have continued to invest is community engagement. In 2022 Blue Bell marched in the Laguna Beach Patriots Day Parade, had a table at the Costa Mesa Cat Extravaganza, decorated a tree for the Sawdust Festival Winter Fantasy, and presented at the spring and fall sessions of the Financial & Estate Literacy Inc. workshop series titled "Your Money & Estate." We plan to participate in all these events again in 2023, and we are thrilled that the Laguna Real Estate Charitable Assistance Fund is once again hosting the Pet Parade & Chili Cook-Off this year on June 24th. Event details are inside. We look forward to seeing you there!

As we focus on the remainder of 2023 and beyond, Blue Bell is prioritizing additional facility improvements, continuing our commitment to senior cat care by ensuring we are appropriately staffed, and working to expand our engagement with donors and the broader community. We are grateful for your support, and hope that you will consider making a financial gift to ensure we can continue our mission to offer loving and compassionate lifetime care for senior cats whose owners can no longer care for them.

Thanks to donors like you, daily miracles will continue to happen at Blue Bell for many years to come!

Jenna Genovese-Mikula
Assistant Director

NEW RESIDENTS

Princess, 12 With her stand-out white whiskers accentuating her glossy black fur and white bib you get one cupcake of a kitty! She arrived in March, and was placed due to behavioral issues in her home. Princess settled in nicely, and is very friendly and talkative. She is getting used to the other cats and is still sequestered in her own suite until she feels comfortable. Princess loves back and chin scratches. She rolls into the cutest positions and has won everybody over with her darling poses.



Baby, 15 This pretty gal with the gorgeous fluffy coat and stunning green eyes came to us in January when her owner went into assisted living. Her daughter brought Baby to us, and upon arrival, she was frightened—growling, hissing, spitting and swatting from her carrier. This is totally understandable, even expected. It is traumatic coming to a new environment without your people while 16 other strange cats are hovering around. Of course she was isolated in her own suite, and the good news is she ate well her first night. She had calmed down by the next day and came out of her carrier seeking attention. She has now joined the community and is fine with the other cats. Although generally quiet, she will beckon you with a meow telling you she is open to some company. She likes the outdoor patio and enjoys her catnip now and then!



Kiwi, 13, a lovely diluted (light-colored) tortie, came to us in January after her owner, aged 90, passed away. Kiwi's owner wished for her to live at Blue Bell, so her son made that wish come true. She rescued Kiwi on Valentines Day 2020, and Kiwi was already a senior cat at that time. Her owner had cats all her life and felt Kiwi was the most special. Each night Kiwi lay next to her Mom making sure she was happy, safe, and sound. As Kiwi's owner's caregiver relates "Kiwi is a sweet kitty with a healing purr so strong you can feel it in your heart, and I'm sure she is missing her Mom like crazy." Fortunately Kiwi bonded with us right away, and she loves to have her silky fur brushed, so much that she begins to purr loudly and drool in satisfaction. She is out and about in the Anderson-Wentzel house.



Molly, 12 and Billy, 14 came to us all the way from Mississippi. Their owner's daughter searched nationwide for a facility and we are proud



and honored to have been selected as their forever home. Grey and white Molly is petite, sweet, and outgoing. Billy is an adorable-looking half tabby half munchkin and is much shyer so he may take a bit more time to adjust. An excerpt from their admission papers shows how special both are: "Molly and Billy's special human guardian passed away recently at 93 years old. She loved these two cats dearly and they are a major reason she lived such a nice long life. They are very sweet cats and they gave her great comfort and joy, as did she to them."

Kiki, 15, Irish, 12, and Haggis, 10 This trio was placed from the same household in Los Angeles on April 18th. It was established in their owner's will that they come to us and her neighbor fulfilled that wish. They all shared the same room at first, but Kiki never got along with the boys at her prior home so we moved her to the lower house in her own suite for acclimation. She is a charming, tiny kitten-like kitty. She has no teeth from prior extractions which just makes her more endearing. She is still spry and loves to play with wand toys and "gums" the attached strings. Irish and Haggis were a bonded pair, but very scared. Sadly, we never got to know Irish (*pictured right in back*) as he passed away less than a month later on May 15th due to severe anemia and acute liver failure. Irish is with his owner now. Run in paradise, Irish with the gorgeous green eyes. Haggis, a handsome kitty with a striking orange marmalade coat, is slowly starting to come around and we have high hopes that he will do fine and adapt to life at Blue Bell.



