

Suffield Veterinary Hospital March 2016 Patient of the Month

Meet Serena, an 8 year old kitty owned by the Belsen family of Windsor Locks. She was adopted in 2009 when she was two years old from the Connecticut Humane Society in Newington. As you can see from this sweet photo taken by Lorilee's Photography of Enfield, Serena is a trim beauty. She likes to sprint around the house and then cuddle up with a cozy blanket afterwards and watch *Finding Nemo*.

When first adopted, the Belsens made a very common mistake of pet owners: they overfed her. By November 2013 she weighed 19.2 pounds, about twice her healthy weight. Fortunately, our Dr. Dawn Burke spoke frankly about the health risks they were creating, and gave them guidance in weight reduction strategies. Stephanie Belsen describes their weight loss journey this way:



"When Serena had gained all her weight she started not feeling well and developed habits and behaviors that were not like her usual self which put a strain on us as a family. At first we were unsure if we could get the weight to stay off (her need to sneak the dog's food didn't help the situation!) and if we'd ever be able to correct the bad habits. We figured out a feeding schedule that works well for everyone and developed ways to make her work for treats like hiding them around the house and putting them into paper towel tubes. We also developed a more controlled access her food supply. Serena was not happy with any of these changes at first. Just like a person who is starting a diet and wants a big piece of cake, Serena really REALLY wanted salmon treats. As she started to lose the weight the behaviors naturally corrected (which was a huge relief) and she came to love playing "find it". Serena is now back to acting the kitten she is on the inside: chasing her tail, jumping where no cat has jumped before, and exploring everything."

In December, Serena came for her annual health check up with Dr. Burke. Her weight? Down to a perfect 10.2 pounds! We couldn't be more pleased, and we admire the hard work the Belsens did to change her eating habits.

Obesity is the number one preventable health problem we see among our patients, and we estimate that nearly 2/3 of our patients are either overweight or obese. Is your pet too heavy? For serving as an inspirational example of successful weight management, we are proud to name Serena our March 2016 Patient of the Month.

Suffield Veterinary Hospital

Dr. Ann Huntington ❖ Dr. Anita Sabellico ❖ Dr. Dawn Burke

❖ Dr. Griffin O'Connor ❖ Dr. Daniel Rothbart

577 East Street South (Route 159), Suffield, CT 06078 (860) 668-4041

View all of our Patients of the Month on our web site, www.suffieldvet.com