

No Pet Should Ever Be Homeless

P.O. Box 673
Bloomfield, CT 06002
(860) 242-9999

Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary, a nonprofit organization, is a leader in the movement to end the unnecessary euthanasia of pets in Connecticut. We are building a domestic animal sanctuary, providing low-cost training and educational services and creating a statewide partnership among animal welfare agencies to address the root causes of pet homelessness.

Quote of Compassion

Truth is not only violated by falsehood; it may be equally outraged by silence.

- Henri Fredric Amiel

Saving Simcha

By Susan Linker, CEO, Our Companions

Imagine that you're driving along in the middle of winter, focused on getting to your destination on time and running through what you have to do for the day. An SUV in front of you slams on the breaks. In its wake, a small dog lies in the road where it was hit, crushed under the weight of the SUV's massive tires. You're in an unfamiliar neighborhood in Hartford. You are by yourself. What would you do? If you are Our Companions' Board Member C.J. Hauss, you don't think twice.

C.J. jumped out of her car and scooped up the little dog, a three-month old female pit-bull. Her owner, who was standing nearby, was unsure of what to do. C.J. knew that time was precious as she watched the broken puppy go into shock.

The puppy was rushed to a veterinarian who did not have good news for the puppy's owner or C.J. - the puppy would need major orthopedic surgery to repair her crushed pelvis, femur and patella. Her owner was not only unprepared for the expense of the surgery, she couldn't even afford the cost of having the puppy euthanized. But someone was looking after the little pit-bull that day which led Our Companions to her side. No one - not C.J., the veterinarian or Our Companions could let this little sweetheart be destroyed or suffer any more.



Could you drive away from this face? Simcha is pictured here "enjoying" her first bath.

Inside This Issue

Saving Simcha . . .1-2

Announcing the 2nd Annual Dogman Classic2

Groundbreaking Campaign3

Special Insert

Animal Emergency Guide

Our Companions' volunteers transported the puppy to an orthopedic specialist in West Hartford. Despite her pain, the little pit-bull struggled to get out of her crate during the journey to give her new friends a kiss as if she knew that she was being saved. Although not entirely out of the woods, she now had a chance at the happy life she deserved.

After surgery to repair her massive injuries, the puppy stayed with Andi Thibodeau, an Our Companions volunteer and veterinary technician. Now named Simcha, which is Hebrew for "a joy; a great pleasure," the puppy has been healing, growing and learning well. Her success is due in part to the tireless hours that Andi has put in but also to Simcha's big brother and friend, Senna. A Rottweiler mix who was also rescued from a neglectful situation, Senna has been taking good care of his little sister, sharing bones, socializing her and showing her the ropes.



Simcha, immediately after surgery, cuddling on her blanket.

Recently, Simcha found her forever home with a veterinarian. At her new home, Simcha will continue to receive the love of her new family as well as the care and attention of a veterinary professional - an ideal situation for this little dog who has been through so much.

Saving Simcha (Cont.)



Big brother Senna shares some cuddle time and a bone with his new little sister.

What if? Little Simcha was fortunate. Fate was on her side the day she was hit by a car. Had it not been for C.J.'s immediate actions, Simcha may have been euthanized or worse - left to die in the streets. Simcha was saved for two reasons - her rescuer knew what to do and then did it.

If you're not sure what you would do if you were confronted with an animal emergency, then be sure to read our special insert, **Animal Emergency Guide**. This guide will give you the information and tools you need to be prepared for almost any type of animal emergency.

But beyond being prepared, C.J. acted. She could have rolled on past the accident, assuming that someone else would take care of the little dog. After all, she was alone in a strange neighborhood and on her way to work. This dog was not her responsibility, she could have reasoned.

Thankfully, C.J., like the many wonderful members of Our Companions dedicated to saving the lives of animals, could not turn her back on Simcha. She extended the love, care and sense of responsibility that she has for her own animals to an animal that she had never seen before.

What would you do? After reading this story and the **Animal Emergency Guide**, we hope that you will be inspired to act and will know the proper steps to take in the event you are faced with a situation where an animal needs you.

Announcing the 2nd Annual Dogman Classic

We are pleased to announce that John Gagnon's Pet Resort is presenting the 2nd annual Dogman Classic Golf Tournament to benefit Our Companions. You can participate as a player, sponsor or volunteer - even bring your friends to cheer you on - all while supporting Our Companions and having a great time.

