



2016



ANNUAL REPORT



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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND CEO

Dear Friends,

The year 2016 was a remarkable one for Our Companions Animal Rescue. Our family of donors and volunteers contributed to our success in unprecedented ways and we are grateful for each and every act of generosity and kindness.

One hundred percent of our capital campaign (construction at the Sanctuary) and 99% of our operating costs (vet bills, pet food, various Sanctuary and Program Center operational expenses, etc.) are made possible by the generosity of the community. There are few nonprofit organizations whose ability to serve its constituents is so closely – in fact, almost exclusively – tied to the voluntary philanthropic support of the public.

This year marks the 15th anniversary of Our Companions Animal Rescue. With this in mind, we look forward to identifying many opportunities to celebrate this milestone with our donors, volunteers, and staff. One of the most significant ways we will mark this occasion is through undertaking the largest expansion yet at the Sanctuary in Ashford, Connecticut. In early 2017, we begin the construction of three new cottages, doubling the number of animals we can provide shelter and care for. While still far from our ultimate goal of 16 cottages, the Sanctuary expansion will enable us to more effectively meet the needs of the community, as well as those of our steadily changing animal population. While we have many important programs and services beyond those offered at the Sanctuary, the opening of these cottages will be a game-changer for Our Companions. We are delighted that you will play a part in bringing this all about.

As we look to the future and dive head-first into what promises to be a landmark year for the organization, allow us to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the Our Companions family, once again, for your support, sacrifice, and commitment to our shared promise to do the right thing for animals.

Sincerely,



Maria das Neves
Board Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maria das Neves".



Susan B. Linker
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan B. Linker".

HOMES SAVED

Founded in 2002, Our Companions Animal Rescue's central governing principle is to do the right thing for animals regardless of the challenge or the cost. Our Companions operates facilities at the Valerie Friedman Program Center in Manchester, Connecticut and at its 47-acre Animal Sanctuary, in Ashford, Connecticut.

Our Companions provides many programs that help homeless animals in need today, while working to prevent animals from becoming homeless tomorrow. Our intent is to pursue adoption only as a last resort, by providing innovative programs to keep pets with their current families. Thankfully, each year we are able to "save the homes" of dozens of pets through our behavior intervention and pet retention programs. Through the myriad programs at Our Companions Animal Rescue, we were able to positively impact the lives of 1,158 animals in 2016. This annual report shares highlights of the many achievements realized this past year.



Keeping Pets and Their Families Together: 180 Lives Impacted

While finding a new home for a pet is necessary in some situations, it is also a stressful and often traumatic experience for the animal. Our Companions is committed first and foremost to offering pet retention programs specifically designed to help families with challenging pet situations, and thus prevent pets from losing their homes.

For example, we offer behavioral assistance programs to tackle many issues that often lead to a family's decision to surrender a pet. There are also instances where we are able to keep families together by providing pet care supplies or veterinary assistance. In other cases, we have skilled staff and volunteers who provide advice and recommendations on how to negotiate with landlords when housing challenges arise. Our Companions also has an invaluable resource in its trained Animal Helpline volunteers who take the time to speak with and offer recommendations to callers who are feeling overwhelmed.

Regardless of the specific program, whenever we are able to preserve a pet's home, it is something to be celebrated. We are proud that in 2016 we were able to preserve the homes of nearly 200 pets and their families. As we enter 2017, it is our goal to expand and enhance our pet retention services, offering additional ways to keep even more people and pets together.



Brody Wilson– A Life-Long Training Success!

We met Brody in 2011 when his family came to Our Companions seeking our help in finding him new home. The family wasn't able to handle the anxiety-related behavioral issues Brody developed after the family divorced and moved. Given Brody's sensitivity to change, we knew we needed to find just the right home for him.

