

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND CEO

Dear Friends,

The year 2017 was a remarkable one for Our Companions Animal Rescue. Not only did we celebrate our organization's 15th anniversary, but we also completed a 1.2 million dollar expansion project which will increase by two-fold the number of animals we can rescue and rehabilitate at our Sanctuary in Ashford, Connecticut.

We have come a long way since our founding 15 years ago. In 2002, our organization consisted of a handful of volunteers, a website, one tiny home office...and one very big dream. Today, Our Companions boasts 25 full- and part-time employees, more than 400 volunteers, and an array of programs targeting the root causes of pet homelessness and suffering.

From our specialized adoption and rehoming programs, to our dog training classes; from our feral cat support network, to our Buddy Project which teaches at-risk youths to train homeless dogs; and of course our Sanctuary, we are making a dramatic difference in the lives of people and pets in Connecticut and beyond. This report will offer some highlights of the lives impacted by our many community programs.

Providing our brand of highly specialized care for the animals we serve – many of whom have special needs, and all of whom have nowhere else to go – is costly. One hundred percent of our capital campaign (construction at the Sanctuary) and 99% of our operating costs (vet bills, pet food, various Sanctuary and Program Center operational expenses, etc.) are made possible by the generosity of the community.

As we look to the future and dive head-first into 2018, allow us to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the Our Companions family, once again, for your support, sacrifice, and commitment to our shared promise to do the right thing for animals.

Sincerely,



Maria das Neves
Board Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maria das Neves".



Susan B. Linker
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan B. Linker".

HOMES SAVED

Founded in 2002, Our Companions Animal Rescue's central governing principle is to do the right thing for animals regardless of the challenge or cost. Our Companions operates facilities at the Valerie Friedman Program Center in Manchester, Connecticut and at its 47-acre Sanctuary, in Ashford, Connecticut.

Our Companions provides many programs that help homeless animals in need today, while working to prevent animals from becoming homeless tomorrow. Thankfully, each year we are able to "save the homes" of dozens of pets through our behavior intervention and pet retention programs. Through the myriad programs at Our Companions Animal Rescue, we were able to positively impact the lives of 1,344 animals in 2017. This annual report shares highlights of the many achievements realized this past year.

Keeping Pets and Their Families Together: 205 LIVES IMPACTED

While finding a new home for a pet is necessary in some situations, it is also a stressful and often traumatic experience for the animal. Since our first priority is keeping pets who currently have good homes happily in their homes, we offer innovative solutions to pet owners who may be feeling overwhelmed for whatever reason and are contemplating rehoming their pet. OC takes great pride in working with these pet owners, who really want to do right by their animals, but who just need a little support.

Our behavioral assistance programs tackle many issues that often lead to a family's decision to surrender a pet. There are also instances where we are able to keep families together by providing pet care supplies or veterinary assistance. In other cases, we have skilled staff and volunteers who provide advice and recommendations on how to negotiate with landlords when housing challenges arise. Our Companions also has an invaluable resource in its trained Animal Helpline volunteers who take the time to speak with and offer recommendations to callers who are feeling overwhelmed.

Regardless of the specific program, whenever we are able to preserve a pet's home, it is something to be celebrated. We are proud that in 2017 we were able to preserve the homes of 205 pets and their families. As we enter 2018, it is our goal to expand and enhance our pet retention services, offering additional ways to keep even more people and pets together.



LOLA

Lola came to Our Companions Animal Rescue to participate in our Family Companion dog training class. Soon after adopting Lola, her family had found that she was reactive toward dogs and people. They were concerned because they had a young grandson and, given Lola's reactive nature, they felt they had to find a new home for her because the baby was getting older and things weren't improving.

The pet owner, Jessica, met with our trainer who helped create a behavior modification plan, in an effort to preserve Lola's home. After continuing in our Family Companion Level 2 class, Lola showed significant improvement and became more confident and less reactive with the trainers and other dogs. In addition, Jessica gained confidence, and knowing that she was better capable of managing Lola, decided to keep the dog. Thanks to Jessica's commitment and the help of OC's Canine College program, the family is living safely and happily together.



The family is living happily together.

SANCTUARY

Sanctuary Rehabilitation: 50 LIVES IMPACTED

Each year in Connecticut's shelters, adoptable animals are destroyed, many of whom could have been saved if they had a proper environment for longer-term rehabilitative care. The Sanctuary's purpose is to meet the needs of this vulnerable group of animals.

Our 47-acre Sanctuary provides a home-like setting that is conducive to a longer-term stay, and offers a low-stress, enriching atmosphere that encourages healing and rehabilitation. The Sanctuary also serves as an adoption center, providing an inviting place for people to meet our animals.