The tournament, which will be held August 11th at 9 AM at Blackledge Country Club in Hebron, is set up in a scramble format, with an awards banquet for golfers and prizes including a weekend stay and dinner for two at Mohegan Sun in Uncasville, CT. We are looking for foursomes and individuals to play in the tournament. Space is limited, so sign up now!

If you don't golf but still want to participate, there are many ways you can be involved. In addition to volunteers, we are seeking personal tee sponsors for the event.



An example of a Personal Tee Sign.

What is a "Personal Tee Sponsor" you might ask? We've all seen corporate sponsor signs featured on golf courses. But at Our Companions, we like to think out of the box. We also know how much we love our pets. So, in addition to offering corporate sponsor opportunities, we are offering Personal Tee Sponsor signs that will feature your special pet - as a tribute to your living companion or a memorial to your pet who has passed.

For just a \$100 donation to Our Companions, pictures of your precious pets will adorn the golf course. Please consider honoring your beloved pet by sponsoring a sign. This is a great way to pay tribute to your animal companion while also helping Our Companions.

To register or to inquire about sponsorship opportunities, please visit our website at www.ourcompanions.org, call (860) 242-9999, ext. 2, or e-mail DogmanClassic@ourcompanions.org.

Groundbreaking Campaign - More Opportunities to Support Our Companions

As we announced in our last issue, Our Companions has officially kicked off the \$15 million, 10-year **Home for Good Capital Campaign** to fund the construction of New England's first comprehensive domestic animal sanctuary and resource center. The resource center will provide low-cost, lifesaving programs to animals and will be a destination for pet lovers across the region to enjoy. The sanctuary will give its resident animals what they intrinsically need - mercy, love, healing, time, and most importantly, a place to call home. Together, the resource center and sanctuary will expand the programs Our Companions is already providing to Connecticut's pets and owners and will truly revolutionize animal rescue and welfare in the state.

There are so many ways for you to be involved in this momentous project; and, we are pleased to announce one more opportunity for your involvement. The Groundbreaking Campaign is part of the first phase of the overall **Home for Good Capital Campaign** and is the most critical to our success because it will literally lay the foundation for the future construction on the Ashford site. Any gift you make will secure the future of the many domestic animals who would otherwise languish in shelters or be destroyed.

Contributors to this part of the campaign will have the opportunity to be recognized for their special role. Once the existing buildings on the Ashford site have been demolished, an attractive outdoor foyer will be constructed to begin welcoming guests to the sanctuary. Within the sanctuary, a memorial plaque will permanently honor the visionary contributors to this initial phase of the campaign. The plaque will serve as the centerpiece of an invitingly landscaped seating area which will also include a panoramic site plan of the future resource center and sanctuary.

Naming Opportunities

In addition to the plaque, donors will receive special recognition at various gift levels, which may also serve as a tribute to their own beloved companion.

Stone Bench w/plaque
\$25,000+

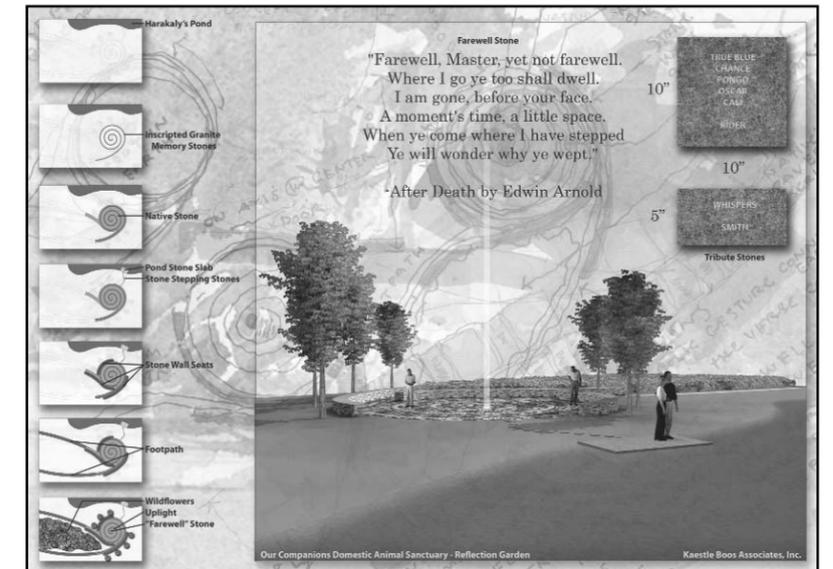
Stone Planter w/plaque
\$10,000 - \$24,999

