



Spring 2010 • Special Pet Issue!

THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO OUR FOUR-LEGGED FAMILY MEMBERS AND THEIR HUMAN COMPANIONS.

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Planning for our Furry Friends

What will happen to Rover and Kitty if you become disabled or die? It's a question that haunts pet lovers. Some folks are reluctant to adopt a pet in later life because they are afraid they will not be able to care for the pet as they age. However, researchers tell us that having a pet extends life. Pet owners will attest to the benefits of belly rubs and long walks for life satisfaction and overall well-being.

The long term care industry recognizes the advantages of pet ownership. Facilities often allow residents to have pets in independent and assisted living apartments. We encourage all of you to continue to keep a pet as you age; and to create a "Life Care Plan" for your pet.



Back Row: *Susie Stiles Wilson, Trish Kennedy, Judy Wyrick*
Couch: *Scout, Monica Franklin*; Front: *Gwen Lawless*

CONVENIENT BEARDEN LOCATION!

4931 HOMBERG DRIVE, IN HISTORIC HOMBERG PLACE, please drop by & visit, we'll make you feel right at home.



How do you do create a Pet Life Care Plan?

Well, first decide who will care for your pet if you become disabled or die. Then write a short plan or description of how to care for the pet, just as you would if you sent him to the kennel for an extended vacation. Then, think about establishing a Pet Trust.

In 2004, Tennessee joined 40 other states and enacted a Pet Trust statute. That statute provides that you may set aside money for the benefit of your present and future animals. The trust may be in your will or it may be an “inter vivos” trust, meaning you establish it during your lifetime.

You choose a person to be in charge of the money, called the Trustee, and you choose a person to be your pet’s caregiver. The trust may be funded with any type of asset: land, life insurance, cash, or any asset. Then the funds are used for veterinarian bills, boarding, food, supplies, chew toys, or whatever your pet needs.

You plan what you want to happen to your pet’s body at death, and then what you want to happen to the remaining funds at your pet’s death. Many of my clients designate a favorite pet charity, such as an animal shelter or rescue organization, as a beneficiary in their wills or trusts. What a great way to leave a lasting legacy for our critter companions!



If you are a Life Care Plan client, let us know if you want to include your pet in your estate plan!

P.A.W.S. [Placing Animals With Seniors]



It is a well-accepted fact that companion animals make a huge contribution to quality of life for owners of all ages. For older adults, the benefits are profound and wide reaching: companionship is only the beginning! Studies have solidly demonstrated improved physical, emotional and mental health for seniors with pets. It is easy to understand how this could be possible. Who else provides the unconditional love and adoration of man’s (and woman’s!) best friend? Abiding trust, the capacity to forgive and a willingness to always laugh at your jokes decrease isolation and loneliness.



Pets provide elders with opportunities to nurture and feel needed, a good reason to get out of bed in the morning, and the pleasures of petting, snuggling, and spoiling. For some, a pet may provide a greater sense of security, and serve as the “first alert” when strangers knock or there’s noise outside.

Pets aren’t for everyone however. Prohibitions in certain residential settings, health and mobility issues and expense concerns can be deterrents. However, there are programs in our community available to assist seniors wishing to own a companion animal.

Knox PAWS [Placing Animals With Seniors] matches eligible seniors with adoptable pets. The Knox PAWS program started in late 2004 when the Office on Aging partnered with the Young-Williams Animal Center to match senior pets with senior citizens.

The Office on Aging’s Project LIVE staff match income-eligible seniors with adoptable older pets identified by animal center staff. The Dorothy Kidd Memorial Fund finances this project, along with donations from the community.

Program participants must be 60 years of age or older, residents of Knox County, income-eligible, and live independently in pet-friendly environments.

If participants cannot afford pet food, it is provided through the Feed A Pet Project (a partnership of the UT College of Veterinary Medicine and RSVP). Pets adopted by Knox PAWS participants are given an initial medical exam, vaccinated, given a microchip, are spayed or neutered and are provided with six months of heartworm and flea prevention medication.

The program has partnered with several community veterinarians to provide discounted services for PAWS clients. One of the vets also agreed to do home visits for PAWS clients who are unable to take their pets into the clinic.

