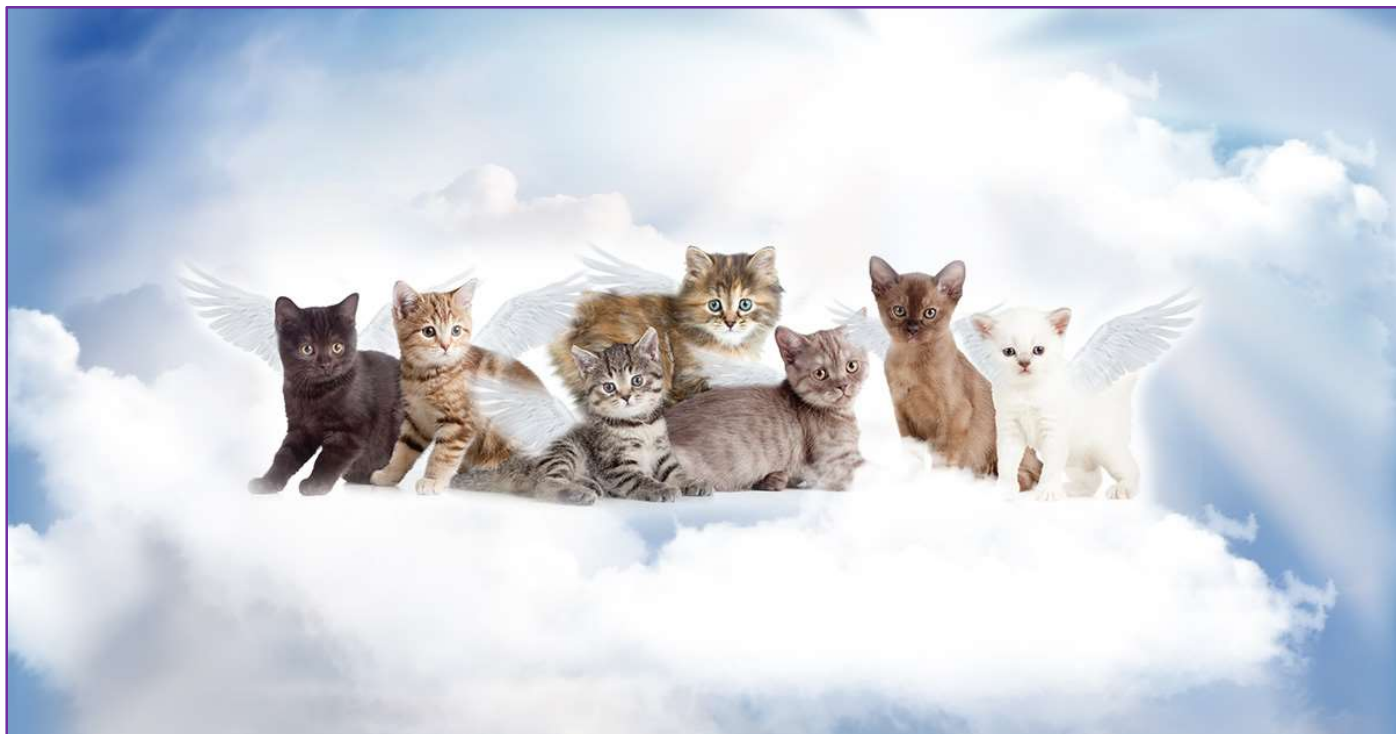




Easter Newsletter



“The very first Easter taught us this: that life never ends and love never dies” – Kate McGahan



This week Christians around the world celebrate the holiday called Easter; the oldest festival of the Christian Church, celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ and held (in the Western Church) between March 21 and April 25, on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the northern spring equinox. It is a holiday just about everyone knows about, not just Christians but also people from other Faiths as well as non-believers. It is holiday which above all represents hope.