Tribute Garden w/ plaque
\$5,000 - \$9,999

Landscaping Feature w/marker
\$2,500 - \$4,999

Listing on Plaque
Up to \$2,500

For more information on being part of our Groundbreaking Campaign, please contact Mary Lawrence at (860) 242-9999, ext. 2 or mary@ourcompanions.org.



Artist's rendering of Reflection Garden.

The Little Pipeline Stray- How the Employees of Duke Energy Joined Together to Help an Abandoned Kitten

Just before Thanksgiving, Our Companions volunteer, Brett Dorman, came across a scrawny little kitten while working on his job with Duke Energy at a pipeline in Waterbury. Sitting on a bale of hay, the little white and grey kitten cried and cried. Brett thought she could probably use some food and drove down the street to a market to get her some canned cat food. While she quickly ate through the food, Brett and his coworkers noticed that not only was she thin, she had ticks and her nails seemed to be very long.

A few people who had been working on the site had noticed her there all week, with many of them feeding her bits of their lunches. Everyone had assumed that she belonged to someone as she seemed very friendly. Hearing her cries and knowing that she had been outside all week, Brett and another employee took the kitten back to their office.

In the office, the kitten snuggled warmly in a coat on a chair. Employees streamed in and out, each one petting her. She responded to each one with a bit of purring, soaking up the love and attention. One of the company's employees, Paula, offered to take the kitten home with her over the weekend. While she already had a dog at home and really no experience with cats, Paula took the little kitten home in an extra carrier Brett had for situations just like this.

Paula kept the kitten all weekend and marveled at how well her dog and the kitten got along - the cage wasn't necessary at all. But by the end of the weekend, the little pipeline stray stopped eating, started to throw up and wasn't going to the bathroom. Paula brought her into work with her on Monday morning and the employees of Duke Energy decided to take her to a local veterinary clinic.



Upon examination, the veterinarian determined that the kitten had a blockage. But after some time at the clinic, her condition did not improve. With the Thanksgiving holiday approaching, the clinic would be closed and the little kitten would have to be taken elsewhere. Our Companions referred Brett to Connecticut Veterinary Center, an emergency veterinary clinic in West Hartford.

Connecticut Veterinary Center took the little kitten in and determined that she was anemic, in pain and would need a blood transfusion because she had likely been sick for so long. An x-ray that had been performed at the previous vet was unreadable due to the lack of fat on the little kitten's body so an ultrasound was performed as well.

The vet clinic didn't hold out much hope for the kitten - they were surprised she was still alive.

Despite this, Paula, Brett and another of their coworkers, Mark, pitched in to pay for the kitten's care in hopes that she could be saved. With bills nearing \$3,000, they just couldn't give up on the little pipeline stray. But efforts to save her life ultimately proved fruitless and the little kitten passed away on Thanksgiving.

While this story has a sad ending, Brett, Paula and Mark will remember that they tried everything within their power to help the most helpless of animals. And in the end, she was in the care of loving people when she passed and not alone in the street. It's amazing to see how a group of people could all step in, give their time, money and love to a tiny creature who had probably not had much of anything in her short life. All the little kitten could give these strangers in return was an appreciative look, the sound of her happy purring and the knowledge that they had done the right thing by the little pipeline stray.

The story of the pipeline stray illustrates the spirit of Our Companions and its dedicated volunteers and contributors. While it's not possible to save the life of every animal, through the joining of resources, hard work, and love of animals, there is much we can accomplish. No act of kindness is ever in vain.

Animal Emergency Guide

Would you know what to do if you had found Simcha, the pit-bull puppy hit by a car in Hartford and featured on our front cover? What about a cat abandoned in your neighborhood or a baby wild animal you believe to be orphaned? People who care about animals or who are involved in animal rescue often come across situations where their help is likely needed but they may not know what to do.

