

The Ricky Fund

for Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Research



Unraveling the mysteries
of feline heart disease.



Ricky was a Devon Rex who looked like an elf, played the piano like a jazz cat and became a media star. His owner, Steve Dale, CABC and Winn board member, says, “I wanted to train our dog

Lucy to play a little piano when she worked as an animal-assisted therapy dog. I began the process using clicker training, but about five minutes into the training, Ricky walked into the room, sauntered up to the piano, took his right paw and went ping on the keyboard. I thought, ‘Why am I fooling around with this dog?’”

But during a routine veterinary check-up, Ricky was diagnosed with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. HCM is the thickening of a part of the heart muscle. As a result, the heart can’t relax well or fill up with blood as it should.

If the disease is diagnosed early, as it was with Ricky, many cats live at least a few years with medication. Some cats even live out a normal life span. But most do not. In fact, HCM may be the most common cause of death among indoor middle-aged cats.

Because the heart does not pump efficiently, some cats with HCM eventually develop blood clots and may be temporarily paralyzed in their back legs. These clots typically recur and may worsen with each event. Other cats just fall over and die, not knowing what hit them—and that’s exactly how Ricky went. He was just four years old.

In 2002, Steve and the Winn Feline Foundation established the Ricky Fund to investigate HCM in cats.

To learn more about HCM, visit
www.winnfelinehealth.org/Pages/RickyFund.html

Already, studies supported by the Ricky Fund have made great progress.

With your support, Winn is helping researchers uncover what causes HCM, identify the genes associated with it and develop more effective treatments.

Dr. Kathryn Meurs at Washington State University found a gene mutation in Maine Coon Cats that’s associated with HCM. Meurs also discovered a gene for HCM in Ragdolls. As a result, Maine Coon and Ragdoll breeders have begun selectively breeding to reduce the incidence of HCM in their lines. Dr. Meurs is currently looking for the specific gene mutation that causes this disease in Sphynx, Siberian and Norwegian Forest Cats.

Three other studies have evaluated the safety and effectiveness of various drugs in helping slow the progress of the disease and improve the prognosis of cats diagnosed with HCM. One drug is used to prevent blood clots; one lowers blood pressure and makes it easier for the heart to pump blood; and one may be able to decrease scarring of the heart muscle in cats with HCM. These drugs have been shown to help people with similar heart problems.

An ongoing study by Dr. Philip Fox at the Animal Medical Center in New York City is reviewing long-term medical data on 1,200 cats to identify what factors predict that a cat will develop HCM, how to most effectively monitor and treat the disease, and what the prognosis is likely to be for affected cats.

And a study by Drs. Karl E. Jandrey, Mark Kittleson and Jennifer Larsen at the University of California-Davis is working to identify factors in a cat’s blood chemistry that could be an early marker of clot formation. This knowledge could give veterinarians warning to begin therapy to prevent blood clots—a sometimes fatal complication of HCM.

The Winn Feline Foundation enhances the relationship between cats and humans by fostering improvements in feline health through research and education.

Winn funds medical studies to improve the health and well-being of all cats. More than \$4 million has been awarded in grants that have changed cats' lives. Winn also sponsors an annual symposium on feline health topics for veterinarians, technicians, breeders and cat lovers, co-sponsors international veterinary conferences, and publishes articles that educate veterinarians and the public about feline health. So much of what we know about feline health has changed, and Winn has been at the forefront, uncovering new information, stimulating interest in the veterinary community and getting the word out to every cat owner. Winn's website and blog focusing on feline health studies worldwide, winnfelinehealth.org and winnfelinehealth.blogspot.com, are important resources that help keep cat lovers and veterinarians informed about the most recent news in cat care.

Every cat, every day benefits from Winn-funded research.



Be sure to visit us on the web at
www.winnfelinehealth.org

For the latest news on feline health studies,
check out
www.winnfelinehealth.blogspot.com

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If You Want to Help

The Winn Feline Foundation is exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Accordingly, your contributions to the Foundation may be deductible for Federal income, gift, and estate tax purposes.

You can contribute to the Ricky Fund online at www.winnfelinehealth.org/RickyFund.html or by completing the donation form that follows.

**Please help us to fight this deadly disease.
We thank you for your support.**

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Winn Feline Foundation Donation Form

Please complete this form electronically and e-mail to winn@winnfelinehealth.org or print and mail to 355 Cornell Street, Wyckoff NJ 07481

I would like to make a donation to Winn Feline Foundation to help fund important feline research to benefit the health and wellbeing of all cats. My gift is tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

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If you would like to sponsor a specific health study (please select a study below). Sponsorship requires a minimum donation of \$250.

You will receive progress reports and a final report on the research, as received by Winn Feline Foundation.

Learn more about the research projects at <http://www.winnfelinehealth.org/currentgrantawards.html>

W13-012 Detection of dermatophytosis in cats by PCR

W13-019 Development of biomarkers for FIP

W13-020 Virus protease inhibitors against coronaviruses

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