



ROSIE THE DOG SAVED HER LIFE

Now Maryanne Pagonis is saving lives of her own.

“I would tell people about Best Friends and how they saved my life. They led me to Rosie, and I can never forget them for that.”

For **Maryanne Pagonis**, meeting Rosie was nothing short of divine intervention. After the death of her dog Maggie, Maryanne needed something to pull her out of her despair.

“I had gone from a pack of two to a pack of one, and you know ... it gets quiet,” Maryanne says softly. “Angels Rest is what intrigued me most about Best Friends because it just seemed so spiritual and healing.”

And so, days after retiring, Maryanne packed her bags and flew from Charlotte, North Carolina, to Best Friends Animal Sanctuary in Kanab, Utah, to volunteer.

“The last thing I asked Maggie to help me with is that if I was meant to have another dog, she was going to have to show me,” Maryanne says.

Despite walking several dogs that fateful day, Maryanne could sense something was different about 9-year-old Rosie.

“Initially they said that Rosie didn’t typically allow people to walk her. And if she did, she wouldn’t walk the entire path,” she says. But that didn’t stop Maryanne from trying to connect with the shy dog.

“I started singing Maggie’s favorite lullaby to her, and she got up and started walking to me,” she says. “She took the treat and sat in my lap, and I put my arms around her and told her I was taking her home with me. She was the one.”

Continued, page 2



Maryanne and Rosie



Maryanne comforting Beethoven



Maryanne and Rosie



Maryanne working with Magpie

ROSIE THE DOG SAVED HER LIFE, *continued*

Needless to say, Maryanne and Rosie walked the entirety of the path that day, and as soon as they were done, Maryanne rushed to fill out the adoption paperwork.

“She taught me so much about the importance of patience and kindness,” Maryanne lovingly says. “And I would tell people they should be a Rosie. Even when her physical issues were mounting, she was still kind and patient and always smiling.”

Maryanne and Rosie spent five loving years together before Rosie peacefully passed away on May 28 of this year. Before Rosie’s passing, Maryanne knew she wanted Rosie’s legacy to become a part of her legacy as well.

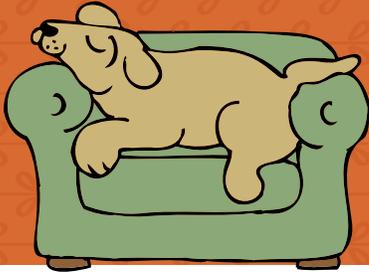
“When I talked to my daughter about my decision to include Best Friends in my will, she said, ‘I don’t want anything. I want you to spend all the money on yourself and that would make me happy.’”

Thanks to Maryanne’s gift, Best Friends can continue to help connect future adopters with Rosies of their own.

“Maryanne’s unrestricted gift is as good as it gets. It will allow Best Friends to deploy lifesaving resources the minute it arrives for whatever the biggest and most urgent need is,” says Matt Clafin, Best Friends planned giving manager.

As for Maryanne, her gratitude toward the organization that introduced her to her soulmate knows no bounds.

“Best Friends showed me how amazing they are at what they do,” she says with a smile. “Best Friends helped save me. Best Friends saved Rosie. And for that, I will be forever grateful.”



WILL POWER

How Giving Docs is taking the stress out of will planning

Martha Steele has always loved animals. As the founder of her own animal rescue group in Michigan, Martha's life has literally "gone to the dogs."

For Martha, deciding to donate her estate to Best Friends Animal Society wasn't an option — it was a necessity out of her lifelong love for animals.

"I thought, how can I maximize my gift to animals?" Martha explains.

"Reading up on what Best Friends did," she says wistfully, "I just thought it was phenomenal. Best Friends was the one doing the most and accomplishing the things I wanted to."

"When I had the idea to leave my house to Best Friends, I wasn't sure if it was even possible," she reminisces. "But then I talked to someone from the planned giving department who guided me through the process and directed me to Giving Docs. It was such an easy way to have my plans finalized."

Giving Docs is an online tool that enables Best Friends' members to easily create or update their will and estate plans in one place. For the Best Friends planned giving team, it's the platform of choice to empower anyone looking to donate through their will or estate with a simple, quick, and hassle-free experience.

"Giving Docs covers all the bases," Martha explains. "It makes sure you get everything that you want in your will as generalized or as itemized as you want it and walks you through the process. You don't have to go calling a lawyer and trying to make an appointment and spending another thousand dollars."

