



Forever Friends

A LIFETIME OF LOVE

How Lynn and Dennis Soter are honoring their pets through philanthropy

While Dennis Soter may call his wife, Lynn, the love of a lifetime (and vice versa), it's unquestionable that two other great loves significantly shaped the Soters' lives: their miniature schnauzer, Maggie, and their rescued cat, Jimmy. Lynn and Dennis' love for animals didn't always take the conventional route, however.

Dennis, who grew up in Springfield, Massachusetts, eventually pursued his master's degree in business and later worked for Chase Manhattan Bank before running the corporate finance practice with Stern Stewart in New York City. Though he grew up with

cats, he claims he didn't consider himself a dog person until he began to observe people with their dogs in Central Park. It was then he realized how wonderful it would be to have a dog once he retired.

Lynn, who worked as an American Airlines flight attendant for 35 years, also felt she was too busy to have a pet before she retired. But she still traces her love of animals back to her childhood dog, Skipper, and her family's multiple cats.

"I've always loved animals," she says. "I think from about the age of 6 or 7, I knew that."

When Dennis and Lynn retired from their busy, career-driven lives, they knew they finally had time to share in the rewards of having a pet.

"One of the first things we did when we moved up to New Hampshire was adopt a kitten named





Jimmy from the Animal Rescue League of New Hampshire,” Dennis says. “And then shortly after that, we got a miniature schnauzer named Maggie.”

“It’s just incredible how much a little animal can make such a difference in your life,” says Lynn with a wistful smile, as Dennis nods in agreement beside her.

“It’s so easy to love an animal that gives limitless love,” he replies.

The Soters’ love for Maggie and Jimmy is infectious and ever present. And although Maggie passed away in 2016 and Jimmy died at the age of 20 in 2021, one thing is strikingly evident: They were both deeply loved.



While Lynn can’t recollect the exact moment she came into contact with Best Friends, it quickly became her No. 1 charity after the planned giving team invited her to visit Best Friends Animal Sanctuary in Kanab, Utah.

“Being at the Sanctuary solidified the opinion I had formed of Best Friends,” she says. “I wanted to do whatever I could to keep it going — it was just so wonderful to see so many people dedicated to these animals. I care deeply about all animals. They have rights. And whether it’s an elephant, a pangolin, a dog, a cat, or something else, I just want to be involved with helping them.”

After Lynn visited the Sanctuary, she and Dennis decided to make a generous commitment to the animals by making a gift today and providing a future gift for the animals through combined assets in their estate plans (such as life insurance, real estate, stocks, and more — which is also called a blended gift).

“Best Friends’ goal is to help the nation reach no-kill. And that’s a great reason for anyone to give,” Dennis says.

And while the Soters have yet to add another four-legged family member into their lives, they continue to pay Maggie’s and Jimmy’s unconditional love forward each and every day.

