



**Best  
Friends**  
Save Them All®

## Forever Friends Companion

### MEETING THE ANIMALS WHERE THEY ARE

**For Joan Evans, caring for the animals today and tomorrow is more than a passion — it's a calling.**



After her many trips to Best Friends Animal Sanctuary, Joan Evans decided that winter is her favorite season to visit. The paths are quieter, the crowds thinner, the air crisper, and the canyons glisten in the snow. It's in these quieter times that Joan gravitates toward the animals who need her the most — the shy ones tucked into corners, unsure whom to trust.

"We have to meet them where they are," Joan says. "We have to learn where they are coming from and accept them for who they are, showing them respect and giving them space when they need it."

That philosophy reflects her love for animals and how she's chosen to care for them — with a generous commitment that will offer them love and healing long into the future.

During her long career in both education and human resources, Joan chose to save and invest carefully, and ultimately she decided to include Best Friends in her estate plan through a legacy gift to the animals.

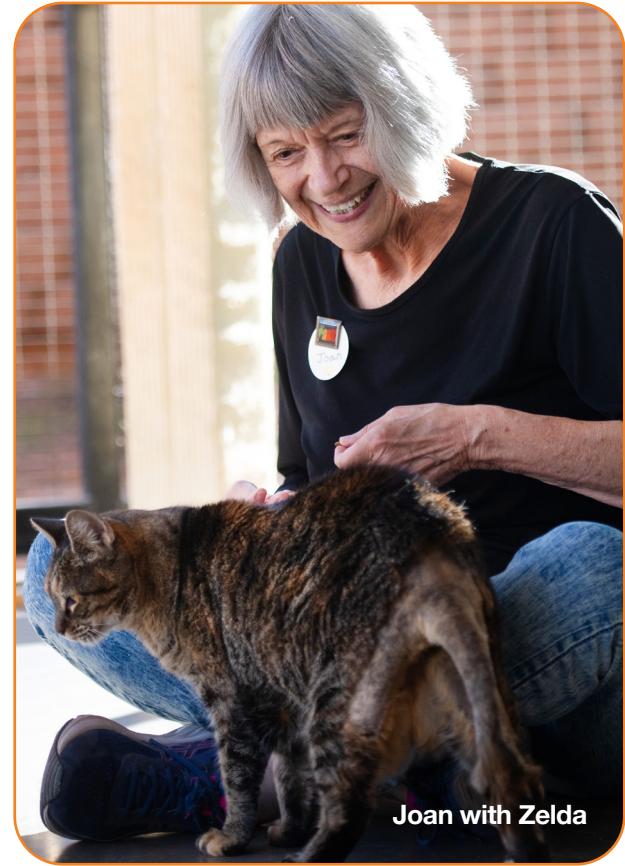
"We work hard all our lives," she says. "It's nice to know that the wonderful work of Best Friends will continue, certainly in part because of the gifts you leave." For Joan, the decision was practical and deeply personal.

She says, "I want a continuation of my love for the animals, and a gift to Best Friends is the best way to do that. As we go through life, we sometimes think, 'What is my purpose?' I truly believe that mine is to take care of the animals."

Joan's love for animals began early, shaped by her mother's passion for animal welfare. "My mom made me aware of the responsibility we have for the animals," Joan recalls. "They rely on us not just for day-to-day care but for patience, respect, understanding, and advocacy."

It wasn't until the late 1990s, however, when Joan was introduced to Best Friends Animal Society that she became a Best Friends member and started learning more about the no-kill movement. And when she first visited the Sanctuary in 2002, that was when everything clicked for her.

"It blew my mind and changed my life," she says. "I was so amazed at the love felt for the animals.



**Joan with Zelda**

**Continued inside**



**Sue Citro and Marcus**

## A LIFESAVING RIPPLE

**Sue's story is a testament to how one person's love can ripple outward, shaping a kinder future for animals.**



For as long as she can remember, Sue Citro has felt a deep connection to animals. Whether it was the loyal companionship of a dog (most likely a senior dog who looks like a Rottweiler, a type of dog she loves dearly) or the quiet comfort of a cat, Sue has always believed that animals bring out the best in us. They remind us of resilience, unconditional love, and the joy of simple moments.

That belief is what drew Sue to Best Friends Animal Society. She saw in Best Friends values that matched her own: that every pet deserves safety, care, and belonging.

"I think it was just so clear how much

people at Best Friends cared about the animals, trying to do right by them and figure out what would make their journey better," Sue says. "Being here at Best Friends, at the Sanctuary, you see what a place of hope and healing it is for the animals."

Sue so fell in love with Best Friends' tenets that she wanted to be more than a donor. She wanted to be on the front lines of lifesaving and help spread those values far and wide. So in 2015, Sue began working at Best Friends and is now part of our senior leadership team as chief experience officer. Since then, her love for the organization and animals has only grown.