E V E N T S

In November and December, **the Sawdust Festival** holds the **Winter Fantasy**, a festive 5-weekend event in Laguna Beach. The grounds are converted into a winter wonderland with Christmas trees, shimmering lights, decorations, and even falling bubble "snow."

We participated a second time in the Tree Decorating contest. We are proud to say our "Ocean of Purrs" won Most Unique Tree! Ornaments, a drawing, and tree topper were made by staff **Jenna Mikula & Lisa Salcedo-Singh**, and volunteers **Matt Powers & Terri Karman**. **Pamela Knudsen** provided gift boxes wrapped in Purrmaid paper.



Jenna and Lisa

Thanks to all the volunteers that helped staff our table at the November **Costa Mesa Cat Extravaganza** which featured speakers, products, cat breed exhibits, competitions, and rescue organizations and charities. We were thrilled to receive \$430 in donations, considering our goal in attending was to generate awareness for our unique mission. We also appreciate everyone who stopped by our table and joined our email list!

MEMORIALS

Sally, 10 was one of the seven cats (Sammy, Baby, Big Boy, Boots, Little Guy and Suzy) who came to us in March of 2016 after our friend Dorothy Palmer passed away at age 102. Sweet-faced Sally loved to play with wand toys, crinkly balls, mice and especially the laser pointer. Several years ago she was diagnosed as having Cryptococcus, an airborne fungal infection that invades the nasal cavity and can eventually eat through bone and enter the sinuses, brain and other areas. Medication did not eliminate it completely. She also had IBD and hyperthyroidism. She began having nosebleeds from one nostril and we worried it might be due to the fungus advancing. One day Caregiver Karen noticed swelling on one side of her head. Jenna took her to the vet. They administered antibiotics and we brought her back to Blue Bell to see if it would improve in the next few days. She was still alert and active, but not eating well. The swelling did not improve, and bleeding started again from both nostrils. Jenna took her back to be examined. The pressure in one of her eyes was five times what it should have been, and after discussing the limited options and quality of life, we decided to let her go. Jenna was with her and gave her lots of love before she passed quickly on November 15th.



Suzy, 20 another "Palmer Cat" came to Blue Bell in 2016. She was very shy initially, but with patience she slowly adjusted. Although not a lap cat, she loved brushing, pets, and head/chin scratches. She was diagnosed with diabetes in 2021. She never gave us any trouble when it was time to test blood sugar or give insulin injections, as if she knew we were helping her. In early 2022, she began having more issues, including vomiting, diarrhea, and weight loss. An ultrasound in April confirmed multiple abnormalities. There were multiple masses in her pancreas and an enlarged liver and spleen. All was untreatable so palliative care was the goal and was effective for almost a year. Her disease progressed and finally her little body couldn't absorb any nutrients and we knew it was time to say goodbye. On her final day, December 21st, Suzy got lots of love from staff and volunteers. She even ate chicken and meat tubes. Joyce took her to the vet wrapped in a Christmas blanket. Then Suzy snuggled with her little head tucked under Joyce's chin for the last time. She is with Sammy, Baby, Big Boy, Sally and Dorothy now. Boots and Little Guy still remain.

Isabella, 16 left us too soon. She came in August of 2022. Amiable from the start, she quickly became friends with staff and volunteers. In November of 2022, volunteers noticed she had fallen and seemed distressed and disoriented. She recovered but was put on observation and later that night she collapsed and was taken to an emergency vet. She was monitored there and diagnosed with a seizure disorder. With medication, the seizures were controlled for several weeks. A routine veterinary exam also revealed she had a lung mass. In January of 2023, repeated x-rays showed the lung mass had grown, and her seizures were becoming more frequent and were no longer well-controlled. She stopped eating and was obviously not comfortable so we made the decision to let her go on January 27th. We were comforted to know we had given her some joy in her final months. Joyce took her to the vet and she passed peacefully.



