Forever Friend Sue Super

To say that Sue Super has cared deeply about animals during her life seems almost like an understatement. When she was in first grade, she remembers reading a sad story about a dog; it caused her to return home that day crying. “From the time I was little, I had this empathy for animals,” she says.

So, when it came to making a decision about her estate, it was an easy question to answer. “I figured whatever money I have, I want it to go to the animals. I think Best Friends is the place. They do so much,” she says.

Bequeathing 100% of her estate to Best Friends was just another way to leave behind an already assured legacy of helping homeless pets. From serving on the board of the Pennsylvania SPCA to volunteering to matching homeless pets with loving families, Sue has done so very much for animals in need.

As a volunteer for Pals for Life, she takes pets to visit nursing homes, hospitals and schools to brighten the lives of others. During her 33-year tenure as a first-grade teacher, she made it a point to teach her students about compassion for animals. When there’s an injured or lost animal in her neighborhood, guess who everyone calls? Sue, of course.

And her home has been a safe haven for animals of every sort. Sue has had three dogs, six rabbits, a handful of guinea pigs and a hamster as pets. Currently, she has numerous “step-dogs” around her neighborhood, including a neighbor dog named Gypsy.

Every day, at a quarter after 6 p.m., Gypsy walks next door to Sue’s house. She takes a seat next to Sue and together they watch World News Tonight and cuddle. Then, at seven o’clock, Gypsy goes back home. “Every night for 10 years, she has come in to watch the news,” Sue says. She even bought Gypsy a ramp, since it’s getting hard for her to jump up on the sofa.

About six years ago, Sue visited Best Friends Animal Sanctuary after an entire year of planning. At first, she had been hesitant about making the long trip alone, but after watching Best Friends co-founder Francis Battista give a talk at the Academy of Natural Sciences, she decided that she had to go.

For Sue, visiting the Sanctuary was worth it. “I was just blown away by the place, the people and the animals,” she says. Sue volunteered with the pigs, the cats, the dogs, and the rabbits and guinea pigs. She would walk out on the patio of the Sanctuary cottage where she was staying and say hello to the horses. “The care and the love is just wonderful,” Sue exclaims. “It’s a beautiful place, and a happy place.”

Who’s to say how many lives have been and will continue to be touched by Sue’s love and devoted service? She has reunited lost pets with their people and matched homeless pets with new families. She has rescued injured wildlife and found care for them. Saving animals has been Sue’s life work, and she’s still at it today. As part of the Forever Friends family, her legacy of caring for the animals will continue here at Best Friends, as more homeless pets find safety and love thanks to her limitless compassion.
Getting comfortable with love

When Sandwich arrived at Best Friends Animal Sanctuary, he was not a happy cat. No one could make him feel better about anything. Attempts by caregivers and volunteers to give him love and affection were rejected, as he scratched and bit without warning.

Sandwich wasn’t any better off when he was by himself. Not only did he dislike being touched, he didn’t seem to like even his own company. When he was alone, it sounded like two cats were fighting in the room. He’d spin around chasing his tail, hissing and howling at it like it had done something to offend him.

It turns out, his tail had done something. The Sanctuary veterinarians examined Sandwich and were able to figure out why he was in such a bad mood nearly all the time. He had feline hyperesthesia, a neurological disorder that causes muscle spasms, twitches and pain along the back and tail.

Sandwich’s condition was the reason why he was a grouch to everyone who tried to touch him, and why he was constantly trying to attack himself. His body was hyper-sensitive, and even the most gentle touch could cause him intense pain. No wonder he was having such a hard time! He didn’t feel good.

Thank goodness that Sandwich’s condition was not only treatable, but he was in the perfect place to get the help he so badly needed. You see, at the Sanctuary, pets who have special needs get all the expert care they need to heal and thrive. Whether they need emotional healing, extra training or medical care, they get it here. All Sandwich needed to make him feel better was the right medications, including a nerve blocker to dampen the dire messages his body was sending to his brain — that a loving touch couldn’t be tolerated and that his body was under attack.

Now, Sandwich is feeling much better and getting all the love he can handle. In fact, these days he’s a very different cat. He likes getting attention, and he’ll gladly jump up onto a willing lap, especially if it means he’ll be petted. And that, of course, means he’s now comfortable enough to meet potential adopters and find his perfect person — someone who understands and accepts him for who he is, sensitive tail and all.