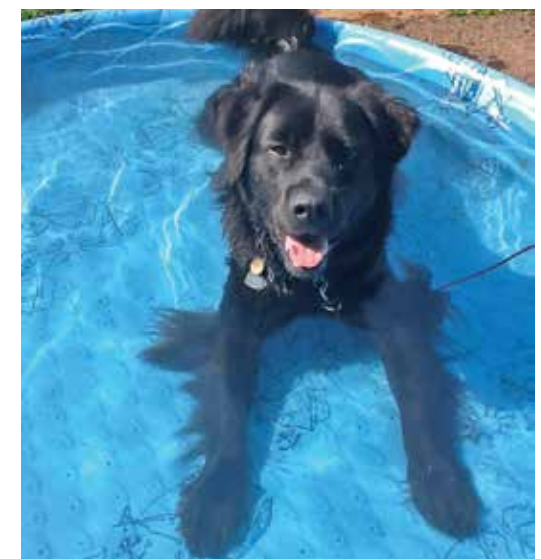
We found that home when we met Terry from Cromwell. After she adopted him, she decided to send Brody to doggie daycare while she was at work. Unfortunately once Brody settled in at a daycare, he began bullying other dogs to the point that he was repeatedly being asked not to return to each daycare he attended. As a Plan B, Terry worked out a system with her vet where he would stay there during the day in his own kennel run where he enjoyed being king of the roost.

Terry also enlisted Brody in Our Companions' dog training classes, and then moved onto taking him to Therapy classes. Brody and Terry were inseparable and loved being a team both while doing therapy work and when at home.

The classes were my salvation. They finally taught me how to be a truly responsible dog owner.

Fast forward four years, and Brody and Terry started having some unfortunate encounters with off-leash dogs in her neighborhood. During one of these encounters, Brody had a fight with one of those dogs resulting in the other dog's owner getting bitten. It was not known which dog bit the person, so both dogs were referred to animal control for quarantine. During Brody's quarantine, at the suggestion of the Animal Control Officer, Terry reached out to Our Companions once again to see what guidance we could offer.

We suggested she come back to class and start at the beginning again, even though she had already progressed through our classes previously. This would give Brody confidence to be around other dogs in a controlled setting where he could learn that he would be safe. After progressing through the basic classes, they now participate in Walking Club where he joins us for walks with different dogs in different settings to continually reinforce to Brody that he is safe around other dogs. As Terry says: "The classes were my salvation. They finally taught me, in spite of being a long time dog owner, how to be a truly responsible dog owner because I can finally read the signals that Brody is telling me."



ADOPTIONS

Adoptions into Forever Homes: 137 Lives Impacted

The Adoption Program at Our Companions works diligently to match pets and potential adopters in order to ensure a successful long-term outcome. This requires that we learn about each animal's personality and needs, and that we ascertain a potential adopter's preferences and lifestyle. Throughout the adoption process, and beyond, OC provides personalized support, including pre-adoption counseling, assistance and advice while the animal is settling in, and support throughout the animal's lifetime.

Kaylee—Adoption Success!

Kaylee came to Our Companions in late 2014, when the Tolland Animal Control Officer reached out to us for assistance in treating a dog she had in her care for heartworm disease. Kaylee had been adopted to a family and then quickly returned after they found out she was heartworm-positive. The Sanctuary was full at the time, so we paid for her treatment and they did the necessary cage rest that goes along with treatment. At the end of that 30 days we had room for her at the Sanctuary.

Kaylee quickly proved to be quite the project dog! We found out very quickly that she was very excitable and high-energy when interacting with people. She would often test new volunteers when coming in the door, or out in the exercise fields by jumping on them, and just behaving badly in general. Once she had gained familiarity with people, she was very sweet and affectionate, and loved to play. She stayed with us for one year and nine months before we found her perfect adopter. During that time she took every class we offered at our Valerie Freidman Program Center, and was a frequent participant of our Buddy Project program. She made great progress while she was with us.



Jenn and Justin came to the 2016 Clear the Shelters event that we participated in. They had an instant connection with her. As a way of having them bond before adoption, we enrolled Kaylee in a basic obedience class so that her adopters could learn what she had worked on while she was with us. She was mid-way through that class when she was adopted.

