



WINN FELINE FOUNDATION

For the Health and Well-being of All Cats

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONGRESSIONAL RECOGNITION OF BRIA FUND ANNIVERSARY AND FIP RESEARCH

Wyckoff, NJ, November 18, 2015: Winn Feline Foundation (Winn) acknowledges November 18th as National Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP) Awareness, Research, and Education Day. The Bria Fund for FIP Research was announced on November 18, 2005. FIP remains a fatal disease affecting cats of all ages, but primarily kittens and older cats. Through donations to the Bria Fund and the 16 studies funded to date, progress is being made to better understand FIP.

In recognition of the Bria Fund's 10th Anniversary, U.S. Representative John (Jimmy) Duncan, (R) TN 2nd District issued the following statement, entered into the *Congressional Record* today:

“Today is the 10th anniversary of the Bria Fund for Feline Infectious Peritonitis. The Bria Fund is a worthy organization created on November 18, 2005, by two of my constituents, Susan Gingrich and James Shurskis, who worked together with the Winn Feline Foundation.

Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP) is a disease that is considered to be the predominant cause of death for young cats under the age of two, but it can affect cats of any age, including senior cats. FIP remains a terminal disease, with no effective vaccine to prevent it, or treatment to cure it.

Despite these ongoing obstacles, the work of the Bria Fund has resulted in new interest and research into the little known disease of FIP. Since 2005, the Fund has supported 16 FIP research projects, leading to important knowledge in multiple aspects of FIP. The information gained about the FIP virus has led to improvements in testing, diagnosis, and treatment, and better understanding of caring for cats with FIP.

This is an exciting time for FIP research. Despite the lack of a definitive cure, better testing and treatment methods are helping some cats live well despite having FIP. There are also more opportunities for veterinary professionals to learn about FIP in their continuing education programs.

Ms. Gingrich and Mr. Shurskis were inspired by personal experiences to establish the Bria Fund. In early 2005, they lost their nine-month old Blue Lynx Point Birman kitten Bria to suspected FIP. They had never heard of FIP before Bria developed it. They soon learned that little was known about this disease, that there were no clinical trials involving FIP, and no treatment for it, except for steroid prescriptions to somewhat ease the pain and suffering of cats with the disease.

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The Winn Feline Foundation is a non-profit organization [501(c)(3)] established by The Cat Fancier's Association.



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After Bria's passing, they were determined to do everything they could to spare future cat owners from the experiences they and Bria had to endure. The Gingrich family is well known for its love of animals. Ms. Gingrich's sisters, Candace Gingrich and Roberta Gingrich Brown, worked hard with their sister to establish the Bria Fund. Her brother, former Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich, encouraged the organization he created, the Center for Health Transformation, to provide a generous contribution to the Fund.

The Gingrich's could not have picked a more worthy ally in the Winn Feline Foundation. The WFF was established by the Cat Fancier's Association, Inc. to support health-related research benefiting cats. To date, Winn has funded over \$5 million in health research for cats at more than 30 partner institutions worldwide. Since the WFF was established in 1968 feline medicine has become a major veterinary specialty. Cats are no longer viewed as small dogs. Today, cat owners expect and receive state-of-the-art medical care.

As the Bria Fund celebrates its 10th anniversary, I encourage my colleagues to pause for a moment in honor of National Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP) Awareness, Research, and Education Day and think of all the pets and pet owners in this Nation, especially cats such as Bria”.

Winn Feline Foundation is a non-profit organization established in 1968 that supports studies to improve cat health. Since 1968, the Winn Feline Foundation has funded over \$5.4 million in health research for cats at more than 30 partner institutions world-wide. For further information, go to www.winnfelinefoundation.org.