Thanks to your support, Sandwich was able to receive a little extra care and medical attention, which has meant everything for his quality of life. And soon, because of you, he’ll even find a home. Instead of spending his days fighting with himself, Sandwich gets to enjoy the simple acts of love — like a warm touch or a gentle caress. And his gratitude is evident with every happy purr.
You could say that Esther G. Floth lived a unique life fit for the movie screen. At only nine years old, she was given the honor of meeting President Herbert Hoover, and she rolled Easter eggs on the White House lawn. After attending Strayer Business College in Washington, D.C., she worked for the director of the top-secret Manhattan Project, the code name used for research and development of the nuclear bomb. Later, when she moved to California, she worked for the Atomic Energy Commission and the Veterans Administration. It was in California that she met her husband, Ed Floth.

Many people who knew Esther called her “an amazing woman,” and not just because of her intriguing, distinguished career. Esther was well-known for her intelligence, her incredible memory and her devotion to the animals. In fact, she committed her life to helping pets in need. She founded Loving Dog Rescue to save the animals for whom she cared so very much. Esther also joined Valley Humane Society, where she started a dog adoption program that still continues today.

Esther single-handedly made an enormous impact in the lives of pets in her community. She rescued and found homes for more than 300 dogs. That’s 300 lives saved, and 300 families blessed with the happy smiles and tail-wagging enthusiasm of a dog who has found a forever home.

At one point, she and Ed had seven dogs in their home — all at one time. Her dogs were her children, and her passion for saving lives was an inspiration to everyone who knew her.

Esther’s genuine love for animals and people helped change countless lives for the better, and here at Best Friends, we are so grateful that she was part of the Forever Friends family. Her memory will live on, as her legacy of caring for homeless pets continues to make an impact thanks to her compassion, generosity and kindness.
Stepping into spring

With the spring season comes warmer weather and sunshine, a welcome reprieve after being stuck indoors during the dark winter months. While the budding season is a pleasure for our senses, it’s also a wonderland of new sights and smells for our pets.

Getting outside for a dog walk — or a stroller ride with the cat — doesn’t just give our pets the activity and enrichment they need for happy lives. It gives our health a boost, too.

Below are just a few ways that stepping outside with your four-legged friend can improve the well-being of both of you.

1. **It makes you happier.** A little bit of fresh air and nature can do wonders for your mood, not to mention increasing the tail-wagging of the dog at the end of your leash. A brisk walk also affects the chemicals in your body, elevating the serotonin level, which in turn makes you feel good.

2. **It’s good for your heart.** Did you know that a daily walk may actually reduce your blood pressure? All you need is 30 minutes of walking a day to improve your cardiovascular health. And let’s not forget that watching a dog romp around in the outdoors is an incredibly heartwarming activity.

3. **It keeps you and your pet healthier.** Walking every day is good for the joints and muscles of both you and your pet. It helps keep bones and muscles strong, eases arthritis and increases flexibility. Regular exercise also aids in keeping your dog’s weight in check and his digestive system functioning normally. Plus, all that stimulation is great for his mental health, too.

4. **It’s a social activity.** By getting outside with your pet, you’re helping him fit in some much-needed social activity. Meeting other dogs can help your pup gain confidence and learn healthy social behaviors. Not only that, it gives you the chance to meet other people (and animals) in your community.

5. **It improves your bond.** Walking is one of the best ways to build a supportive, tight-knit bond with your pet. This simple activity gives your best friend some one-on-one time with his favorite person — you. By giving your pet your time and attention, you’re developing a good foundation for a loving, trusting relationship. And who doesn’t love the excited, nail-clicking dance that results from the mere mention of the word “walk”?
Traveling far through sunlight and shadow, we arrive at a place where we pause in the snow-winged light of many blessings. The tall, towering cliff — ancient guardian — whose face shines gold in the setting sun, watches over all of those who walk in the spirit of kindness, wherever they may go.

Here, beings of innocence grace our lives.

Dogs, with ears that go down or ears that go up, chase dancing leaves that spin round and round. With a sharp bark, they guard the whole galaxy from gobbling ghouls in the dark.

Cats who purr tiptoe in the moonlight that falls through the windowpane of white flowers.

Horses run clear and far under the rainbow of an ancient star.

We thank the earth for her many beings. For the black-winged raven, who rides off into unknown, wind-blown skies.

Up high, in the time-twisted juniper, the old owl winks his feathered eyelids wise.

Here, now and again, geese, on their wintry way, glide by overhead, honking in the air, blue and cold.

Cottontails, brave and alert, wait at the gate of sunrise to greet the dawn of roses.