A few weeks into the adoption, Jenn contacted us to say that Kaylee was getting over-excited with visitors in their home. A home visit was made, and a training plan was put in place for when they have visitors. Jenn and Justin have been very committed to following that plan, and we are so happy when



She stayed with us for one year and nine months before we found her perfect adopter.

we get glowing updates like the following sent our way on a regular basis:

"My mom came over last weekend and Kaylee was awesome. She didn't jump or try to nip. She was walking around with her and following her around the house. My mom did some of her tricks with her and she was great. Nice and calm the whole time. Kaylee has definitely been doing great with all of the stuff you gave us to work on with her."



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Supporting the Needs of Our Community: 825 Lives Impacted

Part of our mission to end pet homelessness includes working closely with the public and Animal Control facilities throughout the state.

Dog Training and Behavior Programs: 247 Lives Impacted

Our Companions offers reward-based training in a variety of forms to address common pet behavior problems and deepen the bond between people and their canine companions. The affordable group training classes are small, with a high number of instructors, often providing a one-to-one student/instructor ratio. Our Companions classes are unique and specialize in teaching dog behavior rather than just the commands, so that pet owners leave class with a greater understanding of their dogs. All classes are designed to be a safe and positive experience for reactive dogs and fearful dogs.

Our Companions provides free evaluations to the public and to Animal Control facilities, providing a professional assessment of the dog's temperament and a recommend treatment plan for behavioral problems. Volunteers for Our Companions Canine College program also provide in-shelter training for dogs in Animal Control facilities to help make them more adoptable.



Feral Cat Assistance: 364 Lives Impacted

In Connecticut, there are hundreds of thousands of cats that are free-roaming and in need of help. Having been born outside, without human contact, many cats have never been socialized with people. Through our Sterile Feral program, we provide TNR, or Trap-Neuter-Return, services for those who are feeding feral cats so they can get them vaccinated and sterilized. Once the cats are sterilized, Our Companions provides cat food assistance and warm feral cat shelters. Our Companions also provides free veterinary care for any cats in the colony who may become sick or injured. The feral cats in our state are in great need and are a very important population that we serve at Our Companions.



Animal Placement: 130 Lives Impacted

Despite our best attempts to keep pets in their original homes, circumstances sometimes arise which necessitate a pet being placed in a new home. Our Companions provides a creative animal placement service or “re-homing program” that works with the public to transfer pets directly from their original home into a new, loving home, as seamlessly as possible. Our Companions provides volunteer Adoption Caseworkers through its Animal Helpline. The Caseworker gets to know the adoptable animal, creates marketing pieces to advertise the animal’s availability, and works to find the best match for a new home. This program also involves the assistance and cooperation of the original owner so they get to meet the new adoptive family. Most importantly, this program saves the animal the stress of having to enter a shelter or rescue facility.



Animal Crisis Support: 60 Lives Impacted

Our Companions has professionally trained workers who provide counseling, coaching and resources when people find themselves in crisis situations involving their pets. Our compassionate and skilled workers help people understand the resources available in the community through their towns, Animal Control, social services, public housing or health departments, and offer advocacy and support in making connections for people in critical situations.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Colt Kittens— Feral Cat Management, Sanctuary Socialization and Multiple Adoption Successes!

The story of the Colt kittens is an example of how multiple programs came together to impact the lives of some very special cats. The City of Hartford is overloaded with feral cat colonies. One savvy colony found shelter in an open garage at the Colt Maintenance Facility. Some kind people were caring for them but became overwhelmed and realized that this facility was not the optimal living situation for the cats. That's when they called Our Companions. Caroline, our Manager of Community Programs, says, "We often get calls from people who really love cats, but they don't know what to do. When we got the call, we explained to them that it's not Our Companions' policy to get rid of the cats. It is our policy to provide TNR services (trap, neuter, return). I convinced them to close the access points to the building and move the feeding stations along the perimeter of the property. We also provided shelters to encourage the cats to hang out there rather than inside the building." The folks caring for the cats were happy to use our program to help these cats. Once they were brought to the vet for spay/neuter and vaccinations, it was determined that four of the kittens were still young enough to be socialized. If kittens are young enough and socialized properly, they can become domesticated and highly adoptable.

