

# Planning for Your Pets Through Your Estate Plan

by Lauren K. Keenan, Esq.

Being a pet owner means being responsible – your pets depend on you for their daily care. Consider what would happen if you were suddenly unable to care for them. What if you were hospitalized or faced with a long-term illness? Who would provide your pets with the care they expect and deserve?

Many people think of their pets as family, so why not treat them like it? While your pets can't inherit property from you directly, there are steps you can take to guarantee your pets' future care.

Consider the following:

- Carry a pocket card with emergency contact information for

your pets' caregiver. (Cards are available at AWLA.)

- Post a notice on your door to alert first-responders to your pets' presence in your home.
- Talk to a loved one or friend about being a caregiver to your pets if you can no longer care for them.
- Prepare thorough instructions for your caregiver (include information such as medications, diet restrictions, exercise regimens, etc.).
- Meet with a licensed attorney about providing for your pets through your estate plan. Discuss the pros and cons of the follow-

ing estate planning tools: specific bequest in your will, durable power of attorney, testamentary trust or revocable intra vivos trust, or a stand-alone pet trust.

By taking the time to consider the needs of your pets and working with the right professionals, you can be sure your pets will be cared for in your absence and feel confident you are caring for them no matter what the future holds.

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## Spay Day Results 2012



In conjunction with Spay Day USA, and a grant from Build-A-Bear Workshop Bear Hugs Foundation, The Animal Welfare League of Arlington subsidized the cost of spay/neuter surgery for low-income residents living in

and around Arlington, Virginia and spayed and neutered 47 pets during

the month of February. In total, 16 dogs, seven cats were neutered and 12 dogs and 12 cats were spayed. In addition to the surgery, pet owners were offered a low-cost rabies vaccines and microchips.

This is the first year the League was able to spay and neuter animals for Spay Day on site in our licensed surgical suite! Many thanks to our veterinarian, Christine Cottey, DVM, for performing all the Spay Day surgeries. The League would also like to thank Fairfax Animal Hospital for their contributions of veterinary services and medicine during this Spay Day event. Each month the League arranges on average, 15 low-cost spay/neuter surgeries subsidized by both the League's

Hantke Memorial Spay/Neuter Fund and the Fairfax Animal Hospital.

The Build-A-Bear Workshop Bear Hugs Foundation is committed to making life more bearable for children, families, and pets in need of a helping paw. With the sale of each full-sized Bearemy's Kennel Pals® friend (a collection of Build-A-Bear Workshop® plush dogs), \$1.00 is donated to domestic pet programs including local animal shelters, stray pet rescue and rehabilitation organizations, and pet education programs around the country. These funds are available to qualified non-profit organizations in the United States and Canada. Visit [www.buildabear.com](http://www.buildabear.com) for more information.