

“Paws & Hearts”

Animal Assisted Therapy

Fed. Tax ID #91-2096569



SPRING 2024 NEWSLETTER

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Spring 2024 and the start of our 24th year! When we hit 25, it will be something to really celebrate!

The start of the New Year has been very good to us! A few new volunteer teams have found their way to our organization, a couple major donations came in, as well as a couple of grants—everything combined makes running a non-profit just a little easier.

We have appointed one of our volunteers Kerry Hopps to our Board of Directors. Like the qualities that every non-profit looks for in new board members, Kerry possess the 3 T's—Time, Talent and Treasure! She is a proven, reliable volunteer and will be a great asset to our small board.

In this newsletter I have refreshed an article I ran years ago dealing with the subject of pet trusts. This refresh was inspired by a visitor to our office inquiring about this exact subject and what she should do now that she was a senior preparing to adopt another dog. So glad she stopped by and asked!

We have another year to make our valley a little happier with our Pet Therapy Visits!

Let's keep busy!

- Richard Waxman

UPCOMING EVENTS

Add to your calendar!

PET BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

Monthly Meetings
Second Wednesday of the Month
@ 1:00pm

VOLUNTEER BOOK CLUB

Monthly get togethers
Last Wednesday of the Month
@1:00pm at the office

“TERRY’S” VIEWS


(“Lucky”, “Scruffy”, “Maddie” & “Bingo”
in thought)



So is it really in my job description to have to listen to Dad as he types out these Newsletters? Did the four guys who came before me have to listen to that whiny voice keep re-arranging the wording? OY!


And speaking of job descriptions, I know I've skated right past having to go on weekly visits with this whole nervous dog schtick I've perfected so well. Honestly, though I think that the big boss is catching on. He's taken me on a few presentations these last couple of months, and I seem to manage well.

While listening to Dad talk to these groups I look around the room and watch how the attendees are responding to our story. I've witnessed those who start to tear up when Dad describes actual pet therapy visits. He always ends his talk with my favorite story when he tells everyone, “Terry visited the Comprehensive Cancer Center last summer and he was visiting with a very old woman who took quite a shine to him. When her name was called for her appointment she whispered in Terry's ears—“Thank you for making me forget where I was!” Even I teared up!

 “Terry” Waxman

“Paws & Hearts”

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The Importance of Leaving a Pet Trust for Your Beloved Companion



Over the years I have written a few times about the importance of leaving instructions in your final wishes as to who will take your beloved dog or cat if the time comes when you are no longer around. A few weeks ago a woman stopped by the office to ask me just this very thing because she was planning to adopt a new pup and was concerned that at her age she might not out-live the dog. Just so glad she was thinking of this! And I decided it was time to dust off that article one more time because the subject is so important.

Trusts are a common way to provide for a spouse, children, or other family members after you're gone, and they even can be used for family members that have fur, fins or feathers.

Though less widespread than trusts drafted for human beneficiaries, pet trusts serve many of the same functions. They can provide legal instructions and protections for the care and placement of animals when an owner dies or becomes incapacitated.

Pet trusts focus on some of the same concepts as a 'human trust.' The key aim is to name a trusted person or organization to provide ongoing care for your animals, while providing funds to do so. Many people instead make informal arrangements, asking friends or relatives to take in their animals. But without a trust or other legal document, there's no assurance your wishes will be fulfilled.

"The last thing you want is for your pet to go to a shelter, get traumatized there, and possibly get euthanized," said Jodi Polanski, executive director of Lost Our Home Pet Rescue in Tempe, AZ, one of various animal-adoption groups that encourage people to consider trusts. If requested, "**Paws & Hearts**" will serve as trustee, overseeing an animal's care and living arrangements. We have already been down this road many years ago with a brother and sister cat.

Similarly, an owner could spell out how much medical care should be given to a pet, especially an older one, and when euthanasia might become the preferred option. Trusts can plan for those and other contingencies. "At least you would have some control over what happens to your pet."

You also could specify many other details, such as your cat be fed grain-free kibble, or that your dog be exercised regularly, but not at dog parks. If your animal is on medication, that would be spelled out, as well as all the medical records and names of the pet's veterinarian. A key decision is naming the right trustee — the person or organization entrusted with carrying out your wishes.

The costs to have an attorney draft a trust vary and are somewhat negotiable. As a general guide, living-trust packages for human beneficiaries typically start around \$1,000 but can rise to several thousand dollars or more, depending on the attorney, the complexities, and the assets involved. Pet trusts, which are simpler, should cost less. If you already have a living trust, you can usually add an addendum rather than draft a separate pet trust.