In this newsletter EndFIP® wants to address a subject brought up too few times in Feline Infectious Peritonitis discussions; the unique and deep grieving of a cat lost to FIP. Some of you will be facing the first Easter without your beloved cat because FIP touched your life and you may feel alone and in complete despair. As we embrace this special holiday celebrating the day peace and love overcame evil and death, please know you are not alone in your grief and we hope you will find the next few pages useful and uplifting.



“There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition, and of unspeakable love.”

Washington Irving

A word about FIP

Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP) is a devastating viral disease of cats that occurs worldwide and can affect many systems of the body. It is a progressive disease which carries a high mortality rate. In 1963, American veterinarian Jean Holzworth first described a peritonitis in cats which caused the abdominal cavity to fill up with fluid. The condition appeared to be infectious, hence the name Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP).

Within a few years, it was recognized that the cause of the disease was a virus, a coronavirus. Feline coronavirus (FCoV) is undoubtedly one of the most poorly understood feline viruses and the disease it causes (FIP) is unquestionably the most feared disease in any multi cat environment and the most shattering diagnosis for a pet parent to come to terms with. Luckily, most cats infected with FCoV never develop FIP. However, for reasons that we don't yet fully understand, instead of clearing FCoV infection, an unfortunate few cats develop the disease.

Since first being discovered decades ago, Feline Infectious Peritonitis is one of the most studied feline diseases and yet, it remains one of the most enigmatic viral diseases of the cat. Much progress has been made since those early days and encouraging new treatments have surfaced in recent years but there's much work to be done in the fields of feline FCoV and FIP. In spite of promising treatments, FIP still remains an almost always fatal disease.

Losing any pet can be as traumatic as losing a child for some people and there is something unique, a deeper pain which affects all of us touched and forever changed by FIP. In most cases, there is very little time from the onset of clinical signs to the time we are forced to say goodbye. The vast majority of pet guardians have never heard those awful three letters “F.I.P” before and they have just a few days or weeks until the time they need to face their worst fear. The death of an FIP cat can be a truly traumatic experience and you will go through the same stages of grieving as in human bereavement: shock and denial, anger, guilt, sadness, depression and then finally acceptance.



EndFIP® extends empathy and sympathy to all marked by FIP. Please know, there is that proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. There is happiness after FIP.



Dealing with the loss of your FIP Cat



Coping with the pain and sorrow of your cat dying of FIP can be one of the most difficult things you will ever need to face. Cats can be incredibly affectionate, loving and loyal. They remind us to live in the moment and to love unconditionally, they also remind us to be adventurous and playful. They help us to become better human beings. And when they are taken from us so untimely and abruptly by FIP, they leave a devastating and profound sense of helplessness and an immense empty space in our lives.

The Nature of Grief

Grief is neither an illness nor a pathological condition. It is a normal and expected process that allows you to maintain connection to your

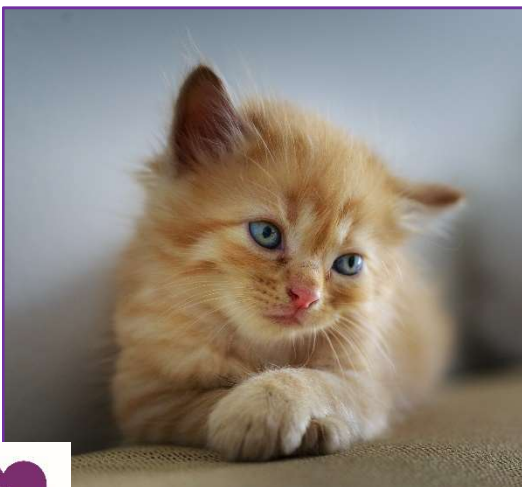
beloved cat while you simultaneously assimilate, accommodate and find ways to go forward in life.

Grief is a needed process which will help you make sense of the past (what had happened to your cat), create a lasting memory out of what can no longer be, and incorporate the memory into a new, hope-filled future. If you are reading this newsletter because just lost a cat to FIP recently, you may not see it now but there is light and happiness after FIP.

