

tips

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Who will take care of Fido after you're gone?

You finally have your estate plan in order. You know who's getting what when you go. But have you forgotten to make arrangements for some of your friends — the four-legged ones?

"Unfortunately, what happens to some of the pets, if there's no family member who steps up to the plate, they end up in a shelter," says Barbara Barrett, vice president of planned giving at North Shore Animal League America. At many shelters, unwanted animals are euthanized, even if they are healthy.

The Port Washington-based organization offers a program for pet owners who may not have family or friends willing to care for their pets. Safe Haven Surviving Pet Care requires a donation of \$10,000 for the first pet and \$5,000 for each additional pet be made to the league. You do not have to make the donation while alive. "They provide in their will or name us as a beneficiary of an insurance policy or retirement plan," Barrett says. You will have to provide documentation of the gift.

In return, Barrett says, "when the

need arises," the league will take custody of your pets and care for them.

"Our first goal is to find new loving homes for them, but while they're with us — and it may be for some time — we will provide all the care," she says.

The pets will be housed in the league's facility until they can be adopted. If they are not adopted, the pets will live out their lives in Port Washington and be cared for until they die, Barrett says. North Shore does not euthanize healthy animals, she says.

While the organization is Long Island-based, the program accepts pets from anywhere in the United States.

Another way to make sure your pets are cared for is through Bideawee's New Leash on Life program. Like North Shore's program, Bideawee's plan is based on donations that most pet owners stipulate in their wills or estate plans. Bideawee requests a donation of \$15,000 per pet, "but we work with each person," says Darlene Larsen, Bideawee's manager of

individual giving.

Bideawee will try to find new homes for your pets, but it also maintains a "retirement home" for dogs and cats of all ages in Westhampton. "We match the pet with what is best for each animal, whether it's adoption, foster care or permanent residence," Larsen says.

For more information on North Shore's Safe Haven program, call Barrett at 516-812-7218 or visit nsalamerica.org/how_we_help/surviving_pet.html. For more information on Bideawee's New Leash on Life, call Larsen at 646-619-7231 or visit bideawee.org/programs_&_services/elder_care/gyrp.php.



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