"Matt the Cat" est. 17-20, arrived in January of 2022 after his owner passed away and a friend of hers (who became a volunteer) placed Matt with us. He was a sweet boy from the outset. Initially he was diagnosed with high blood pressure so he began treatment for that. Despite having thyroid, kidney, pancreatic and heart diseases, he did well for many months. In the weeks prior to his demise, numerous worrisome symptoms appeared, including low appetite and activity, which prompted a vet visit. After two nights of hospitalization, he was not improving. He was also anemic and his organs began to fail. Euthanasia was scheduled but we began supportive care back at Blue Bell so he could be loved and spoiled for a few more days. He spent his last few hours on Wednesday December 7th napping in the sunshine, and ate lots of chicken and treats. He was comfortable and loved. Joyce took him to the vet and he passed peacefully over Rainbow Bridge, where we are sure his mama was waiting for him with open arms.

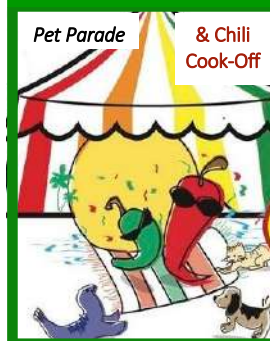
Bella, 16 We lost this charmer on February 7th, 2023. We were lucky to have her for almost seven years, since December 30th, 2016. She became our Anderson-Wentzel House Greeter, scooting into the kitchen area and supervising the caregivers while they prepared meals and meds. She was a beautiful cat, with white whiskers framing a black face and adorable black dots sprinkled on white paws. Bella also had a delightful quirky personality. We would often see her drinking from the faucet by scooping the water with her paw. She knocked treat canisters off the counter every chance she got, and jumped down to eat as many as she could before we could stop her. She was diagnosed with intestinal lymphoma in March of 2022, and was put on an aggressive regimen of medications to keep her comfortable. She responded well for months, but in January we noticed her appetite waning and she was losing weight. She had a loose tooth and needed an emergency dental to remove it. Unfortunately, Bella did not recover well from the dental procedure and continued to decline. Late one night Joyce noticed Bella was open-mouthed breathing, a dire sign. We knew it was time and there was nothing further we could do. The next morning, Joyce took her on the last trip to the vet and gave her lots of love and kisses before she passed peacefully. She leaves behind her sister, Cozy.



EVENTS (continued)

It was a fun day representing Blue Bell at the 56th Annual Patriots Day Parade in Laguna Beach on Saturday March 4th. Participants ranged from civic and veterans' organizations to school bands, floats, vintage automobiles, and novelty groups. The parade also honored citizens who have served the community and those who have served the nation in time of war or national emergency. Thanks to our marching banner carriers
*Jenna Mikula,
Terri Karman, Matt Powers, and
Pamela Knudsen!*

COME JOIN US!



Saturday, June 24th
11am-3pm

Neighborhood Congregational Church
340 St. Anne's Drive, Laguna Beach

The Laguna Real Estate Charitable Assistance Fund is hosting its fundraiser **Pet Parade & Chili Cook-Off.**

Blue Bell is happy to once again be a beneficiary of the proceeds.

Come visit our booth! There may be a special Blue Bell kitty to meet!

For more information visit:
<https://www.lre-caf.com/>



the Blue Bell
FOUNDATION FOR CATS

ENSURING YOUR CAT'S FUTURE

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Our Mission:

The Blue Bell Foundation for Cats offers loving and compassionate lifetime care for senior cats whose owners can no longer care for them.

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Enclosed is a "Gift of Love" in the amount of \$ _____

to be given in the name of

_____ For: (Please Specify)

- Anniversary Birthday Holiday In Memory Of
- Other _____

Send a card announcing the donation to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Your Name and address:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Make checks payable to: **The Blue Bell Foundation for Cats**
Donations are tax-deductible THANK YOU!

YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK

Cats are sponsored to ensure their continuing lifetime care. However, costs are rising dramatically and cash donations help augment our budget toward expenses immensely. These includes veterinary medicine, staffing, food, equipment, supplies, medications, fluid treatments, dental care, facility maintenance and improvements.

Donations received from the newsletter (including Gifts of Love) go specifically to the "Community Cat Fund". Please refer to our website for information on the "Campaign for Blue Bell" and a detailed description of all giving opportunities. You may arrange for your donation to be applied toward one of them.

A huge **thank you** to all our compassionate supporters who understand our mission and the need for our existence.

Registered Non-Profit 501(C)(3)

OR DONATE ONLINE!

<http://www.bluebellcats.org/donate/index.php>