The grief process is shaped with pain, inconsistency and tension, things we all prefer to avoid. Trying to suppress, deny or ignore grief will not make it go away, sooner or later it will push its way through to the surface like a volcano's molten lava.



When people deny or ignore grief, they can experience physical effects such as headaches, backaches but also grief finds emotional outlets, especially anger which is a very common reaction for an FIP parent. We need to make sense of it all and it is quite easy to blame the veterinarian and/or ourselves.



There is a sense of frustration, we need to know why did it happened and blame someone for taking our beloved cat away. In reality, there is no one to be blamed for FIP, except for the vile feline coronavirus (FCoV).

Acknowledge your grief; please take time to grieve, surround yourself with caring people who will embrace what you are experiencing - you need to understand that unresolved grief can cripple you and rob you from living fully again. On the other hand, those who engage in the grieving process can emerge from the experience better, healthier and happier.

Steps for Healthy Grieving



When the cat that has died was a constant in your daily life, it can be very hard to get through your day without him/her. Learning to recognize and deal with the pain though is an important part of managing the loss of your kitty. The truth is this: nothing can simply make your grief go away. You must acknowledge, face and resolve your grief. Thankfully there are some things you can do to help guide you through this very natural process.

This brief list of suggestions for healthy ways to cope with grieving for your FIP cat may be helpful as you follow your own path to healing:

- ***Expect to recover***
 - Affirm that you will be fine, that you will be able to make it and know that there are many resources out there if you need them.
- ***Do short-term things***
 - Go to a movie, go for a walk, soak in a bath, light a candle, read a good book – whatever comforts you and brings some relief. If you have another pet(s), spend time with them (they are also grieving), it will help you both to spend time together.
- ***Find ways to express your emotions***
 - Consider making a photo album, scrapbook or shadow box to remember your cat and remind you of happier times.
 - Write in a private journal, join a pet loss support group, consider joining the movement to create awareness about FIP
 - Give the popular poem: “The Rainbow Bridge” a good read and cry if you need to. We all did.



- ***Never go to sleep without***

- Breathing deeply, smiling at least once and being thankful for what you still have.

- ***Keep in touch with your feelings***

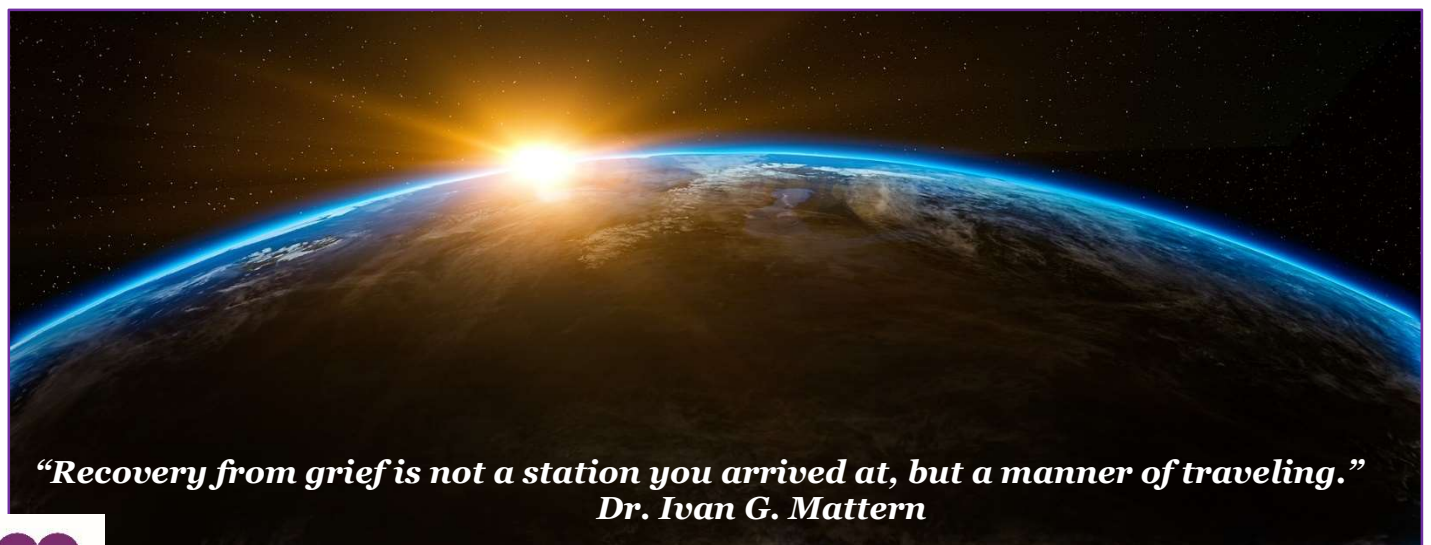
- As you ride the roller coaster of emotions, remind yourself that time cannot be slowed down nor sped up. All grief gets reworked and it will get easier for you to cope with each passing day.
- Remember the past fondly and as much as you need but don't live in it. There is no future in that.