This year, thanks to the generous support of the community, Our Companions successfully completed a major expansion of its Sanctuary, doubling the number of lives we can save in 2018 and beyond.





FREYJA

Freyja was a much loved kitty who lived with a nice man and his other long-haired cat. While she certainly loved her owner, Freyja was not a fan of her feline friend. She took her anger out on her house by peeing all over everything. We certainly couldn't blame her owner for deciding that what Freyja needed more than anything was a home of her own.

Freyja wound up heading to the Sanctuary, where she got a room of her own and once she was in her own space, she didn't have a single issue. While peeing wasn't a problem anymore, as she settled in we learned that Freyja had a couple of other quirks that made her a little difficult to place. While she loved being near people, she was a bit picky about how they interacted with her. She loved to head-butt people and give them love, but was quick to swat or nip if she felt someone was petting her too vigorously. We knew it would have to be an extra special, super patient household that took this girl home, but we didn't know it would take over a year to find that perfect family. Fortunately for us, a wonderful woman and her elderly mother came to us looking for a middle-aged cat to welcome into their home and they fell in love with Freyja's photo online. We had no clue how Freyja would take to them, but it was clear to see during the showing that they completely understood her needs and now, six months after her adoption, she has quickly become the center of their universe.





HERA

Sweet, shy Hera was a fixture at our Sanctuary for many years. This gorgeous shepherd mix came to us from a dog pound and was so shy and withdrawn we wondered if she would ever come out of her shell. The fact that she had once been loved was apparent, since her rear leg was chock full of metal from an apparently expensive surgery to fix what had probably been a bad break. Hera struggled to trust people, particularly men, but over time, she developed strong bonds with certain people she saw every day, so we were hopeful that she could transition into an adoptive home with some patience and love. While she was picky about who she liked, Hera slowly came around to strangers and made many, many friends – both dog and human – during her time with us. We learned that she adored chicken, Nylabones, digging in her sandbox and was surprisingly tolerant about wearing costumes. She became our resident “super-model” and sported all sorts of hilarious and adorable seasonal and holiday-themed outfits over the years that she was with us. We tried so hard to find her a forever home, but her nervous nature and general fear of new people held her back from any potential homes that came around for her. Fortunately for us (and for her), Hera was adopted by a dedicated volunteer who had spent a lot of time with her over the years and who was eager to give Hera the warm and wonderful home she deserves.



We learned that she adored chicken, Nylabones, and digging in her sandbox.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Supporting the Needs of Our Community: 1005 LIVES IMPACTED

DOG TRAINING AND BEHAVIOR PROGRAMS: 303 LIVES IMPACTED

Our Companions offers reward-based training in a variety of forms to address common pet behavior problems and deepen the bond between people and their canine companions. The affordable group training classes are small, with a high number of instructors, often providing a one-to-one student/instructor ratio. Our Companions classes are unique and specialize in teaching dog behavior rather than just the commands, so that pet owners leave class with a greater understanding of their dogs. All classes are designed to be a safe and positive experience for reactive dogs and fearful dogs.

MAGGIE

Chris adopted Maggie when she was two years old from a backyard breeder who wanted to get rid of her because she had undergone two pregnancies giving birth to a total of 18 pups, all of whom had died. Chris wasn't given much additional history but she was told Maggie was completely house-broken, got along great with other dogs and animals and had no respiratory issues.

Once home, Chris found that Maggie had all

sorts of issues. She wasn't house broken, she had no experience in socializing with other animals at all, she killed small animals with a vengeance, lacked manners and displayed a lot of anxiety.

Chris brought Maggie to a couple of trainers and classes, and had her evaluated by a dog behaviorist who specializes in aggressive dogs. It wasn't until she started working with Our Companions that things started to move in a positive direction.

Since then, Chris has done lots of classes: Family Companion I and II, Tricks, Walking Club and Focus on Focus – anything just to spend time together building and strengthening their bond. Today, three years later, Maggie is a fun-loving, connected partner. She is much less anxious, comes when she is called, and is a really fun walking partner.



Maggie is a fun loving, connected partner.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

ADOPT-A-SHELTER PROGRAM

Part of our mission to end pet homelessness includes working closely with the public and Animal Control facilities throughout the state.

Our Companions provides free evaluations to the public and to Animal Control facilities, providing a professional assessment of the dog's temperament and a recommend treatment plan for behavioral problems. Volunteers for Our Companions' Canine College program also provide in-shelter training for dogs in Animal Control facilities to help make them more adoptable.