********Mobile Meals recipients who own pets can receive pet food.********
for more information about PAWS, Mobile Meals & other programs contact
The Knox County Office on Aging

Service Dogs for Alzheimer's Patients?

The answer is a resounding “yes!” Tiffany Denyer, director and founder of Wilderwood Service Dogs shares that service dogs are uniquely suited to the needs of those with dementia, and make a profound impact upon the functioning of their owners. For the same reasons that animals make us all better people, those with Alzheimer's, autism, and other brain disorders benefit measurably from the companionship, sensory stimulation, protection, and attention of specially trained service dogs.

These animals are provided hours and hours of specialized and individualized training to assure their utility and compatibility with owners. While costly, averaging \$10,000 service dogs enable greater independence and safety, as well as the pleasure of companionship for their owners. Tiffany shares that many families have held fundraisers to help with the costs, while others have obtained matching funds from employers.

When considering long term care spending for Alzheimer's patients, a service dog may be a worthwhile investment with sweet benefits.

The innovative and award winning Wilderwood Service Dog Organization is located right in our midst in Blount County! It provides service dog training and a remarkable array of other services. A nonprofit, donations help this important program subsidize the commitment of owners and trainers to improving lives of those suffering brain disorders. For more information email Tiffany at wilderwood@charter.net or call 865-660-0095.

One Call Club for Seniors

assists pet owners with finding reliable, affordable, and accessible services - from elder friendly veterinarians and mobile groomers to dog walkers, boarding kennels and weekly grocery trips to shop for pet (and human!) food. Now open to adults 50 years and older, the One Call Club's \$50 membership fee provides “one call” access to reliable, reasonably priced services. For more information call the Office on Aging at: (865) 524-2786



Choosing the Right Pet

While many breeds of dogs make great pets for seniors, smaller breeds are considered preferable. They tend to be better as “lap dogs” and thrive on attention, and they have smaller exercise needs. Smaller dogs are also easier to manage physically, while still being plenty protective of beloved owners. Mature, housetrained animals are strongly recommended, and our local Young-Williams Animal Center has special reduced adoption rates for their adult (6+ months) and senior (7 years+) dogs and cats.

Temperament and grooming needs should also be considered when choosing a pet. The super hyper and the ultra shaggy should be avoided. Young-Williams also makes available adult and mature dogs that have been provided with basic obedience training, because good manners are especially important to senior pet owners.

Now about cats: great company and generally low maintenance except for that pesky litter box! Cats can pose a fall hazard with all that rubbing up against legs and such. And what about choosing a cat with the “right personality”? The cat will determine if the elder’s current personality is tolerable, or will endeavor to modify it as necessary.

If you are a family member, neighbor and/or a friend of an elder with a pet, consider offering your help to support this important, life-enhancing relationship. Assistance with walks, grooming, and vet trips can be of tremendous value. (It takes a village. Yes it does. But it’s well worth the effort.)

For more information about how our community supports older adult pet owners, contact the Knox County Office on Aging at 865-546-6262, and the Young-Williams Animal Center at 865-215-6599 or <http://www.knoxpets.org>.

OUR SERVICES INCLUDE:

- *Life Care Planning*
- *Medicaid and Medicare Advocacy*
- *Long Term Care Advocacy*
- *Estate Planning using Wills, Trusts, Powers of Attorney*
- *Conservatorship*





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A Note from Monica a.k.a. Scout's Mom

Last year, Mayor Ragsdale appointed me to the Young-Williams Animal Center Board of Directors. What a fun, enlightening and rewarding experience this has been! Animal lovers are a unique "breed," usually having a great sense of humor, deep compassion and a high tolerance for silliness. I was honored to serve as a judge for Mardi Growl 2010, Young-Williams' February fundraiser on Market Square. I have never seen so many creative animal lovers and cute costumed critters!

Pet adoption and support of pet adoption programs such as P.A.W.S., as well as donations of time, money, and supplies to your community animal shelter, or animal rescue organization are great ways to make a difference in the life of a furry or feathered friend.

Happy Spring!