

Leave a Legacy

Paula Fischer Supports Our Companions in Life and Beyond

by Mary deManbey

One of the most difficult decisions most people have to make is deciding who should be the beneficiaries of their wealth upon their death. For Paula Fischer, former Our Companions board member and staunch supporter, it was a no-brainer.

“If I won Powerball, the first thing I would do is build the sanctuary for Our Companions, that’s how much I believe in this organization and what it can and will do,” she says. “I can’t do enough. My heart is with the animals and the incredible plan that Our Companions has mapped out.”

Because she believes so strongly in the goals and future aspirations of Our Companions, Paula designated Our Companions beneficiary of her life insurance policy. As a single woman with no children, her intense love and passion for pets motivated her to leave a legacy for animals in need. Being enthusiastic animal lovers themselves, Paula’s family members are very supportive of her decision.

“I look at pets the way people feel about their children. I love them deeply, and this is one way I felt I could give back significantly.”

Paula’s relationship with Our Companions began in the early nineties when she met Susan Linker (Our Companion’s CEO) through a mutual friend. “When I first met Susan, I knew immediately that whatever she did, it was going to be awesome,” she says. “Several years later in 2002, when Susan approached me to become a board member of her newly formed organization, I couldn’t say no.”

Because of her work in marketing and public relations, Paula was instrumental in helping Our Companions get off the ground through her networking relationships and by contributing ideas to the startup of the organization. Today, with her busy schedule, Paula wishes she had more time to volunteer for Our Companions. She continues to donate pet portraits and handcrafted jewelry for the silent auction at the Dogleg Classic, Our Companions’ annual golf tournament, as well as support special events.

What advice would Paula give to someone who was thinking about leaving a legacy in his or her will to Our Companions? “If you have life insurance that you’re undecided about keeping, or especially if you’re single without children, I would encourage you to name

Our Companions the beneficiary. The same goes for a 401k or IRA. It suddenly gives that investment a worthwhile purpose. It comforts me to know that upon my death, I will be leaving a gift of life to homeless animals.”

The Forever Home Society

By deciding to include Our Companions in your estate plans, you can become part of the “Forever Home Society.” Besides the obvious benefit of the gift of giving that will live on after you, your gift could also:

- Increase your current income by minimizing your income taxes, capital gains taxes, and/or estate taxes.

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- Create or preserve benefits for your heirs.
- Plan and provide for your pet's future.
- Your legacy will help provide for the long-term financial stability of Our Companions.

As there are many different options to consider, consult with your financial advisor, your attorney or visit Our Companions web site for more information at www.ourcompanions.org/pages/giving_legacy.htm.

Trust Protectors For Your Pet

Perhaps you have set up a trust for the care of your pet should your pet outlive you. But how can you be sure the terms of the trust will be carried out? Connecticut recently passed a law to permit the creation of pet trusts, thereby helping you to ensure your pets will not be neglected or euthanized if they outlive you.

The new law requires the trust to designate a trust protector who acts on behalf of the animal to assure that the trust is carried out appropriately. A Superior Court or probate court would have jurisdiction over your pet, only to be terminated upon the death of your pet.