



## Partners to the Bridge

**What can we do to help you, the family, in orchestrating a memorable and peaceful end of life journey for your and your animal friend?**

**Questions you may ask...**

**We like our veterinarian or care provider and want our animal to continue under his or her care...**

It's wonderful to have a relationship with a trusted veterinarian. At **Partners to the Bridge** we will work with whomever you would like in order to develop a care plan that is compatible with your life, is sustainable, and can be modified as your animal's and your journey requires.

**We have already paid so much for our animal's care and although we'd like support, we are concerned about mounting expenses...**

Of course you are! We have been there and know the concerns all too well. Making the best decisions and planning beforehand will help. We believe that continual support structured through set rate programs will allow budgetary planning and excellent continual care. Support via email, phone and regular visits facilitates regular problem solving, healthy grieving and promotes healing. If our programs do not meet your budget after the road you have traveled in pursuit of a cure or recovery, we can structure services to meet your needs. Just ask!

**We'd like to know we can get through the grief we are anticipating...we just feel so down already and don't know how to carry on...**

We know that grief associated with your friend's loss begins much before the actual death occurs. Our background in human hospice tells us that the entire family is the unit of care and so care for the caregivers is essential! Based on our referrals, your family can reach out to like-minded individuals in your community who have lived through similar situations, and provide you with just another listening ear or perhaps expanding your base of physical support. If you feel so inclined, we make additional recommendations for local support groups and HelpLines via email or phone. In cases of complicated grief we work on a close basis with grief and bereavement specialists, including therapists and counselors specializing in pet loss.

**We have heard that there are gentle treatments we might pursue in order to keep our friend comfortable. What about those?**

Complementary treatments have proved as excellent adjunctive support as animals approach the end of life. In many instances, such care can improve an animal's condition while also

improving their quality of life which in turn may even extend their life. We work with a complete professional network of affiliates who offer such services and therapies as:

- Acupuncture
- Homeopathy
- Veterinary Orthopedic Manipulation (VOM)
- Traditional Chinese Medicine, including Chinese herbs
- Western herbal remedies
- Acupressure

Some of our service providers will consult with you and may demonstrate so you may learn the following skills yourself :

- food and nutrition therapy
- massage and TTouch
- warm water therapy
- Reiki
- intuitive communication
- Food and nutrition therapy
- Aromatherapy (essential oils)
- Flower essences

**Our veterinary provider has suggested we provide in-home therapy and nursing treatment so we don't have to go to the clinic as often... but we are not sure how, don't have the nerve, or simply can't be there to do it ourselves....**

We have a network of trusted veterinary technicians who can teach you minor procedures such as administering subcutaneous fluids, tips on giving medications and hygiene and dressing changes. We work on a close basis with your veterinarian to establish a care plan that works for you and your animal friend on a day-to-day basis. If you need someone to come to your home to provide the care or to assist your friend, you will have already established a relationship with these trusted providers.

**We have been told that our friend's diet may be modified in order to improve appetite and health condition. The quantity and quality of information on the web and in books is overwhelming! How can I make decisions for change and find the time to follow through?**

We teach nutritional basics for both dogs and cats and can assist in positive change by offering resources and instruction on home cooking for your animal friend. We have teaching resources to help and also nutritional specialists you may consult. Our experience is that preparing your friend's food at this time in his or her life can be a valuable way to nurture them. If home cooking is not for you, we have recommendations on commercially prepared food that is just as good as homemade and more convenient.

**Quality of Life is important for our animal but we don't have time or money to devote to our well being now...**

We have learned the value of self-care and respite first hand. We will arrange referrals to pet sitters who are also veterinary technicians and are focused on animals in hospice or with special needs so you can have peace of mind while you have to be away. We have a network of

therapists and support groups that can support you so you can be the best you can be. Grief is work! It is never easy but easier when you are surrounded by like minded people who “get it”.

### **I will make decisions for burial, cremation and memorializing when the time comes...**

Planning these things in advance help your family prepare emotionally for the time when you won't have the emotional energy to make these decisions. We know that this can help in the promotion of emotional healing and we can help with this process as well. We allow you to investigate all your options and help you access trusted resources. Memorializing and paying tribute to your animal companion's life promotes emotional healing as well as an outward expression and consequential validation of your family's loss.

### **More than anything, we don't want our animal friend to be in pain or to suffer unnecessarily...**

We assist in planning pain management strategies and contingency planning if your animal friend's pain cannot presently be effectively controlled and you need help. We have found that having someone to talk to, a hand to hold, and calming strategies can get animals and their people through the crisis and proceed with the plan. We assist you in constructing a network of providers and support that will allow for in-home veterinary intervention. With advanced planning your family will most likely be able to keep yourself relaxed, support your animal friend and circumvent an emergency trip to a clinic if that is your goal.

### **We aren't comfortable with euthanasia as an option and wish to consider other options.**

Death without euthanasia assistance is often achievable with excellent palliative care. Veterinarians should be consulted and other opinions could be considered. We understand that this period where we see an obvious decline and physical changes we perceive as pain and suffering can naturally be stressful and for many, frightening. To help ease the process, we explain what to expect as animals enter this transitional period often referred to as the dying process. You will be prepared for what our animal might hear, see and feel throughout the entire experience. This will make it easier to anticipate ways to help your animal friend for a smoother transition. We help you develop the plan, the back-up plan, and the back-up to the back-up plan and support you in enacting the plan when appropriate.

At a certain point in your animal's care you may feel you'd like support on a 24-7 basis in order to help prevent crisis or emergency situations from occurring. Your program may be changed in order to accommodate your current needs. If you have budgetary constraints you can also choose to arrange for only certain part of a program on an a la carte basis. All you have to do is ask and we will happily work with you. We look forward to hearing from you directly, or else ask your animal care provider to arrange referral so we can meet you, your four legged as well as two legged family, and get together right away.

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