As with trusts for humans, pet trusts can involve an investment-management component, especially if several animals are involved or they are long-lived, as with some birds. A suggested funding amount for a pet trust is usually \$10,000. Any money left after the animal dies can be donated to a non-profit group.

If you don't establish a pet trust, consider spelling out your pet-care wishes in a letter given to a trusted relative or friend, though these instructions wouldn't be legally binding. While you might think of your pets as family, they're considered property in the eyes of the law.

Similarly, you could leave funds with a friend or family member, with care instructions. But without a trust, "Nothing will prevent (the person) from using the money for some other purpose and/or giving your pets away." Just make sure you give this some serious consideration and make sure to get it done.



Your beloved companion animal deserves to be taken care of if you are no longer able to!

~ Volunteer Stories ~

**We are continually adding new Canine Ambassadors and their handlers--
Our volunteers have been sending in some of the most amazing reports from their weekly visits.
Each and every one of you are making such a difference in the lives of the
patients that you and your Canine Ambassador visit!**

SANDIE & "SHELBY"

The Comprehensive Cancer Center at Desert Regional

Best Day!!! So many people today. We started in the basement and spent probably a half an hour just there. "Beagle man" was there again. Shelby loves him and he's a great calming influence on her. Today people tended to "group" around us. So when we were talking to someone, others would come up and join in - everyone touching Shelby. I also think she got and gave more kisses than ever before. Staff and patients alike were friendly, welcoming, and appreciative of spending time with Shelby. There were some cat ladies who actually followed us up a floor to spend more time with us. The most "exuberant" dog person I have ever met, I think, was on the 2nd floor. She is a groomer in Yucca and just couldn't get enough of Shelby. She picked her up, kissed her, and petted her for a long time. Shelby got a lot of compliments about her "beauty and her sweet nature," which, of course, boosted her self-esteem. What lady doesn't like that? We had a great time! And more importantly we made so many of the patients waiting for appointments feel just a little better from our visit!



TONI & "MUFFIN"

Valencia Palms

We always enjoy visiting the activity room! Residents are generally awake and alert when Muffin visit's them. Today, I put Muffin on the lap of a gentleman who appeared to have severe dementia. I guided his hands to pet and feel Muffin, as he had poor motor skills. He also had no verbal skills, and his face was very non-emotional. When I took Muffin off his lap, he smiled and watched her as she went around the room. One of the residents said we did him a world of good because she had never seen him smile before. What a great feeling! The residents who like Muffin are always so grateful and thank us, whether it be in Spanish, or English!



BOB & "THOR"

Vista Cove Memory Care

The staff was putting up the holiday decorations today, and less patients were sleeping. One of the patients in the higher functioning building asked if we had visited before and said we looked familiar. Another patient in the same area was sitting on the couch, and Thor sat beside her. The patient was enjoying petting Thor for a few minutes, and the patient stopped. Thor lifted his front paw in a pawing motion to indicate that he wanted more petting. Thor is getting very comfortable visiting Vista Cove and becoming very familiar with the patients and staff. We met one of the Marketing Directors - Gerry Neighbors. She took a few pictures of Thor with the residents and included the following in her text with the photos, "Thank you for sharing your gifts of companionship with our residents!"



OUR MISSION STATEMENT

"Paws & Hearts" is a leader in the field of "Animal Assisted Therapy" (AAT) and it is our mission to enrich the lives of the frail and special care cases that require the loving attention and affection that only a 'four-legged" healer can provide.



"Paws & Hearts"

42-600 Cook Street, Ste. 138
The Berger Foundation Building
Palm Desert, CA 92211

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

MONTHLY PET LOSS SUPPORT BEREAVEMENT GROUP

We have been offering our Monthly Pet Loss Support Bereavement Group now for almost 9 years, and in that time we have helped a few hundred people who have been experiencing the pain of losing a beloved dog or cat (even a horse once.)

We truly like to think that these monthly sessions are helpful to the attendees, if only for the fact that everyone has a chance to listen to what the person sitting beside them has to say, and we realize we are not alone in our time of grief and hopeful healing.

Over the years we have received dozens of thank you cards and emails expressing gratitude at having found a place to come and really 'get all the feelings out' and to share some tears with others experiencing the same loss. I've chosen not to share any of the notes because they are all too personal, just know that we are always here to listen and offer some guidance in dealing with the loss.