The next phase of their journey was kitten socialization at Sebastian House at Our Companions' Sanctuary in Ashford. When the Colt kittens first arrived, they couldn't be held and were fearful of humans. A special socialization program was required, given their critical age of nine weeks old (just past the usual window of time for feral kittens to be successfully so-





cialized). They were immediately put on an around-the-clock schedule with volunteers patiently spending time with them, feeding them with baby food on their fingertips, coaxing them out from hiding places, and simply getting them used to humans. Each volunteer spent about two to three hours with them per session. This went on for three months, resulting in a whopping 200 hours of pure socialization time.

Even though they will always be shyer cats, all four have been adopted into wonderful homes! Colt was the first to be adopted, after one of our volunteers fell in love with him. Lynn happened to be in the right place at the



Each volunteer spent about two to three hours with them per session.

right time, as she was looking for a feline companion for her five-year-old cat. When she was younger, Lynn had an orange cat and always wanted another one. So when Colt was ready for adoption, she didn't hesitate. "We call him Riley now, and he runs the show," she laughs. "He gets along great with our other cat, and they often run around chasing each other."

Chickpea, Tetris, and Jupiter are doing equally well in their new homes! Chickpea, the most social of the four kittens, was adopted to live with another kitty. And, Tetris and Jupiter were adopted together with their bigger and braver buddy, Higgins – which made for a very special trio!



SANCTUARY

Sanctuary Rehabilitation: 56 Lives Impacted

Each year in Connecticut's shelters adoptable animals are destroyed, many of whom could have been saved if they had a proper environment for longer-term rehabilitative care. The Sanctuary's purpose is to meet the needs of this vulnerable group of animals.

Our 47-acre Sanctuary provides a home-like setting that is conducive to a longer-term stay, and offers a low-stress, enriching atmosphere that encourages healing and rehabilitation. The Sanctuary also serves as an adoption center, providing an inviting place for people to meet our animals.

This year, thanks to the generous support of the community, Our Companions will begin an expansion project. This next phase of construction will allow us to provide many operational enhancements to facilitate the animals' rehabilitation while at the Sanctuary. For example, additional housing will allow us greater flexibility in "mixing and matching" the communities of animals in each cottage, creating compatible living situations for all of the animals in our care. In this phase, we also will improve the design of the cat and dog cottages, incorporating what we've learned from the current housing experience to provide an even more supportive and enriching atmosphere for the animals. The additional housing also will allow us to add a kitten nursery and isolation areas for animals who may be sick or require close observation.

But most importantly, this new construction will allow us to double our capacity for housing animals at the Sanctuary and provide our life-changing rehabilitative services to a growing number of the community's most vulnerable animals.



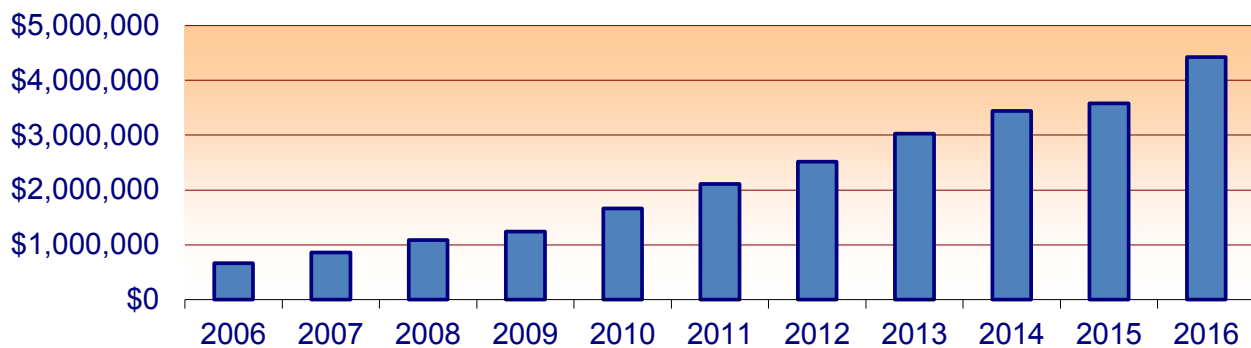
More than 200 volunteers are actively involved in providing daily care and socialization for the animals at the Sanctuary. We would not be able to deliver these live-saving services without the dedication and commitment of our volunteer team.

