Pet Care When Needed Most

Mercy Care Long Term Care Presents
Mercy Paws
Valerie Black
- 22 years in Vocational Rehabilitation and Case Management
- 11 years with Mercy Care as Case Manager/Team Lead/Mentor
- Three years with Mercy Paws and 2 years as Mercy Paws Coordinator
- 1 year Volunteer at Lost Our Home Rescue
- Office Coordinator for Pet Therapy

Mike Cunningham
- 25 years in Secondary Education
- 9 years with Mercy Care as Case Manager, Trainer, Project Manager and Program Manager
- Three years with Mercy Paws
- 15 years Volunteer and Fostering with Arizona Poodle Rescue
- Office Co-Coordinator for Pet Therapy
Mercy Care Sponsor Structure

Ascension Care Management

St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center, a Dignity Health Member

dba Mercy Care & Mercy Care Advantage

Managed by Aetna Medicaid Administrators, LLC through a Plan Management Services Agreement
Proprietary and Confidential

Physical and Behavioral Care for Adults and Children Medicaid Members

Members - 307K

Physical and Behavioral Care for Long Term Care Members

Members - 13K

Physical and Behavioral Care for Medicare Advantage Dual Special Needs Plan

Members 20K

Physical Care for Developmentally Disabled Members

Members 13K

Physical and Behavioral Care for Persons with Serious Mental Illness, BH for Foster Care Kids and Crisis.

Members 47K
Mercy Care LTC Member Demographics by Age and Placement:
Member Demographics:
• 16% receive Behavioral Health Services (counseling and/or prescriber services)
• 61% Female, 39% Male
• 25% Dementia/Alzheimer’s
• 42% on MCA
• 15% of our members residing at home receive Home Delivered Meals
• 4% of our members residing at home receive Adult Day Health
• 75% of our members reside in their own home or Assisted Living
• Mercy Care serves 4 counties, Maricopa, Pima, Pinal and Gila

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ALTCS
Geographic Service Areas
Mercy Paws History

Way back in 2015...

A discussion with several case managers and management began around a recurring issue. Members without informal/natural supports who’s family was comprised of cherished pets were refusing medical care. The need was identified as affordable, quality pet care. Our case managers were reinventing the wheel with each occurrence and not always successfully.

Several staff already volunteered in the Phoenix animal rescue world and the idea of formalizing a benefit service for these members was born.

Everyone recognized the value and therapeutic importance of pets for socialization, companionship, activity, affection and healing.
By Early 2016:
With the assistance of upper management and a commitment to our members and their families (in all configurations), we were able to approach Phoenix Animal Care Coalition (PACC911) with a proposal to collaborate during medical emergencies.

Over 100 rescue organization strong, PACC911 felt prepared to take on this task. Mercy Care approved the budget for a pilot year and from March 2016 to April 2017 we rolled out and tested Mercy Paws.

In the first year....
Year One – Education of staff and members. Four Advanced Directives Completed

Year Two – Education continues. Advanced Directives for Pet Care continue to arrive weekly

Total of 12 activated placements/fostering to date.

3 referrals were due to death and or placement in nursing home. Pets were successfully rehomed.

9 referrals were temporarily fostered and returned successfully to members.

Advance Directives for Pet Care Currently include:
Dogs, Cats and Birds.
YEAR 2016 - 2017

- Cat: 60%
- Dogs: 20%
- Bird: 20%

YEAR 2017 - Present

- Dog: 54%
- Cat: 39%
- Bird: 7%
Our Partner-PACC911 (Phoenix Animal Care Coalition 911)

