



Celebrating Thirty Years

1981 - 2011 Milestone Events

1981 - Cat Care Society (CCS), Lakewood, Colorado, was founded in 1981 by Linda East, DVM and Lynn Rowe (L-R pictured below). CCS is a nonprofit organization, established in order to improve the quality of life for homeless, injured and abused cats in the Denver metropolitan area.



Initially housed at 855 Lincoln, 2nd Floor, near Downtown Denver, the first expanded CCS shelter was in a converted house at 11th and Harlan in Lakewood.

1986 - Kathy Macklem Hill was the first Executive Director for the Cat Care Society, serving twenty years until January 2006. First statistics collected in 1986 for only eight months - adoptions for that time period were 146, an average of 16 per month.

1994 - In the fall of 1994 Cat Care Society purchased a parcel of land at 5785 West 6th Avenue in Lakewood as the site for its new cageless cat shelter for the Society. Through 1994 the CCS only had three paid employees (a full-time Shelter Manager, plus part-time Cleaner and Volunteer Coordinator). The Cleaner worked Monday through Friday and the volunteers cleaned on Saturday and Sunday. The Volunteer Coordinator worked three days a week, as she does now. The Shelter Manager was the Vet Tech, receptionist, adoption coordinator, filled in cleaning when needed and was on call 24/7. The Executive Director volunteered her time at 60 to 80 hours per week. In 1994 the CCS adopted 322 cats, 50 more than in 1993 at an average of 27 per month.

1995 - The fact that a house already existed on the new 6th Avenue property was a bonus - it was renovated, numerous dead trees and shrubs were removed, a parking lot added, and Cajun's Closet was born. The new thrift store was named after the CCS's mascot, Cajun, when it opened in February of 1995. Cajun, a large, longhaired, orange tabby boy was the cat in residence at the thrift shop until 2002 when his health started to fail. After losing one eye and becoming blind in the other it was time for him to retire. Now our "shop cats" are cats from the shelter that are available for adoption.



Further in 1995, a full-time Vet Tech joined the staff, also helping with adoptions and answering the phone. In 1995 584 cats were adopted out, an average of 49 per month - almost doubling the number of adoptions from the previous year. Over the years we have slowly added part time office staff and increased the number of part time cleaning staff and made the Executive Director a paid position. The board has remained steady at five members.

1995-2001 - The CCS and its dedicated and loyal supporters embarked on a grassroots capital campaign to fund a modern and expanded facility - specifically for a cageless shelter. The non-traditional campaign of bake sales, fashion show and luncheons raised \$350,000 by 1999 - another \$100,000 was raised to complete construction.

1999 - In November 1999 a Denver Post article featured the CCS's very industrious and successful grassroots effort to fund its new shelter building.



October 2001 - The CCS moved into the new, 10,000 square-foot, custom-built shelter directly behind Cajun's Closet at 5787 West 6th Avenue. The shelter provides a temporary refuge for up to 45 adult cats until an appropriate and permanent home can be found for each. Veterinary care, premium diet and human interaction are lovingly provided. The new building also provided for the addition of the CCS Meow Mart, a small gift shop within the shelter. Prior to moving into the new shelter, the CCS had three full-time staff (Executive Director, Shelter Manager and Vet Tech), plus six part-time staff (Volunteer Coordinator, two office staff and three cleaning staff).



2002 - Adoptions increased to 862, an average of 72 per month.

2003 - Part-time office staff increased to five and cleaning staff to six due to increased demands of the new shelter and the lack of volunteers able to clean on the weekends. The CCS euthanasia rate has remained at an average of 8 to 10% of surrenders per year. Euthanasia is mainly due to cats testing positive for Feline Aids or Feline Leukemia, feral (wild), aggression, fading kitten syndrome or untreatable health problems.

2005 - The Cat Clinic at Cat Care Society opened for business. This was possible due to an estate bequest. The bequest paid off the mortgage on the shelter and the remainder was used to complete the clinic in the lower level of the shelter building. The purpose of the clinic is to provide health care for the shelter cats and cats of qualifying low-income families. We don't turn anyone away based on their inability to pay. A Clinic Manager, Vet Tech and Receptionist were hired. For the first 12 months, we had to use relief veterinarians to perform surgeries. Staff includes a full-time Veterinarian and two Vet Techs. Volunteers help with post-surgical procedures and phone answering.



Further in 2005, the building at 5707 W. 6th Avenue was purchased and the Cajun's Closet Thrift Shoppe moved into the lower level of that building - doubling its space to 900 square feet. Cajun's Closet had been housed in the house at 5785 W. 6th Avenue since purchasing the land for the new shelter in 1994. The new building has one tenant on the upper floor; the remainder of that floor is being used for staff offices.

2006 - In June 2006, the CCS hired Shari Shiffer-Krieger as its second Executive Director. The CCS now has five board members who have either previous board experience, non-profit experience or real life skills that can help the Society in many ways. A strategic planning meeting was held in 2006.

2010 - The 30th Anniversary Fundraising Event, "Tails of the Painted Cats," was announced and sponsors and artists recruited to make the creative and ambitious project possible.



2011 - The CCS hired a Development Director and Computer Support Administrator. This will enable Cat Care Society to advance to its next level of success. Further, in 2011, The Cat Clinic began breaking even and has opened up the practice to include any cat owner.

May 2011 - The CCS's 14,000 cat, Jackpot, was adopted in his 'forever home!' This achievement, on the average, is 467 cat adoptions per year for thirty years, albeit activity was slower in the early years, or 1.25 adoptions per day, every day for the Cat Care Society's first thirty years.