The roughly 127 dog volunteers and 112 cat volunteers put in, on average, almost 180 hours per week at the Sanctuary. They perform any number of tasks, from walking the dogs, to brushing the cats, to assisting with feeding and housework. There are even volunteers who spend quiet family time with the dogs and cats in the evening, to make them feel more at home. All of our volunteers go through a detailed training that includes some basics of training and behavior, in order for them to give the best care possible to our animal residents.

2016 Financial Results Commentary

Our Companions Animal Rescue was founded in 2002 and since then each year has continued to show remarkable growth to achieve its financial goals. The chart below graphically depicts the growth over the last 10 year in net equity (total assets minus total liabilities) which is the measure of an organizations net worth. As the chart indicates, net equity has grown steadily from under \$1,000,000 in 2006 to over \$4,000,000 as of 12/31/16. Our Companions is supported primarily by small donations from a large and continuously growing private donor base.

Our Companions Animal Rescue Net Equity by Year



The highlight of the income statement for 2016 (see the detail income statement on the following page) include \$943,523 in general donation income compared with \$975,883 in 2015. However what is not reflected in this number is an additional \$764,978 in capital campaign funds that were raised in 2016 to fund the construction of Phase III at Our Companions' Sanctuary in Ashford, CT. Phase III includes constructing 2 more dog rescue cottages and one additional cat rescue cottage, which essentially will double the size of the Sanctuary. Total administrative expense for 2016 was \$939,628 which was slightly lower than the 2015 total of \$954,961, primarily due to lower payroll related expense. The highlights of the administrative expense include expending \$74,735 on veterinary care across all our programs and another \$22,612 on pet care for the animals housed at the Sanctuary, all of which directly relates to the core mission of helping animals. Our Companions also recorded \$41,405 in miscellaneous other income in 2016, which consists primarily of \$13,077 in dividends on the Board Restricted Investment Fund, and an additional \$32,803 in unrealized stock appreciation on the same account. Net Income was \$79,229 in 2016 compared with \$70,736 in 2015.

The balance sheet is also presented on the following pages and the highlights at 12/31/16 include total assets of \$4,434,429 and liabilities of only \$5,985, for a net worth of \$4,428,444. This number has shown steady growth as the chart above vividly displays. Our Companions finished the year with \$2,203,129 in total funds on hand however \$827,995 of this is in the capital campaign fund and will be used to fund construction of the Sanctuary in early 2017. The Board Restricted Fund which is invested in a Vanguard balanced index fund increased from \$502,635 at 12/31/15 to \$546,693 at 12/31/16. Overall Our Companions' balance sheet is very healthy and Our Companions is strongly positioned to move forward with the Sanctuary expansion plans in 2017.

Comparative Balance Sheets

For the periods ending 12/31/16 and 12/31/15

	<u>12/31/16</u>	<u>12/31/15</u>	<u>Net Change</u>
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
General Fund Cash on Hand	825,606	715,001	110,605
Board Restricted Fund	546,693	502,635	44,058
Capital Campaign Funds	827,995	75,665	752,330
Other Restricted Funds	<u>2,835</u>	<u>15,444</u>	<u>(12,609)</u>
Total Cash & Short Term Investments	2,203,129	1,308,745	894,384
Prepaid Expense	1,706	3,656	(1,950)
Fixed Assets			
Land	564,584	564,584	-
Land Improvements	272,975	254,797	18,178
Buildings & Improvements	1,639,302	1,650,656	(11,354)
Leasehold Improvements	18,877		18,877
Vehicles	22,895	22,895	-
Furniture, Fixtures, Equipment	61,154	61,154	-
Computer Equipment	2,543		2,543
Machinery & Equipment	30,413	30,413	-
Construction In Progress	14,298	1,650	12,648
Accum Depr - Furn, Fixt, Equip	<u>(397,447)</u>	<u>(307,674)</u>	<u>(89,773)</u>
Total Fixed Assets	2,229,594	2,278,475	(48,881)
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>4,434,429</u>	<u>3,590,876</u>	<u>843,553</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY			
Current Liabilities			
Federal Withholding Liability	4,416	4,893	(477)
State Income Tax Liability	515	697	(182)
Ct State Sales Tax Liability	<u>1,054</u>	<u>1,049</u>	<u>5</u>
Total Payroll & Sales Tax Liabilities	5,985	6,639	(654)
Total Current Liabilities	<u>5,985</u>	<u>6,639</u>	<u>(654)</u>
Equity			
Retained Earnings	3,584,237	3,439,001	145,236
Net Income	<u>844,207</u>	<u>145,236</u>	<u>698,971</u>
Total Equity	4,428,444	3,584,237	844,207
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>4,434,429</u>	<u>3,590,876</u>	<u>843,553</u>

