

PROVIDING FOR YOUR PET'S CARE AFTER YOU DIE©

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Just like it is important to make provisions for children, and other loved ones, in the event of one's death, it is important to provide for pets. Unfortunately, many people overlook such provisions and their pets end up in dog pounds, humane societies or are euthanized. This can all be avoided with just a little effort.

In Michigan it is now possible to establish a pet trust that can provide for a pet after the owner dies. Until several years ago, such trusts could not be enforced. That was unfortunate because the trustee could euthanize the pet and then abscond with the trust assets, without penalty. Fortunately that has now changed and pet trusts are enforceable. That means that money put into a trust to provide for the pet is protected. Typically pet trusts have trustees to handle the money, a caregiver to take care of the pet, and a trust representative to monitor the trustee and caregiver to insure that they fulfill their duties under the trust.

When establishing a pet trust it is important to leave enough money in the trust to provide for your pet *for the rest of its life expectancy*. Given the high cost of veterinary care, one may wish to include a requirement that the trustee obtain veterinary care insurance. Anyone interested in establishing a trust for their pet should consult an attorney to insure that it is done correctly, and discuss it with the trustee, caregiver and trust representative. If you do not know a suitable caregiver you may wish to use an organization that provides caregiver services. Such organizations typically charge for their services.

If you choose to leave your pet to a friend or family member, without creating a trust, be sure to obtain their consent and be sure to leave them sufficient money to provide for your pet's care. **YOU SHOULD NEVER LEAVE YOUR PET TO SOMEONE WITHOUT THEIR CONSENT OR SUFFICIENT MONEY TO CARE FOR YOUR PET.** Pet care is expensive and it is not fair to the caregiver to expect that he or she will care for your pet with their own funds.

Responsible pet owners make provisions for the care of their pets after they die. Failure to make such plans is irresponsible and will very likely subject the pet to a cruel fate.