- ***Find a least one person you can talk to***

- Reach out to an empathetic friend who loves cats and share your grief honestly and from the heart.
- If you can't think of someone to call, try going on-line to a forum or support group for people who are experiencing the loss of a beloved pet.
- Talk about your cat and tell someone what you loved about your kitty, share what happened to him/her.

- ***Decide you want to heal***

- Some people can't let go of the pain, whether from a sense of misplaced loyalty, fear of living without it or unwillingness to build a new future. Decide to make each day as good as possible.
- Decide to look for joy and whenever you are ready, consider getting a new cat. The fact you are reading this newsletter is proof you are a loving, caring person. Good-hearted people able to provide loving and safe homes are hard to find and there are so many beautiful animals in need. No one will replace your kitty but you may help fill the emptiness in your heart with a new cat.
- Make others smile, be a source of light and hope. Live in such a way that when you die and you are reunited with your beloved pet(s), the world will be a better place because you lived.



“Recovery from grief is not a station you arrived at, but a manner of traveling.”
Dr. Ivan G. Mattern

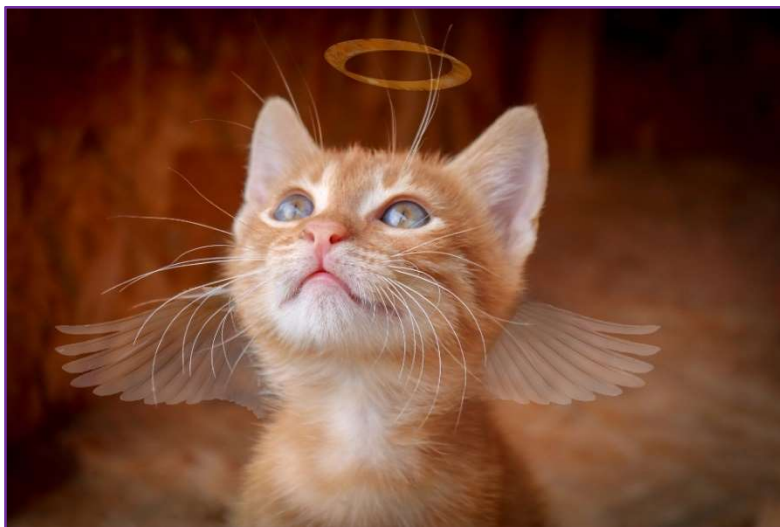
The Seven Stages of Grief

Terminal illnesses are the most debilitating things we will ever need to deal with emotionally. When we know our loved ones are going to depart that causes major psychological stress, and the accompanying grief when they pass is that much more intense. As a pet parent, Feline Infectious Peritonitis, is one of the worst scenarios to ever be faced with because most times we only have a few days to process what is happening. We feel a sense of helplessness and defeat as for the most part, there is nothing we can do. We try all that we can and yet despite every effort and high financial costs, we still lose what we loved so deeply.