Recently, Our Companions hosted a program called *Handling Animal Emergencies*. Because you care about animals, we wanted to share with you the lifesaving information and tools that you would need should you be faced with an animal emergency of your own. To follow are some general guidelines as well as very specific things to consider depending upon the type of animal emergency with which you are faced.

Always Be Prepared

If you know you are the type of person who would or just might stop for an injured animal, then the best thing you can do is to be prepared with an emergency animal kit. Keep this kit in your car at all times so that whether you're on the road or at home, it's always close by. We recommend that the kit include:

- Cell phone
- Phone numbers and addresses of 24-hour veterinary clinics, wildlife rehabilitators, animal shelters and animal control agencies. Contact Our Companions for a free rescue resource directory.
- Animal carriers and pillowcase
- Adjustable 6-foot slip lead
- Bottled water
- Leather gloves
- Muzzle
- Strong-smelling foods (canned tuna, dried liver, etc.)
- Treats
- Food and water dishes
- Animal first aid kit (available online through Medi-Pet and CPR Savers & First Aid Supply)
- Flares
- Blankets or towels

Also, be prepared to take financial responsibility for the life you save. If you are going to try to take an injured or orphaned animal to a veterinarian, you will likely be responsible for its vet bills as well as for the decisions related to the animal's care. Your veterinarian may be sympathetic if you cannot afford medical care; but, remember that they are regularly asked to provide free or reduced fee services for situations just like yours and may not be able to help.

Act Safely

Be aware of your surroundings. If you're on a busy road, make sure your hazard lights are on and if necessary, use your emergency flares to give you enough space and oncoming vehicles ample warning that you are on the side of the road. Injured,



Jeannie Kitchens, an Our Companions volunteer, demonstrates the use of cages for catching and transporting animals at our recent Handling Animal Emergencies program.



sick and frightened animals will not likely come right to you and may injure themselves further by trying to get away from you, even though you are trying to help. If you are able to approach the animal, remember that it's frightened and it may scratch or bite you. When possible, try to restrain the animal by creating a barrier with a carrier, leash or blanket to prevent it from running away. Speak calmly and try to lure the animal to you with the strong smelling food in your kit.

Transporting a Stray, Injured or Sick Animal

In general, it's not a good idea to allow an unknown animal to have free reign within your car. If the animal fits in your carrier, that's the best spot for him or her. Larger animals may be better left for an expert or until you can get some assistance. At this point, you need to know what you're going to do with the animal - bring it to a veterinarian, try to locate its owner yourself or bring it to a shelter.

Enlisting Help

If the animal seems too agitated for you to approach or if you are hesitant for any reason, stop and call for assistance. Depending on the type of animal or what level of involvement you want to have with the saving of the animal, call your local police, animal control officer or rescue organization. Give them your contact information, your current location and try to remain on the scene to ensure that someone does come. Meanwhile, you can keep track of the animal and prevent further harm.

Finding the Owner

If you are able to get close enough to the animal and see that it has a tag, contact the owner as soon as possible. If there is only a rabies tag, the pet's veterinarian may be listed on the tag. You can contact them to get the name and phone number of the owner using the code number on the tag. Don't automatically assume that the owner is irresponsible or, conversely, that the owner will take responsibility for an injured animal - especially if the animal needs to have expensive veterinarian care. They may prefer to have the animal euthanized, as in the case of Simcha. If you are willing to do so, you will want to let the veterinarian know that you would be willing to take financial and personal responsibility for the animal should the owners decide to euthanize.

If the animal doesn't have a tag, it may still have an owner who is looking for it. Once you've brought the animal to the veterinarian, you can begin to look for its owner. If the owner cannot be located, consider keeping the animal yourself or finding it a good home. For a great resource on looking for a pet's owner or looking for a new home for a pet, take a look at our ***Forever Home Manual***, available on our website at www.ourcompanions.org/pdfs/forever_home_manual.pdf.

Special Case - Feral Cat or Lost Pet?

How do you know if the cat's been abandoned and is not just someone's outdoor cat? If you can get close enough to the cat, check for a tag first. If you can't get close enough or there isn't a tag, try feeding the cat to get a better look at it. You may have to do this for a few days to win its trust. Check to see if it's injured or looks unhealthy. Domesticated cats will likely come to you with food but feral cats probably won't; instead, they will hiss and run away.