History:
• 1999 Bari Mears took up the challenge to support and network animal rescues for efficient fund raising and resource distribution
• 100 + organizations now make up PACC911
• Currently oversee three medical funds in addition to Mercy Paws
• Operates Rescued Treasures a thrift boutique to support the medical funds
2nd Chance Dog Rescue 
AJ’s Best Friends Rescue 
Akita Advocates Relocation Team Arizona 
Americas Freedom Paws Rescue 
Animal Loving Friends 
Any Rat Rescue 
Arizona Happy Tails 
APARN – Arizona Pug Adoption & Rescue Network 
Arizona Animal Welfare League & SPCA (AAWL) 
AZ Animal Rescue Mission 
AZ Basset Hound Rescue 
AZ Beagle Rescue 
AZ Boston Terrier 
AZ Border Collie Rescue 
AZ Chihuahua Rescue 
AZ Golden Rescue 
AZ Humane Society 
AZ Labrador & Giant Breed Rescue 
AZ Maine Coon Cat Rescue 
AZ Paws and Claws 
AZ Piggie Poo Rescue 
Arizona Poodle Rescue 
AZ Sheltie Rescue 
AZ Small Dog Rescue 
AZ Weimaraner Rescue 
Boxer Luv Rescue 
Brambley Hedge Rabbit Rescue 
Caring for Canines 
Carrie On Rescue 
Cherished Tails Senior Sanctuary 
Cochise Canine Rescue 
Desert Harbor Doberman Rescue of AZ 
Desert Labrador Retriever Rescue 
Desert Paws Rescue 
Fetch Foundation 
Forever Loved Pet Sanctuary 
Four Peaks Animal Rescue 
Friends for Life Animal Rescue 
HALO (Helping Animals Live On) 
Help A Dog Smile 
Home Fur Good 
Hoof & Paws Rescue 
Lost Our Home Pet Foundation 
Lost Paws 
Lucky Dog Rescue 
Maricopa County Animal Care & Control 
Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office (MASH UNIT) 
Medical Animals in Need (MAIN) 
Mini Mighty Mutts 
One Love Pit Bull Foundation 
Paw Placement 
Paw Kindness 
Pei People Shar Pei Rescue 
Pittie Me Rescue 
Rescue a Golden of Arizona 
Rescuing Animas In Need (RAIN) 
Rescue League 
Rotten Rottie Rescue 
Safe Haven for Animals 
Save the Cats Arizona 
Saving Paws Rescue 
Southwest Collie Rescue 
Sun Cities 4 Paws 
Sunshine Dog Rescue 
Surrendered Souls Rescue 
The Dog Safe House 
Valley of the Sun Dog Rescue 
Valley of the Sun Giant Schnauzer Rescue 
Yorkie Luv Rescue
Meet Bouncer

“He likes girls. He is an avid people watcher.”
Bouncer

Our member eagerly sat with his case manager and completed an Advance Directive for Pet Care for his best friend Bouncer. Our member reported he instantly knew when he met Bouncer two years earlier at a rescue event that the 7 year old, 125 pound Mastiff/Rottweiler/Bull Terrier Mix was meant to be his buddy. Having lived alone for many years, now having Bouncer to care for meant the world. Health issues were nothing new to him and he needed to make sure that Bouncer would be taken care of properly. With the help of his case manager he completed his Advance Directive for Pet Care and included a perfect description of his friend from coat color, pattern, food preferences, sleep patterns “don’t wake him up if he’s sleeping”, all the way to “he likes girls and is an avid people watcher”.

A huge change came for Bouncer with the sudden death of his friend and buddy. While careful plans for a neighbor to provide food and water to Bouncer until Mercy Paws could respond had been made, when the case manager arrived to check on Bouncer, she found him outside in 116 degree heat without water or food. In fact, after the member’s passing, his “friends came over and took his belongings leaving Bouncer outside to fend for himself.”

A call to our Mercy Paws Coordinator quickly turned into a call to action with the PACC911 Coordinator taking it upon herself to rally two volunteers to meet her at the member’s home. They met the park manager per the Advance Directive and located a very relieved; thirsty and hungry Bouncer. The Mercy Paws/PACC911 rescuers report that not only was Bouncer ready to hop in the car after a drink but that he settled in with the rescue that opened its heart and doors and was cared for until his next best friend came along. Mercy Paws provided for our member the peace of mind that Bouncer would be cared for and avoid abuse or neglect if something happened to him. Bouncer also avoided shelter placement which for an 7 year old large male mix is an almost certain death sentence.
Who Is Eligible?

Any member with one or more pets who can not identify natural/informal supports in the community to assist with pet care during a medical emergency/skilled rehab stay.

• Members/Reps may self identify
• Case Managers may identify and refer
• Providers, Hospitals and EMT’s may identify and refer
When is it appropriate to use?

Mercy Paws is available to enrolled members for either scheduled or emergency medical/BH hospitalizations and skilled rehabilitation stays.

• No limit on the number of pets
• No limit in number of days covered
• No limit in number of times used per year

Mercy Paws is not appropriate for:

• Respite – unless the only natural/informal support is also the primary paid caregiver
• Family vacations
• Evictions – case by case review
Process?