To understand what you are going through after your loss, you also need to be aware of the different stages that grief follows. Some people may become stuck in one stage and can never move forward to complete the healing process that is required. What is crucial is to have a support structure; people who are there to listen and help you cope as you go through each stage. In that way healing will eventually come. It does not mean you will "move on".

To "move on" means to leave behind and forget. We never forget those who came into our lives and meant so much to us. They always remain an indelible part of who we are, shaping us into what we become. The grief process helps us to come to terms with and process what has happened. To help dull that sharp edge of pain we feel when someone we love so deeply leaves us. If you are a person of Faith, you believe our souls do live on and know that we will be re-united with our soul families once we cross the veil and that is extremely comforting and healing.

Sadly, many feel lost, they feel like wandering souls who have lost the part of themselves that was the very reason for living. If you can understand that it is all part of a process and to reach out to those who understand and can help, then you will move through each stage and come to reach the end stage. Every stage takes a different amount of time for each person. No one can hurry you, the important thing is to progress to the next stage. But know that what you are going through at any one time is normal and part of the grief experience.



Stages of Grief

I. Shock and Denial

- Most people react to learning about a loss with numbed disbelief. You may deny the reality of the loss at some level. In order to avoid the pain. Shock provides emotional protection from being overwhelmed all at once. This may last for weeks.

II. Pain and Guilt

- As the shock wears off, it is replaced with the suffering of excruciating pain. Although it feels unbearable, it is important that you experience the pain fully, and not to hide it, avoid it or escape from it with alcohol or drugs. You may have guilty feelings or remorse over things you did or didn't do with your loved one. Life feels chaotic and scary during this phase.

III. *Anger and Bargaining*

- Frustration gives away to anger. You may lash out and lay unwarranted blame for the death on someone else – try to control this, as permanent damage to your relationships may result. This is a time to release bottled up emotions. You may rail against fate, questioning: “Why me?” You may also try to bargain in vain with the powers that be for a way out of your despair (i.e. I will never drink again if you just bring him back)

IV. *Depression, Reflection and Loneliness*

- A long period of sad reflection overtakes you. Realization of the true magnitude of your loss sets in and it saddens you. You may isolate yourself on purpose, reflect on things you did with your lost one, and focus on memories of the past. You may sense feelings of emptiness or despair.

V. *The Upward Turn*

- As you start to adjust to life without your dear one, your life becomes a little calmer and more organized. Your physical symptoms lessen, and your depression begins to lift slightly.

VI. *Reconstruction and Working Through*

- You become more functional and your mind starts working again. You will find yourself seeking realistic solutions to problems posed by life without your loved one. You will start to work on practical and financial problems and reconstructing yourself and your life without your loved one

VII. *Acceptance and Hope*

- In this last stage you learn to accept and deal with the reality of your situation. Acceptance does not necessarily mean happiness. Given the pain and turmoil you have experienced, you can never return to the carefree, untroubled you that existed before this tragedy, but you will find a way forward. You will start to look forward and actually plan things for the future. Eventually, you will be able to think about your lost loved one in sadness but without wrenching pain. You will once again anticipate some good times to come and yes, even find joy again in the experience of living.

EndFIP® is extremely grateful to **Aurora Lambrecht** for providing the “Seven Stages of Grief” text. Sadly, Aurora lost three cats to this dreadful disease, being familiar with the nature of grieving FIP losses, her insight is extremely valuable and we deeply appreciate all her contributions to the fight against FIP.



Need help

You are not alone in your grief. If you don't have family or friends who understand your feelings, or if you need more support, they are capable to provide. **PLEASE SEEK HELP.**



Help IS always out there...somewhere.

EndFIP® aims to inspire hope and work in partnership to help alleviate the human suffering and deep grieving caused by FIP.