Coyotes laugh gently in undiscovered hills.

In the quiet beyond time, one can hear, alone in solitude, the silent sound of many voices. Presences beyond the web of time.

There, where the rustling wind runs through every day and year, a river of wind weaves through the cottonwood leaves.

Arriving at a place of gratitude, which is the wind-worn steppingstone to peace, is to climb beyond the din of a world crowded, seeming all awry.

And to know the trills of the whippoorwill and that nearby, the meadowlark calls her song, a silver thank-you to the dawn.

And so, no one is gone, but each one is here in the echoing melody beyond all time. In the rain, singing, ringing on the rocks and in the smiling rays of the sun.
Saving lives with a **charitable gift annuity**

If you are retired, looking for a way to increase your cash flow, or you'd like to save money on your taxes, a charitable gift annuity might be a good choice for you. Basically, it's a way to make a gift to the animals and still receive income for yourself or others. It can also give you and/or another beneficiary a stable income for life.

**How it works:**

- You make a donation to Best Friends (minimum of $10,000).
- You receive fixed annual payments for the rest of your life, at an attractive payment rate.
- You receive an immediate charitable income tax deduction, and if you donate appreciated securities to fund your gift annuity, you will enjoy capital gains tax savings as well.
- Your gift will benefit you (and someone else, if you choose) now, and save the lives of homeless pets in the future.

The charitable gift annuity is a simple way to secure fixed, lifetime payments, while providing for a gift for the animals in the future. Currently, the minimum amount to establish a charitable gift annuity with Best Friends is $10,000, and the minimum age is 60.

Are you interested in learning more about charitable gift annuities? We'd love to help! Email us at plannedgiving@bestfriends.org or call us at 435-644-2001, ext. 4503. We'll walk you through the process and answer any questions you might have about setting up your own gift annuity for the animals. You can also find out your potential rate by using our gift calculator, which is available at [bestfriends.org/plannedgiving](http://bestfriends.org/plannedgiving).

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**ROADHOUSE AND MERCANTILE**

We are excited to share news about the opening of the Best Friends Roadhouse and Mercantile, a new lodging option in Kanab created to encourage visiting and volunteering at the Sanctuary, and put the Sanctuary on the map for pet-loving people just passing through who have yet to discover its magic. Complete with a dog washing station, dog splash pad, and pet walking and monitoring services, the Roadhouse was designed specifically to accommodate people traveling with their dogs or cats and offer services that allow guests to feel comfortable leaving their pets for the day while they explore the Sanctuary, national parks and all that southern Utah has to offer. Shuttle service from the Roadhouse to the Sanctuary is also provided, helping to reduce the impact of the increasing number of visitors on the canyon and its inhabitants — a win-win-win!

**Make your reservations at bestfriendsroadhouse.org.**
Coachella Valley Community Cat Program
The community cat program (CCP) in Coachella Valley continues to make remarkable progress. This three-year program is wrapping up this spring, after bringing the save rate for cats in this desert California community up to 69% in 2019. Modeled after other Best Friends CCPs, this program uses trap-neuter-return (TNR) to save the lives of community (aka stray or free-roaming) cats. Through TNR, community cats are spayed or neutered, vaccinated, treated for any minor health problems, ear-tipped for identification and returned to their outdoor homes. TNR is the most humane and effective way to control the number of community cats and save lives. And thanks to the incredible work being done in Coachella Valley, California is getting that much closer to achieving no-kill throughout the state.

Emergency response training
Best Friends was among the first animal welfare groups to respond to the call for help after Hurricane Katrina, and since then, we’ve continued to help animals and people in the aftermath of other natural disasters, such as Hurricane Harvey. In preparation for times when our immediate help is needed again, we recently created an emergency response team. Major emergencies like hurricanes require a massive coordinated group effort, and the emergency response team ensures that a well-trained, ready-to-help group is exactly what we have the moment a disaster strikes. Right now, Best Friends is holding sessions at shelters and rescue groups across the country to make sure that their staff and volunteers are trained in emergency preparedness and response. Plus, we’re creating a regional emergency shelter operations team who will be ready to jump into action in the wake of a disaster.

Thanks to the extraordinary kindness of people like you, lives are being saved all across the country. Here are just two ways that your compassion is changing the future for homeless pets.
plant a seed

By making a gift to the animals in your will or trust, you will make an impact that will grow and last into the future.

Find out how to make a planned gift today at bestfriends.org/plannedgiving