GWEN HARTWELL'S STORY begins when her daughter rescued a dachshund, named Duke, from a Louisiana rescue shortly after Hurricane Katrina. Gwen and her daughter could only care for one dog, so they had to leave behind Duke’s known shelter companion, Rudy.

It wasn’t until they returned home to Florida that Gwen learned Rudy crawled through a fence and escaped! The local police found him in downtown New Orleans scavenging for food and shelter. Knowing what Rudy had gone through, Gwen knew they had to go back and get him.

Years later and now a seasoned member of their family, Rudy became ill and was diagnosed with kidney failure. “I loved all my pets, but Rudy was my soul pet. There was just something about Rudy,” Gwen told us. After 5 days in intensive care, Gwen and her family said their final goodbyes.

Heartbroken, Gwen contacted SPCA to inquire about the tribute and memorial program. “I knew about the memorial garden. I wanted a brick to keep his memory alive. I don’t want everybody to just forget about Rudy. There’s something there to show that this sweet little soul existed.”

Not only did Gwen honor Rudy with a brick that day, she also took a walk through our shelter where she happened to meet a dog that looked a lot like him! It didn’t take long for her to realize it was meant to be. “I rubbed his face and I said, ‘You can’t replace Rudy, but you don’t have to.’”

Gwen likes to visit the memorial garden to reflect about the joy Rudy brought to her life. “I think anyone who lost a pet would be blessed by having a brick here. It’s something they could come look at, knowing at the same time they are helping to save lives. Because that’s what the SPCA is doing, saving lives. Anytime you donate money, you’re helping.”
Milo looks friendly, but he’s actually part of a colony of more than 20 community cats, meaning they are free-roaming feral or stray cats. Many community cats like Milo are fearful of humans and would not make good pets. You might have seen cats like him in your own neighborhood.

These community cat colonies often cause an influx of kittens into shelters from early spring until late fall in Pinellas County. Known as “kitten season,” it puts an intense strain on shelter resources such as space, food and medical care for the kittens.

Our vets believe Milo is about one year old, which means he may have already contributed to multiple litters of kittens being born in his short life.

**But thanks to you, there is a solution!** Milo and the rest of his colony were spayed or neutered as part of a TNVR (Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return) program at the SPCA Tampa Bay Veterinary Center. TNVR stabilizes the population and improves the lives of both the cats and their human neighbors.

Cats are humanely trapped by colony caregivers or volunteers that work with organized non-profits, such as MEOW Now and are brought to the veterinary center. They’re then spayed or neutered, vaccinated for rabies, medically examined to look for illness or injury and ear-tipped for identification by SPCA staff. After recovery, they are picked up and returned to the neighborhood where they were trapped.

**It is because of your passion for all animals that SPCA is able to provide these veterinary services.** And with your support, even more cats can be neutered, vaccinated and returned to their communities.
A CAT, A DOG AND A HEDGEHOG?

I could just imagine my brother saying that out loud if he were in the sad position of dealing with my affairs after my death. As my husband Roy and I updated our estate plans after our wedding, we worried about what would happen if our pets outlived us.

A good friend of ours taught us an important lesson. A sudden illness put her in the hospital over the holidays. When I got the tearful call saying she had died, the caller had a second difficult task: to ask if Roy and I could take in her senior poodle. As much as she loved Bentley, our friend hadn’t had time to provide for him after her death.

We soon realized that what happens to our pets if we are to pass away is a concern most of us pet parents have. We broached the subject with a team of elder law experts. The incredible challenges and costs associated with setting up our own trust led us to start brainstorming. There had to be a better way!

SPCA Tampa Bay staff, board members and our group of passionate attorneys worked together to create the Legacy of Love Communal Pet Trust. The trust lets you set aside funds for your pet’s care in an irrevocable trust that can be utilized by your pet’s new caregiver as needs arise. Any funds that may remain after your pet passes become a gift to the SPCA to help other animals in need.

It’s hard to think about a time when I won’t be with my little guy Wingnut or my cuddly Cate. I feel so good knowing SPCA Tampa Bay can help me provide for their care when I can no longer do so.

SPCA TAMPA BAY endorses the FIVE FREEDOMS OF ANIMAL WELFARE

1. FREEDOM FROM HUNGER AND THIRST by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigor.
2. FREEDOM FROM DISCOMFORT by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting place.
3. FREEDOM FROM PAIN, INJURY OR DISEASE by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
4. FREEDOM TO EXPRESS NORMAL BEHAVIOR by providing sufficient space, proper facilities & company of the animal’s own kind.
5. FREEDOM FROM FEAR AND DISTRESS by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

We wouldn’t be able to help them without you. THANK YOU!
28th Annual
SPCA TAMPA BAY
PET WALK
VINOFY PARK
St. Petersburg, Florida
PetWalk.org

SATURDAY, October 6 — 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Proudly presented by
Love My Dog Inc.
Resort and Playground

I can’t stop barking about SPCA Tampa Bay! | By Ezra the Yorkie
our four-legged Ambassador

MY NAME IS EZRA THE YORKIE! When I was two years old, I was rescued from a puppy mill. Thankfully, I was nursed back to health and found a loving forever home with my new family, Kevin and Robert.

After being adopted, we all went shopping for the necessities: food, bowls, treats, a leash, toys and you guessed it... clothes! Every time my dad pulls out a new shirt or outfit, I get so excited that I jump around in circles and lose complete control over my tail!

My parents realized how much I love to dress up, so they started taking photos of me and shared them on what the humans call “social media.” I was so honored with the outpour of support that my parents and I decided to create my own Facebook and Instagram page, just for me!

Now that I have quite a lot of followers, I’ve decided to use my celebrity status to help raise awareness about the importance of adoption. After all, I too am a rescue and am so very fortunate to be given a second chance at life!

In 2017, I accepted an Ambassadorship with SPCA Tampa Bay, and I couldn’t be more proud to help my friends in need. I can’t stop barking about them! So join me in helping raise awareness for this wonderful cause. You’ll be happy you did!

Your Tampa Bay Community Furry Friend,
Ezra the Yorkie

FB: @Ezraftzdog
IG: @ezra_the_yorkie