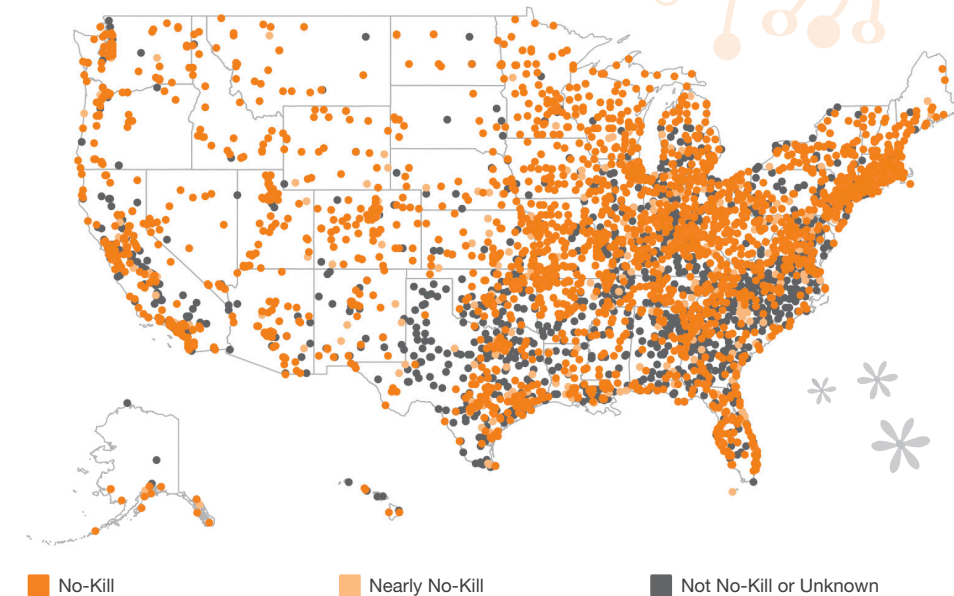


BECAUSE OF YOU, NO-KILL IS WITHIN REACH

Here’s what you can do to help.

Thanks to compassionate and dedicated people like you, together we’re saving so many lives and leading the entire country to no-kill in 2025 and beyond. Right now, nearly 2 out of every 3 shelters in the U.S. are no-kill, with hundreds more within reach.

When we announced our goal to make the U.S. no-kill, it was about accelerating our work together — and with your help, that’s exactly what we’ve done. Thank you for making this lifesaving progress possible and for continuing to be part of this journey to ensure the animals have a safer, brighter future.



As of the end of 2024, there were only

1,434 U.S. shelters remaining to reach no-kill and **49%** were close

with 100 or fewer pets to be saved.



If just **6%** more of the **7** million families

who will bring home a new pet this year chose to adopt rather than purchase a pet, then the entire country would reach no-kill.

If no-kill nationwide in 2025 and beyond seems like a lofty goal, it’s because it is.

Big goals can push us beyond what we knew was possible, just like when Best Friends first pushed for a shelter system that valued saving each and every life.

By setting such a bold goal, we have a greater chance of hitting the mark. Now is the time to intensify our progress and push for a country where no homeless dog or cat is killed in a shelter.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for loving the animals as much as you do.

Together, we can Save Them All.



Q&A

Thank you for all of your kindness and generosity to the animals. We are so fortunate that members of the Best Friends family are always asking us how they can do even more for the animals. Here are a few common questions we hear.

Q: Getting every shelter in the country to no-kill will take a lot of resources. How can I be part of reaching this important milestone and sustaining it?

A: We are grateful so many people are part of the Best Friends family. We're at a critical moment. Of the shelters that aren't no-kill yet, more than a quarter need to save fewer than 100 animals to achieve no-kill. Thank you to everyone who has included a gift to the animals and Best Friends in your will. A great way animal lovers are making an impact is by contributing a portion of their future bequest now to ensure the momentum continues and every shelter achieves no-kill soon.

Q: I love the animals of Best Friends so much that I became a member of Best Friends, and now it's my absolute favorite charity! What else can I do to help the animals?

A: Thank you! It takes all of us working together for every community across the country to achieve no-kill. The animals are very fortunate that so many Best Friends members have included a gift to Best Friends in their will in addition to the gifts they make to the animals today. Almost half of the animals rescued by Best Friends are saved thanks to bequest gifts. If you haven't included a gift to the animals and Best Friends in your will, please consider it. If you have, but haven't let us know, please contact us so we can thank you and welcome you to Forever Friends.

Q: Is there anything I can do to make a bigger gift to the animals now when I still need a steady income to care for me and my pets?

A: Yes. Have you heard of a charitable gift annuity (CGA)? CGAs allow you to make a gift to the animals and Best Friends of \$10,000 or more, receive a tax deduction for the gift, and receive fixed income for life. There are several options for the income payments, so they can be set up to meet different financial planning needs. Appreciated stocks or mutual funds can be used as gifts to fund a CGA, providing extra tax benefits. If you are eligible for qualified charitable distributions from your IRA, you may also be able to use them to make a gift to fund a CGA.

Thank you for everything you do for the animals. If you would like to learn more about any of these topics or have other questions, please reach out to us at [435-359-9227](tel:435-359-9227) or plannedgiving@bestfriends.org.