Canine College volunteers work on manners, sitting, loose-leash walking, and play – all important skills for a dog to be adoptable. Volunteers spend approximately 45 minutes per session with the dog. After a dog completes the program and is adopted from a municipal shelter, the new adopter can continue the dog's training in OC's traditional Canine College classes at a reduced rate.





CHAMP

Champ, a Pit-bull, was a resident at a local animal shelter when workers from Canine College intervened on his behalf. He had been a cruelty case, tragically, so he was very fearful of trucks, other vehicles, and of people who came upon him suddenly. Canine College workers visited him regularly, working to ease his fears, slowly gain his trust, engage him in attention games as well as provide counter-conditioning around vehicles and new people. He also received training in basic manners and leash skills. All this work paid off, because eventually the right adopters met him and took him home.



*Eventually
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COMMUNITY SUPPORT

FERAL CAT ASSISTANCE: 465 LIVES IMPACTED

In Connecticut, there are hundreds of thousands of cats that are free-roaming and in need of help. Having been born outside, without human contact, many cats have never been socialized with people. Through our Sterile Feral program, we provide TNR, or Trap-Neuter-Return, services for those who are feeding feral cats so they can get them vaccinated and sterilized. Once the cats are sterilized, Our Companions provides cat food assistance and warm feral cat shelters. Our Companions also provides free veterinary care for any cats in the colony who may become sick or injured. The feral cats in our state are in great need and are a very important population that we serve.

STERILE FERAL - PETER HILL

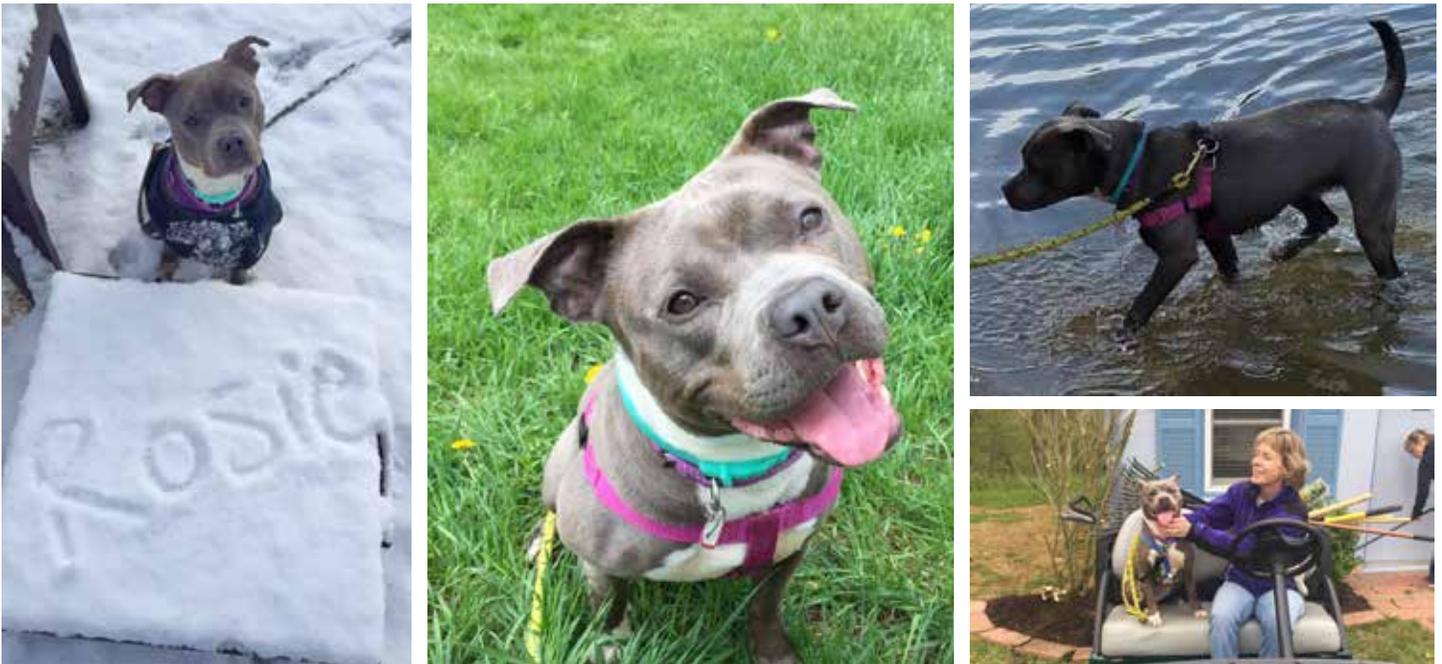
Peter Hill first contacted OC in the fall of 2016. He had a neighbor feeding a colony of feral cats and recognized something needed to be done before the population got out of control. There had been several attempts to get the colony “managed,” but those efforts had fallen short and kittens continued to be born. When Peter attended our December 2016 Trap Training Class, he estimated there were 11 cats to be TNRed. Peter borrowed traps and TNRed nine cats in January 2017 and then discovered just how challenging it would be to trap the remaining two. He trapped one in May and then spent a very rainy weekend in June working to successfully trap the remaining cat. Since then, no kittens have been sighted in the neighborhood and the cats are content, happy and well provided for. With all the cats TNRed, and the colony considered “managed,” Peter was able to sign up for our cat food program and now receives donated food to help offset the cost of feeding the cats.

