

Profiles in Giving Volunteer Henry Petrofsky by Jennifer Barrows

Henry Petrofsky has been integral to the success of Our Companions since 2003, serving in many volunteer capacities over the years. At the outset, the organization benefited greatly (and still does) from Henry's accounting acumen. He has generously offered his time and energy to establish standard accounting practices that have helped the organization achieve a reputation for "the cleanest books around" (a statement made by a local third-party auditor after reviewing Our Companions financial records). Henry has since gone on to serve on the Board of Directors, as Treasurer, as well as Chair of the Finance Committee.

"I can't imagine where we would be without the dedication and generosity of this exceptional volunteer leader," said Susan Linker, CEO. "Henry not only freely gives of his expertise and time, but his heart really is in this work, whether it's serving as a foster parent, as an Our Companions ambassador within the community, or as an organizational leader – he does it all with genuine devotion and we are so grateful for his many invaluable contributions."

When he's not working as Controller for Metal Management Aerospace in Hartford, Henry also fosters animals – right now he has a mother cat and five energetic kittens keeping him on his toes. He also lives with his feline soul mate, Allison, a cat who began visiting his back patio regularly when she was just a kitten, and ultimately joined Henry's household permanently. "Allison definitely ignited the animal lover in me," says Henry.

At first he thought she was a stray; later he learned that she belonged to a neighbor. It quickly became apparent that Henry was more interested in the kitten than the original owners were, so the owners consented to let Henry keep her.

"When I took her to the vet, I had access to all her medical records from the previous owners, and I learned that Allison and I shared the same birthday. I guess that pretty much sums up how special she is to me," said Henry.

When asked what brought him to Our Companions, he recounts that his involvement began after a visit to Zion National Park in Utah. At the local visitors' bureau there, he came upon information about Best Friends, the domestic animal sanctuary located nearby. Intrigued by the idea of such a place, he visited and was absolutely captivated. "That was a life changing moment for me," he recalled. "I decided at that moment I could do anything I wanted in my life, and working with and for animals is what I really want to do."

Shortly after his return to Connecticut, he read an article in the paper featuring Susan Linker, CEO of Our Companions, who told about her plans to build a domestic animal sanctuary in Ashford. The article mentioned the organization was seeking volunteers to help realize the dream shared by Susan and so many others, including Henry. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Thank you, Henry for giving so much of yourself to this organization and to the animals who benefit from our work. We look forward to working with you for many years to come!