



## TIPS FOR CREATING A LEGACY GIFT IN YOUR WILL

Like many people who talk about leaving gifts to their favorite nonprofit organization, unless you leave a properly executed will, your assets will simply be divided among your surviving relatives. So here are a few tips to help ensure that your wishes will be carried out as you intended with regard to your estate:

1. First and foremost: Create a will

A letter of intent or verbal promise does not ensure that your wishes will be carried out as you intended. A legal will is essential.

2. Consult an attorney

To make a proper will, it's best to seek the advice of attorney specializing in estate planning. Even the simplest wishes regarding the most modest estate should be written in proper legal language. In general, the cost to prepare a legal will is modest. Your attorney should suggest ways for you and your heirs to save money by reducing estate taxes and minimizing probate costs and other legal expenses.

3. Update your will regularly

An out-of-date will can be worse than no will at all. Review your will annually, or whenever major life events occur, such as:

- o Changes in your family, like marriage, divorce, birth and death
- o Updates to state and federal laws
- o Inter-state moves
- o Changes to the nature and value of your property

4. Name an executor and an alternate

An executor is someone who will see that your will is properly executed according to your wishes. It is wise to name an alternate in case your chosen executor predeceases you, or for some other reason cannot handle the details of your estate. Choosing someone knowledgeable in business or financial management is a good idea. You could also consider using a corporate

executor, like a bank or trust administrator, who would have experience with and access to probate, real estate, tax and investment professionals.

5. Choose your beneficiaries

You may want your estate divided among several beneficiaries. Opting to leave your beneficiaries with a percentage of your estate (as opposed to fixed assets) is a flexible way of giving. You could also name a final beneficiary such as Canine Companions for Independence to receive any unclaimed portion of your estate.

6. Tell us your plans

As you consider options, keep us informed. We may be able to suggest ideas and alternatives that would suit your needs as well as provide for Canine Companions for Independence's future. We are also available to review draft bequest language with your attorney.

7. Remember Canine Companions for Independence

If you include us in your will, please tell us. We would much prefer to say "Thank You" to you personally, rather than to your executor. We will always honor your request for anonymity.

8. Note our legal name and address

For the purpose of a bequest, our legal name and address should be used.

They are: Canine Companions for Independence, Inc., P.O. Box 446, Santa Rosa, CA 95402.

9. Participate in Heritage Society activities

As a member of the Heritage Society, you will be identified as one of the generous supporters of Canine Companions for Independence and enjoy all of the benefits associated with Heritage Society membership.

Sidebar