We are here to help, if you need assistance please REACH OUT to us at:

griefsupport@endfip.com



A personal note from Maria S. Bonino

Luca came into my life when least expected and blessed it in ways I never thought possible. We were together for just over a year and his last 25 days - the sad end of his life changed mine forever.

Losing Luca was shattering. I've never experienced that profound grief before even though I've loved and lost many times in the past. It took a long time to come to terms with what had happened to Luca and the unfairness of it all.

FIP marked my life and left a devastating emptiness which can only be filled by being involved and doing what I can to help find permanent solutions to end FIP and help those touched by this dreadful and insidious disease.



Many times, I've been asked: Why did I get involved in the FIP field? Why did I decided to launch the EndFIP® global initiative and found the Luca Fund for FIP Research?

In the past, I've answered those questions providing full and lengthy details but during a recent trip to Los Angeles when I finally gathered the strength to visit the veterinary clinic where Luca transitioned on October 5, 2013, it all became very clear. Whilst in the room where Luca took his last breath, and at the same time, I felt the air escaping my lungs and the walls caving in on me. In that room, now, a few years later and with a different perspective I realized the answer simply is: because I do not want any other cat nor his/her human family to experience what Luca and I endured during those final weeks of his life.

Luca fought bravely against this formidable foe. He was one more victim of this dreadful disease. The virus won, it took one more and that one more was my beloved cat and I declared war against feline coronavirus. Shortly after his passing, I decided to dedicate myself to help find a solution and upon conducting extensive research chose to support FIP research at the University of Glasgow School of Veterinary Medicine due to their unparalleled history in the feline viral field and the fact that past, as well as on-going FIP research, is conducted humanely without the use of laboratory cats.

I've promised Luca his passing was not going to be in vain. I've embraced the grieving process and once my heart healed and felt strong enough, I set a course of actions into motion which brought to fruition the creation of the Luca Fund for FIP Research, which was announced on October 5, 2018 from Assisi, Italy as part of the launch of the EndFIP® global initiative.

I am blessed with a group of people both in the United States and in Glasgow, who understood my concerns, embraced my idea and helped me make my dream a reality. I am forever grateful to each one of them for their continued development of Luca's legacy. Five years on, many times I've found myself with tearful eyes, the pain of losing Luca will never go away. I remember lovingly our time together and incorporate all those memories into a new, hope-filled present and future. My life is also blessed now with two beautiful, healthy and FCoV free rescued cats who witness every day how I remember and honor the big brother they never met. There is happiness and joy after the pain and sorrow FIP creates in everyone it touches.

I've kept my promises and Luca continues to be the wind in my sails and the inspiration behind EndFIP®

Gratefully yours,

Maria

HAPPY EASTER!

May it be filled with the hope of new beginnings, love and happiness



MAKE YOUR GIFT STRETCH!

This **Easter weekend**, thanks to the generosity of our leadership donors, ALL donations received by the Luca Fund for FIP Research will be **triple matched**.



EndFIP®: A vision and a mission

- Bring awareness
- Raise funds for research
- Eradicate FCoV and end FIP

Help us accomplish our goals. Your donation is both needed and appreciated. The Luca Fund for FIP Research is committed to exclusively support research that does not use laboratory cats and does not conduct experimental infection of healthy cats with a deadly virus. Help us end FIP, so that one day, no one will have to go through the pain of losing their cherished cat to a disease that has claimed so many for so long.

The Luca Fund for FIP Research is part of the global vision of the EndFIP® project. Your donation to the Luca Fund will be applied to studies conducted at the University of Glasgow School of Veterinary Medicine. The Luca Fund for FIP research is a special fund of the American Alumni of the University of Glasgow established in 2018 to accept tax-deductible donations for Feline Infectious Peritonitis research. AAGU has been recognized by the IRS as a section 501(c) (3) charitable organization. All donations to AAGU are deductible as charitable contributions to the full extent permitted by law.



www.endfip.com/donate

www.LucaFundforFIP.com