Comparative Income Statement

For the 12 month periods ending 12/31/16 and 12/31/15

	<u>12 Months Ended 12/31/16</u>	<u>12 Months Ended 12/31/15</u>	<u>Over / (Under) Vs Prior Year</u>	<u>Over / (Under) %</u>
Income				
Animal Program Fees	23,806	23,752	54	0%
Donation Income - General	943,523	975,883	(32,360)	-3%
Donation Income - Capital Campaign	764,978	74,500		
Donation Income Restricted Grants	10,123	21,981	(11,858)	-54%
Total Income	<u>1,742,430</u>	<u>1,096,116</u>	<u>(44,164)</u>	-4%
Administrative Expenses				
Salary Expense	415,124	441,103	(25,979)	-6%
Payroll Taxes - Fica & Suta	35,766	37,621	(1,855)	-5%
Veterinary	74,735	72,965	1,770	2%
Pet Care Expenses	22,612	22,048	564	3%
Printing	10,843	9,433	1,410	15%
Postage	14,615	15,147	(532)	-4%
Insurance	34,347	33,716	631	2%
Promotional	5,438	4,110	1,328	32%
Professional Fees/Consultants	23,311	25,053	(1,742)	-7%
Information Technology Services	40,458	37,735	2,723	7%
Utilities	31,871	33,077	(1,206)	-4%
Office Supplies	9,154	15,006	(5,852)	-39%
Facility Supplies	10,911	13,026	(2,115)	-16%
Rent & Lease Expense	40,950	40,950	-	0%
Repairs & Maintenance	17,567	10,348	7,219	70%
Conference & Seminar Registrations	1,723	554	1,169	211%
Event & Trade Show Fees	95	468	(373)	-80%
Advocacy	1,150	2,800	(1,650)	-59%
Educational Materials	12,525	11,790	735	6%
Stewardship/Cultivation	5,360	194	5,166	2663%
Training Program Expense	21,254	19,999	1,255	6%
Volunteer Expenses	506	1,148	(642)	-56%
Federal & State Filing Fees	2,378	0	2,378	
Miscellaneous Expense	3,490	612	2,878	470%
Bank & Credit Card Fees	9,016	6,864	2,152	31%
Travel & Meal Expense	3,049	4,071	(1,022)	-25%
Depreciation Expense	91,380	95,123	(3,743)	-4%
Total Administrative Expense	<u>939,628</u>	<u>954,961</u>	<u>(15,333)</u>	-2%
Net Ordinary Income	802,802	141,155	661,647	-469%
Other Income/Expense				
Interest & Dividend Income	13,077	11,932	1,145	10%
Realized Gain/Loss on Investments	(255)	5	(260)	-5200%
Unrealized Gain/Loss on Investments	32,803	(7,856)	40,659	-518%
Gain/Loss on Disposal of Fixed Assets	(4,220)	-		
Total Other Income & Expense	<u>41,405</u>	<u>4,081</u>	<u>37,324</u>	915%
Net Income	<u><u>844,207</u></u>	<u><u>145,236</u></u>	<u><u>698,971</u></u>	-481%

MAILING ADDRESS

Our Companions Animal Rescue

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Fax 860-331-8555

FACILITY LOCATIONS

Ashford Sanctuary

46 Floeting Road
Ashford, CT 06278
Visiting Hours: Saturday, 1pm-3pm and by appointment

Valerie Friedman Program Center

34 Sanrico Drive
Manchester, CT 06042
Hours: M-F 9am-5pm and by appointment

OurCompanions.org