"When you start using Giving Docs you start thinking more specifically about how you want to allocate your estate. It actually made me take some people out of my will so that more of my estate would go to Best Friends," she says with a chuckle.

"I just hope that more people take advantage of it because it is truly peace of mind that my wishes are going to be carried out."

If you, like Martha, feel inspired to make a legacy gift to the animals of Best Friends, it's now easier than ever thanks to our partnership with Giving Docs.

Plan your legacy for the animals by scanning the QR code here.





Meet the planned giving team: **Lindsey Dupont**



Including Best Friends in your plans is a major life decision, and it's important to understand how the process works. It's totally natural to have questions about the planning process — **in fact, we expect you to!**

Our associate director of planned giving, **Lindsey Dupont**, is here to help answer some of the most common questions we receive about planning your will or estate.

Q: How often should I update my plans?

A: Most estate planners recommend updating your plans every three to five years. I would suggest reviewing your plans every year to ensure nothing has changed dramatically, such as a major life milestone (e.g., moving to a different state, getting married/divorced, retiring, having children/grandchildren).

Q: I already put Best Friends in my will. Do I need to do anything else?

A: Yes! Please let us know if you've chosen to include us in your plans. You're now a part of our Forever Friends family, and we'd love to say thank you and hear more about your gift.

Q: May I restrict my future gifts to certain animals or purposes?

A: Great question! While our strong preference is for all gifts to be unrestricted so that we can use them in our areas of greatest need, you can choose to designate them for certain animals or purposes. Please reach out to our planned giving team to discuss options in advance — we would hate to have to decline your gift because a certain purpose isn't possible or practical.

Q: Do you take gifts of real estate/property?

A: Yes! We always prefer real estate or personal property that is left to us through a will or trust to be sold as part of the administration, with the proceeds then distributed to Best Friends. We can only accept ownership of property in certain situations, so please contact our team to discuss your specific needs.

Q: What kind of an impact do legacy gifts have on helping the animals?

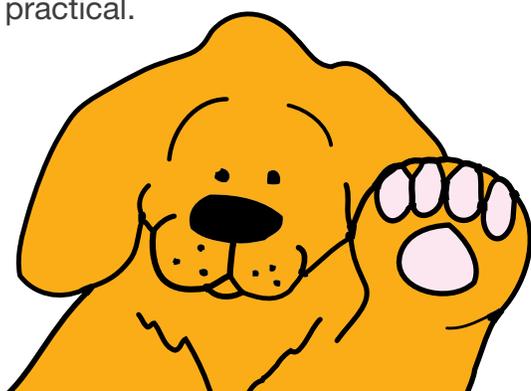
A: Over the years, planned gifts have provided a significant percentage of the annual operating funds for Best Friends' work. They have allowed our organization to continue to expand our reach across the U.S. and to help thousands of homeless pets across America. Legacy gifts are so incredibly important to sustaining Best Friends' lifesaving work and continuing to help homeless animals now and well into the future. Best Friends members are at the heart of our mission, and we hope to honor them at every turn.

Q: Why do I need to let you know the specifics of my plans?

A: This information helps us ensure your wishes are fulfilled. Financial institutions aren't obligated to notify us after someone passes away. Therefore, the more information we have about your gift, the more proactive we can be in guaranteeing your wishes are fulfilled.



Chat with us!



ONCE A WALLFLOWER, NOW A PRIMA DONNA

How Aspen the cat got her groove back



You'd never know it from the fluffy, outgoing cat begging for petting on planned giving team member Jodie VanDine's desk at the Sanctuary, but Aspen wasn't always this much of an attention seeker.

In fact, this 6-year-old, stunningly beautiful girl was actually a bit closed off when she first arrived. "She was very

standoffish," Jodie explains as Aspen paces back and forth on her desk, rubbing her head against Jodie's idle hands as if to say, "You should be petting me with these, human."

"She didn't want anybody to be near her or pet her. And now look at her," Jodie says laughing as Aspen crawls into her lap.

While Aspen's backstory is a mystery, her time with Best Friends began when she was found as a stray outside of the Sanctuary in 2020.

Aspen's personality began to blossom when she moved into Frankie's Place, where the planned giving team (who brings you this newsletter) works.

"When she came to Frankie's, she had more human interaction," Jodie says. "For some reason, I am the one she chose to befriend, and now she literally sleeps at the end of my desk each day."