Cat won't come to you. Maybe it's feral? Feral cats are not socialized to people. They range from cats who have never had human contact to those who were once pets - semi-feral. Often living in loose associations called "colonies," feral cats become well adapted to their territory and can live safely and contentedly without much human contact. If you've tried to get a cat to come to you, even with food, and it runs in the opposite direction, it may very well be feral and can't be adopted into a home.

If you suspect the cat is feral, you can still do something to improve its life by becoming a caregiver. You can provide shelter and food to the cat. But most importantly, you can participate in our ***Sterile Feral*** program. Through the proven, humane approach of Trap/Neuter/Return, feral cats are trapped, brought to a clinic to be sterilized, vaccinated and ear tipped and then returned back into their territory under the watchful eye of a caregiver. For more information on the ***Sterile Feral*** program, visit us online at www.ourcompanions.org/pages/programs_feral.htm.

The cat has a tag. If there's a tag and the owner's name is on it, call the number and verify the pet is theirs, either describing the pet or having a picture and vet records. Sometimes, a rabies tag gives the name of a veterinarian's clinic. Call during business hours and get the name and phone number of the owner using the code number on the tag and then call the owner.

The cat does not have a tag but appears to be in good health. You have a few options. Call Our Companions at (860) 242-9999 to speak with one of our animal welfare professionals for advice and resources.



Special Case - Injured or Abandoned Wildlife

If you suspect that a wild animal is injured or abandoned, first be sure that this is the case. Connecticut has laws that protect wildlife, making it illegal in many instances to remove an animal from their habitat unless they are clearly injured or an abandoned orphan. If an animal does not run away when you approach it or is obviously injured, cold to the touch, or in an area of danger, then action is needed. Remember that even the most experienced

rehabilitators still make poor surrogate caregivers compared to life in the wild.

Making the wrong assumption about the well-being of a wild animal can possibly do more harm than good, particularly when dealing with baby wild animals assumed to be orphaned. Seeing a baby animal on its own does not automatically mean it is alone - wild animals may leave their young alone for long periods of time or may be within close proximity to you without you seeing them. In addition, a young animal may actually be on its own and be quite capable of taking care of itself.

The consequences of making the wrong decision when taking a baby from its mother are possibly worse than the alternative. If the baby has been handled by humans, the mother may reject it in the future and abandon its nest. Then, the baby must be hand-reared and reintroduction into the wild is very often unsuccessful.

A wild animal may need your help if you witness any of the following:

- A dog or cat brings the animal to you
- Bleeding
- An obviously broken limb
- A featherless or nearly featherless bird nestling on the ground
- Shivering
- Evidence of a dead parent nearby

Once you have identified an animal in need, contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator in your area. Fully describe the animal, the situation and its location to them to make sure they will be able to assist the animal. If immediate assistance is not available, they may be able to direct you on how to handle the animal, especially if it's injured. Here are some general rules to consider when trying to contain a wild animal:

- Punch holes, from the inside out, into a cardboard box or other container. A paper bag may be suitable for most songbirds.
- Line the box with an old T-shirt or other soft cloth.
- Put on gloves.
- Use a towel or pillowcase to cover the animal, then scoop him up gently and place him in the container.
- Do not give the animal food or water. He could choke, develop digestive problems, or drown. Many injured animals are in shock, and eating or drinking can make it worse.
- Place the container in a warm, dark, quiet place—away from pets, children, and noise—until you can transport the animal.
- Transport the animal as soon as possible. While in the car, keep the carrier out of the sun and away from direct air conditioning or heat. Keep the car radio off and talking to a minimum.
- Never handle an adult animal without first consulting with a wildlife professional. Even small animals can injure you.



Remember, not all animals need rescuing. Unless the animal is displaying any of the above signs, do not attempt to rescue in any of the following circumstances:

- A fawn (baby deer) who is curled up in the grass and appears approachable. His mother is most likely out of sight, but nearby and watching you.
- A bird who is fully feathered on his body with evidence of tail feathers, hopping on the ground, but unable to fly. This is a fledgling (adolescent bird), and his parents are probably nearby.
- A rabbit who is four inches long with open eyes and erect ears. She is independent from her mother and able to fend for herself.
- An opossum who is nine to ten inches or longer, not including the tail. He is independent.
- A squirrel who is nearly full sized, has a full and fluffy tail, and is able to run, jump, and climb. She is independent.