

SPCA MONTEREY COUNTY

Guardian Angel Future Care Program

*Peace of mind that your pet
will have lifelong, loving care*

What would happen to your pets if you died or became incapacitated? Who would know their daily routine, favorite treats and toys, medical conditions, and what makes them feel safe and loved?

Every year anxious, bewildered animals whose owners have died are brought to The SPCA by neighbors, family members or authorities who have no idea of the animals' needs, disposition, or what kind of new adopter would make a good match. Suddenly the pet is amongst strangers, deprived of the comfort of familiar surroundings and their beloved human companion.

For over 25 years The SPCA's Guardian Angel Future Care Program has been a crucial safety net for pets of all species — dogs, cats, rabbits, turtles, birds, horses. . . our program materials will help you gather the information that a new pet guardian needs, and provide guidelines on legal considerations and selecting a caretaker.


If you chose The SPCA as guardian we will make every effort to rehome your beloved pet with the best possible human companion. Our professional adoption placement staff will use your detailed Pet Profile Form to match your pet with an adopter who is best suited to meet your pet's physical and psychological needs. We can also work with an assigned temporary guardian to find your pet a good home.

You can enroll in the program free of charge, or use the materials to help with your own planning process. To get started, follow the steps below and fill out Pet Profiles for each of your animals. If you are naming The SPCA as guardian, also fill out the Guardian Angel enrollment form. You can complete these forms right now online, or download hard copies below and mail them to The SPCA c/o Guardian Angel Future Care Program.

Your pet's future guardian

- Name an individual who has agreed to care for your pet. Make sure they have the time and financial means to assume responsibility, and the same beliefs and values as you do about animals. If your guardian is not nearby you may want to ask a neighbor or friend to provide interim care. Sample wording to name an individual guardian in you will might be: "I give to _____ my pets, (names and descriptions) to be cared for as companion animals. If (he or she) is unable to care for my pets, I give such animals to _____ to be cared for as companion animals.

- Name a successor in the event the first person named is unable to provide for your pet(s).



"Our family and friends already have pets so we needed to find an alternative for Gretchen's future care. We volunteer at The SPCA and have seen the staff in action, so we have total confidence that our dog would be in good hands. It means a lot to us to have that kind of peace of mind."

— Anne Markland

"We enrolled our dog Gretchen in the program last year before we took a trip to Europe. Now we make sure her profile is updated whenever we fly together on trips. We enjoy ourselves much more knowing that new caretakers would have the information they need if something happened."

— David Waters

- You may want to enter a reciprocal agreement with a like-minded pet owner. You could both make similar provisions in your wills to provide for each other's pets in the event of death or incapacity.
- If you cannot find an appropriate caretaker, The SPCA can be named as guardian of your pet(s). You may also wish to assign a friend or family member as a temporary guardian who can ease the transition and assist The SPCA in finding the best home. The wording in your will to name The SPCA might read: "I give to The SPCA for Monterey County my pets (names and descriptions) to be cared for pursuant to the provisions of The SPCA's Guardian Angel Future Care Program."

Ensuring your wishes are carried out

- Once you have made arrangements with a trusted caretaker, notify your heirs, attorney, executor, and any family members or friends who can help ensure your wishes are carried out. Always consult an attorney for advice when drafting your will.
- Send everyone copies of your Pet Profile Forms and keep your own copies with your important papers. Update them regularly as your pet's condition and needs change.
- Sometimes a pet has painful/untreatable medical or behavioral problems, is extremely feeble, or has severe anxiety that makes it extremely difficult to find a willing caretaker and/or inhumane to expect the animal to endure a traumatic transition to a new home. You should specify in writing that if your animal is too elderly or sick to handle the physical/psychological stress of transition, you have no objection to euthanasia if your pet's guardian feels that is in the best interest of the animal.
- Be sure all your pets are microchipped and wear ID collars. A lost pet may not be taken to a facility with a scanner so a microchip alone is not enough. If your pet spends time outside or gets scared and runs away during a time of crisis (for example, if emergency responders enter your home), there may be no one who is able to conclusively identify him.

Providing funds for the care of your pet

- You may leave a sum of money to an assigned caretaker, along with your request that it be used for your pet's care. You may also establish a pet trust as part of your estate plan—these trusts are legally binding and enforceable under California law. You can designate a friend or trusted advisor to oversee that the trust's funds are properly used to benefit your pet(s). We recommend that you discuss your options with your estate planning attorney.
- Leave only a reasonable amount of money for the care of your pets. Very large sums can be more burdensome for a caretaker or trustee to manage responsibly, and large gifts to your pet(s) may be contested or invalidated by your human heirs.

All of us here at The SPCA have beloved pets and understand how important it is to know they will be cared for no matter what. If you have any questions about our Guardian Angel Future Care Program please call Kimberly Willison at 831/264-5421.



"I hate to think what our cats Sabrina and Diva would go through if they suddenly had a new owner who didn't know the best way to care for them. The Pet Profile Forms are something we can give The SPCA and our family and friends so they could help find the best home."

~ Alice Englander

"These cats are part of our family, so we planned for their future just like we planned for our own long-term security and healthcare. You can't assume someone in your family is going to take care of your pets, and sometimes it may not even be a good fit."

~ Bill Englander



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