"What I love about Best Friends is the way that we work with partners — the way we think about scaling and how we can help our network partners to work together in an even bigger way," Sue says. "That's how we cement no-kill in a community. We give shelters the ability to save more lives and communities the power to support their shelters, ensuring that when we take the country to no-kill, it stays that way."

You could say, then, that Best Friends' lifesaving work creates a ripple effect. You show one community how to be no-kill, then they show the next, and so on. That ripple effect is what Sue is most passionate about because it isn't about today — it's about tomorrow. She knows that the work we're doing together to end the killing of pets in America's shelters is ongoing, and she wants her love for animals to continue making an impact long into the future.

### **Meeting the animals where they are, continued**

The animals always come first — always. I realized there is a whole community of like-minded people working toward a no-kill goal, and it was an incredible experience."

Over the following years, Joan welcomed more than a dozen rescued cats into her home, and she even began volunteering with Fearless Kitty Rescue, a Best Friends Network Partner, helping with caregiving and community cat initiatives. In recent years, Joan has focused much of her volunteer time as a socializer, working with shy or traumatized cats.

"We have to learn where they're coming from — what makes them tick," Joan explains. "We have to give them the space when they need it. I think Best Friends has been instrumental in teaching the world about those concepts."

### **For Joan, Best Friends is more than a place — it's a voice.**

"Best Friends speaks for the animals who cannot speak for themselves," she says.

"There are many organizations that do wonderful work helping people, but far fewer focus on animals. Best Friends' leadership in the no-kill movement has been so important on getting the word out that we need to care for the animals."

During her most recent visit to the Sanctuary, Joan once again sought out the quieter areas — spending time with shy cats, offering gentle companionship, and lending a hand wherever help was needed. Her presence truly reflects the care and quiet respect every animal deserves.

**It's how Joan has always shown up — with compassion and patience, meeting animals exactly where they are.**



That's why Sue chose to make a planned gift to Best Friends. For her, her gift is more than a financial decision; it's a way to ensure her values live on and ripple across the nation.

"I think about the impact that we're making for the animals and how much impact we still have yet to make," Sue says. "There are so many animals who have been part of my family and part of my story, and I want to continue providing care for animals who need it so other families can experience the same love and joy and all the things that come with having a pet."

Through her generosity, Sue is helping Best Friends expand lifesaving programs, strengthen shelter partnerships, and bring communities together to save more lives. And most importantly, her planned gift ensures that we continue to work toward a day when every pet is safe and in a home.

Sue's story reminds us that planned giving is not just about estate planning. It's about passion, values, and the legacy we choose to leave behind. For Sue, that legacy is written in paw prints, wagging tails, and the countless lives her gift will touch. Her generosity ensures that the mission she loves will continue and that future generations of animals will know only joy and care.

"This work is something that I'm really proud to be a part of, and I want to make sure that it continues. I want it to thrive, so I can help all those homeless pets have a better story," Sue says. "I want to make sure I help bring about a time when there really can be no more homeless pets. I can't think of anything better."

**“Being here at Best Friends, at the Sanctuary, you see what a place of hope and healing it is for the animals.”**





## Pardon our NOSINESS!

If you've made a planned gift, let us know the details so

we can ensure your wishes are fulfilled. Scan the QR code to let us know all about your planned gift to the animals.

## We're so thankful for our Forever Friends

Forever Friends are true friends and lifesavers — and get great perks.

Thank you for being part of the Forever Friends family. You are supporting the work of Best Friends, as well as shelters and rescue groups nationwide. As a small thanks, Forever Friends receive:

- Best Friends lodging discounts
- Invitations to special events
- Invitations to virtual gatherings
- Special Sanctuary activities
- A personal contact at Best Friends
- A lifetime subscription to *Best Friends* magazine and the Forever Friends Companion



## What's your 'why'?

There are so many ways to help the animals — and so many reasons.

For some people, making a planned gift for homeless pets is a way to leave behind a positive, lifesaving legacy. Others want to ensure that future generations of cats and dogs will have cozy beds, full bellies, and lots of love. And for many animal lovers, a planned gift is the ultimate way to honor the furry friends who brought joy to their own lives, ensuring that countless others have happily-ever-after stories, too.

No matter how you choose to give, or why you choose to give, please know that when you plan a gift for the animals, you're giving them a safer, brighter future. To learn more about any of these types of gifts, please go to [bestfriends.org/plannedgiving](http://bestfriends.org/plannedgiving).

**Will or trust:** Making a gift through your will or trust is an easy and flexible way to save the lives of homeless pets for years to come.

**Retirement assets:** You can allocate any of your unused retirement assets as a gift to Best Friends' lifesaving efforts.

**Life insurance:** You can name Best Friends as a primary life insurance beneficiary or a contingent beneficiary.

**Charitable gift annuity:** Create a brighter future for homeless dogs and cats and receive lifetime income at the same time.

**IRA rollover:** If you give a gift to the animals by making a qualified charitable distribution from your IRA, the distribution won't count as taxable income. It's a win-win.

**Stock gifts:** A donation of stock is a wonderful way to support the animals. Plus, you'll get a significant tax break.