“As a result of the training and support offered by Our Companions, eleven cats received the medical care they needed,” explains Peter. “This colony is now stable and healthy. Without Our Companions, this would not have been possible.”

ANIMAL PLACEMENT: 153 LIVES IMPACTED

Despite our best attempts to keep pets in their original homes, circumstances sometimes arise which necessitate a pet’s being placed in a new home. Our Companions provides a creative animal placement service or “rehomeing program” that works with the public to transfer pets directly from their original home into a new, loving home, as seamlessly as possible. Our Companions provides volunteer Adoption Caseworkers through its Animal Helpline. The Caseworker gets to know the adoptable animal, creates marketing pieces to advertise the animal’s availability, and works to find the best match for a new home. This program also involves the assistance and cooperation of the original owner so they get to meet the new adoptive family. Most importantly, this program saves the animal the stress of having to enter a shelter or rescue facility.





BUDDY PROJECT: 31 LIVES IMPACTED

The Buddy Project is an innovative program that pairs at-risk youth with rescued dogs. The goal of the program is to provide mutually beneficial experiences for the students and the dogs. The students learn how to train the dogs using positive-based training methods, which prepares the dog for later adoption and also provides the youth with a model for positive social interactions.

ROSIE

Rosie lived at the Sanctuary from December 2016 until June 2017. Criminal charges of cruelty and neglect had been filed against her previous owner. Rosie was severely malnourished and gravely underweight and had spent the first year of her life in a crate in a basement. When she came to the Sanctuary she wore a coat to protect her from the elements because she had significant trouble regulating her body temperature. She was hyperactive and untrained. After allowing Rosie a few weeks to gain strength and adjust to life at the Sanctuary, the Buddy Project students began working with her. Proving to be a stellar student who learned quickly and responded well, she quickly became a favorite of the Buddy Project students. Rosie was adopted in June of 2017 to a family with very young children who adore her.

Student: LB

Participation in The Buddy Project helped with LB's self-esteem, enabling her to develop greater confidence and a sense of pride in her work. She enjoys relating the success stories of the dogs and how she helped them. The Buddy Project focuses on the positive and LB responded extremely well to this approach.

Rosie quickly became a favorite of the Buddy Project students.

ADOPTIONS

Adoptions into Forever Homes: 86 LIVES IMPACTED

The Adoption Program at Our Companions works diligently to match pets and potential adopters in order to ensure a successful long-term outcome. This requires that we learn about each animal's personality and needs, and that we ascertain a potential adopter's preferences and lifestyle. Throughout the adoption process, and beyond, OC provides personalized support, including pre-adoption counseling, assistance, and advice while the animal is settling in, and support throughout the animal's lifetime.

DAISY

Daisy was a very sweet older kitty living a quiet life with a beloved owner who sadly passed away. Fortunately, she was soon adopted by a wonderful family where she lived for several years. Eventually, however, two young children, an active dog and then a large, new puppy proved to be too much for her. Daisy tried to avoid the chaos whenever possible, by finding her own quiet spots. However, when she was diagnosed with diabetes, she began to exhibit signs of stress including a change in her usually impeccable litter box routine. After her family decided that a quieter environment would be best for Daisy's health she became part of our rehoming program.

Although she was beautiful and loving, we expected it could take some time to place an older cat with medical and litter box issues, but Daisy soon found a wonderful adopter. Kellie, who is also diabetic, was drawn to Daisy's newspaper ad. Her home was a great fit, as she lived alone with just one quiet older cat. Kellie wasn't fazed by Daisy's diagnosis and Daisy seemed to know right away that she had found herself the perfect mom. She has adjusted beautifully to her new life in every way and is usually right in the middle of things or snuggled in Kellie's lap. Her glucose readings started to show steady improvement, likely due to a change in diet and gradual weight loss and as of the new year, she is completely off insulin.