Today, Aspen is a far cry from the skittish cat Jodie once knew. Most mornings, Aspen eagerly greets Jodie at the door to escort her to her food bowl before settling in for some early

Interested in learning more about Aspen or meeting her in person? We'd love to chat! For more information, email adoptions@bestfriends.org.

morning kisses and lap time. Later, Aspen busies herself by greeting visitors and soliciting head rubs from them.

Aspen loves nothing more than a good routine and is looking for that special person who can give her the stability, love, and attention she craves. Her only demands? Daily lap time and not sharing the spotlight with another cat who might take away too much petting from her human.

"If she finds somebody who can give her attention nonstop, she would probably be in heaven," Jodie says.

Aspen has worked several years at her 9-to-5 job at Best Friends and is looking forward to an early retirement in a home of her own.





A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH

The remarkable life of Nancy Pinkston

Nancy Pinkston was a force of nature to be reckoned with. Beloved by her many friends and family members, Nancy's quick wit, intelligence, and kind heart were only a small part of her larger-than-life personality.

As she would often tell her friends, "You should always eat dessert first because if you drop dead during the meal, you'll miss out on the best part."

In 1971 after graduating from the University of Texas, Nancy attended law school. But it wasn't for her. Instead, at the behest of her brother (and in between appearing on

Jeopardy! and partaking in other assorted adventures), Nancy began a storied career with IBM for several decades.

In 2003, Nancy joined Animal Allies of Texas (AAT) and quickly became a major driving force of the organization, pouring her heart, soul, and money into it. Under Nancy's behind-the-scenes leadership, AAT distinguished itself from other organizations by taking in sick or injured dogs whom other rescue groups wouldn't accept. However, with this incredibly compassionate philosophy came far greater expenses and challenges. Despite those challenges, Nancy made sure

the animals were safe at every turn. **Saving hundreds of sick and injured dogs was one of Nancy's proudest accomplishments.**

"She had private cremations done because she wanted the animals honored after they passed since they weren't honored in life," good friend and AAT volunteer Sandie D'Orazio says. "That was the kind of person Nancy was. It was her private way of showing respect."

Nancy survived skin cancer in 2016, heart surgery in 2017, and hip surgery in 2018. She became ill due to complications related to diabetes and kidney disease and passed away on September 26, 2021, at the age of 72, exactly in the same way she lived: proud and determined.

"Nancy saw how much Best Friends accomplished, and she wanted somebody she knew would do a good job with her will and carry out all the big ideas she had," Steve Hartzog chimes in.

"The 'great procrastinator' never made it to Best Friends," Sandie says. "But she's probably floating around at Angels Overlook right now just admiring everything."

"She was loved by a lot of people. We miss her," Valerie Corder adds.

Nancy led a life full of adventure, compassion, love, and most importantly plenty of good desserts. Her lifesaving legacy will continue to live on through the animals she helped save and the many humans she impacted along the way.



If you feel inspired to make the animals a part of your legacy, our planned giving team is here to help plan your legacy of love. Start a conversation with one of our team members today by calling 435-359-9227 or emailing plannedgiving@bestfriends.org. We can't wait to talk about your legacy.





WILL PLANNING CAN BE A TABOO TOPIC, BUT IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE



Here's how to normalize it.

Legacy planning isn't easy to talk about, especially when the person on the other end of the conversation is a family member or friend you love so dearly. After all, they've always been the person you go to for all the answers, and now it's up to you to ensure they're properly prepared to take care of themselves as they age.

However, talking about end-of-life plans can alleviate the stress of figuring out passwords, beneficiary rights, and bank account information after a loved one passes.

Having those tough conversations is important for both parties — to ensure your loved one's wishes are carried out exactly how they would want them to be and to prevent unnecessary familial stress and strife during your time of grieving.

What information should you talk about with your loved one?

Here's a checklist of topics to consider:

- Check to see whether your loved one has a written will in place so that their assets are distributed exactly how they want them to be. If they don't have a will prepared yet, ask them how they would like to see their assets distributed and encourage them to prepare a will.
- Make sure they have designated a trusted friend or family member with the power of attorney. Should they face mental decline, this is a crucial step for being able to help them handle their finances.
- Ensure their will outlines their medical wishes. Should your loved one be unable to make their own medical decisions, it's critical to understand exactly what they would want to do during medical emergencies.
- Make preparations for assisted living and care. The cost of in-home care and long-stay facilities can add up quickly. Ensure your loved one has a plan in place for the future. Long-term care insurance and early investment savings can help prepare for the cost.
- Ensure they have a written list of their passwords. A master list of usernames and passwords makes it easier to access vital resources such as medical records, bank accounts, and more.