Daisy had found herself the perfect mom.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

The primary source of Our Companions income is from private annual fund donations. A small amount of program fee income is generated from dog training classes and restricted grants are occasionally received to fund specific programs or expenditures. The other income is primarily dividends and unrealized gain on the Board Restricted Quasi Endowment Fund.

3 YEAR INCOME & EXPENSE SUMMARY

	2017	2016	2015
Donation & Service Fee Income	1,048,448	967,329	999,635
Other Restricted Grants	11,760	10,123	21,981
Other Income/Expense	80,200	41,405	4,082
Total Income	1,140,408	1,018,857	1,025,698
Total Operating Expenses	1,048,683	939,628	954,962
Net Operating Surplus/Deficit	91,725	79,229	70,736
Capital Campaign Income	61,000	764,978	74,500

3 YEAR COMPARATIVE BALANCE SHEET SUMMARY

	12/31/17	12/31/16	12/31/15
General Fund Cash	641,596	725,606	715,001
Board Restricted Fund	622,647	546,693	502,635
Capital Campaign Fund	-	927,995	75,665
Other Restricted Cash	7,081	2,835	15,444
Net Fixed Assets	3,316,893	2,231,300	2,282,131
Total Payroll Tax Liabilities	(7,048)	(5,985)	(6,639)
Net Assets	4,581,169	4,428,444	3,584,237

Our Companions abbreviated balance sheet is presented with the highlights being very low liabilities of \$7,048 and no long term debt. Net assets increased to \$4,581,169 as of 12/31/17.

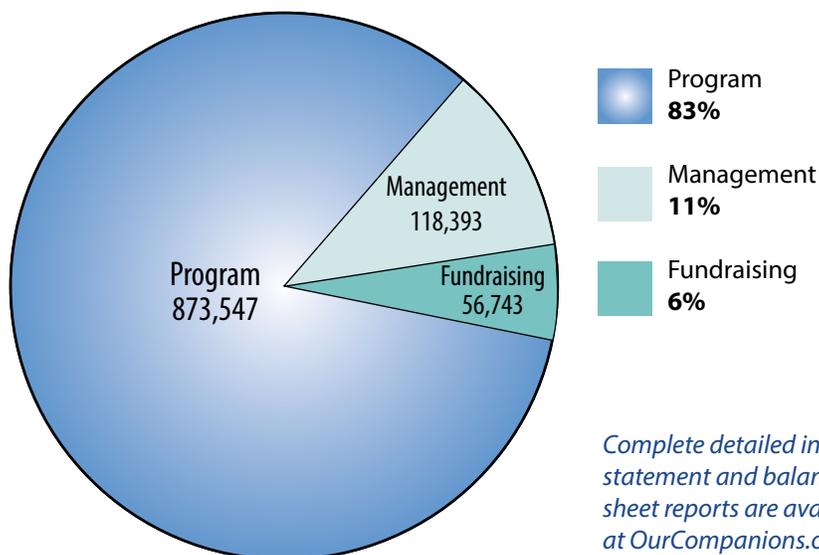
OUR COMPANIONS 10 YEAR ANNUAL FUND HISTORY

Total Annual Fund Donations

2017	1,025,283
2016	943,523
2015	975,883
2014	850,064
2013	738,480
2012	620,629
2011	511,282
2010	358,574
2009	392,683
2008	297,785
2007	333,350

Note that annual fund donations excludes program fees, restricted donations, capital campaign donations and "other" income.

2017 EXPENSES BY FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY



Complete detailed income statement and balance sheet reports are available at OurCompanions.org

FUNCTIONAL EXPENSE STATEMENT

All 501c(3) non profit organizations are required to prepare a functional expense statement which breaks out total expense by 3 categories; Program, Management & General and Fundraising. This statement is an important indicator of how much of its income an organization spends on its core programs. In 2017 Our Companions spent \$873,547 (83%) of all expenditures on its core programs. A full detail version of the functional expense report can be viewed on the federal tax return available on OC's website.

MAILING ADDRESS

Our Companions Animal Rescue

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Fax 860-331-8555

FACILITY LOCATIONS

Ashford Sanctuary

46 Floeting Road

Ashford, CT 06278

Visiting Hours: Saturday, 1pm-3pm and by appointment

Valerie Friedman Program Center

34 Sanrico Drive

Manchester, CT 06042

Hours: M-F 9am-5pm and by appointment

OurCompanions.org