• Identify member need and provide education
• Complete Mercy Paws Advance Directives for Pet Care form
  • Permission to act concerning Medical and Fostering care
  • Plan for pick up/Contact person(s)-landlord, neighbor etc.
  • Contingency Plan if not able to resume care

Phone call or email from Case Manager to Mercy Paws Coordinator identifying need for service.
Mercy Paws Coordinator attaches Advanced Directives for Pet Care via email with pick up instructions to PACC 911 Coordinator followed up with a phone call to discuss case.
PACC 911 sends out request for care to multiple rescue agencies
Once determined, the rescue agency facilitates pick up, medical assessment, and fostering. (talk about member’s updates with cm)
With case manager input, upon discharge/outcome, Foster will coordinate with member for the return or rehoming of their pet.
Coordinator closes the referral as successfully completed.
# Advance Directive for Pet Care Form

## Mercy Paws

**Advanced Directive for Fostering and Re-Homing**

I (we), ___________________________ give permission to Mercy Paws to provide temporary shelter and care to my/our ☐ dog(s) ☐ cat(s) ☐ other(s) beginning when my/our case manager is notified of my need and concluding as soon as transportation for my/our pets can be arranged upon my return home. My/our pet’s information is

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<th>Pet Name</th>
<th>Type: Dog/Cat etc.</th>
<th>Age In Years</th>
<th>Spay/Neut: Y or N</th>
<th>Rabies Vaccine (Date-Cert.)</th>
<th>4/1 Vaccine Date</th>
<th>County Registration: Y or N</th>
<th>Veterinarian: Contact Information, who last saw your pet</th>
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Needed Data

Copies of Rabies certificates
Spay/Neuter certificates
Breed description, Pet Size
Pet Superpowers (i.e.: Housebroken, crate training, potty pads, litter box trained)
Pet Health History/Medications
Dietary Needs
Temperament
Bite History
Restrictions
Home Environment
Contingency plan- what are wishes for animal, fostering, rehoming etc
Contact person for pick up, phone number, address, pick up instructions
Signature authorizing pick up including authorization for care and medical treatment as needed
What is provided?

In addition to fostering for the duration of the hospitalization/rehab stay...

• Transportation
• Nutritious Diet
• Spaying/Neutering (if needed)
• Dental (if needed)
• Vaccinations (usually needed)
• Grooming (always needed)
• Micro Chipping (if needed)
• Compassion and Love
• Procedures/Treatments:
  • Cherry Eye
  • Mammary Tumors
  • Mange
Meet Alize
While the member’s informal support and housing with family were unstable the member continued to decline to plan for herself and her grey and white Tabby friend Alize which would have included Advance Directives. Perhaps it was positive thinking on the member’s part but very abruptly, the member was asked to leave the family home and in so doing, had to take Alize with her. In her call to her case manager late in the afternoon, the member reported she and her cat were in her car and not sure where to go or what to do.

While the case manager was able to suggest temporary placement, the necessary medical review and information would not be possible from her PCP until an appointment could be set. In response to the member’s stress level and medical complexity, it was suggested she go to the ER. It was determined the member would be admitted.

The Case Manager picked up Alize from the member at the Hospital and got needed information on the Advance Directive for Pet Care. The case manager took Alize to her home that evening and delivered her the following morning to the rescue identified by Mercy Paws.

Alize remained with the rescue for two weeks, until our member discharged from the hospital to an assisted living center that welcomed them both.
Meet Peanut and Cuddles
Peanut and Cuddles

On Friday, May 25th, 2017 the Mercy Care Plan case manager was called at 4:30 pm by a member in crisis revealing for the first time that she and her two small dogs Peanut and Cuddles were being evicted that day. The member’s emotional state was erratic and the case manager began immediately addressing the member’s threat to harm herself and her two dogs. Crisis Response was called to assess and transport the member. The member had consistently declined to complete Advance Directives for Pet Care in the past with the case manager continuing to introduce the topic into conversation whenever possible. While working to support the member, the case manager called their manager after 5:00 pm and made him aware that the member would not leave for treatment due to her two small dogs. The Manager made the necessary connections and within 30 minutes Mercy Paws had developed a plan to take Peanut and Cuddles in and hold them until the member could stabilize and make decisions. Within three days the member was able to complete the Advance Directives for Pet Care and return them to her case manager. Once in the hands of our PACC911 partner, the information allowed for placement of the two together. During their time in the care of the rescue, Peanut was altered (Cuddles already was) as well as having a painful Cherry Eye repaired and Cuddles had a Mammary Tumor Removed. Both had dental checkups and their rabies shots were brought up to date.

During this time, the member was able to work with her case manager and upon discharge from the hospital, locate an Assisted Living Center that could meet her needs and that would allow Peanut and Cuddles to move in as well. The facility has done a great job of working with the member to develop an agreement that is intended to make this new arrangement successful. With the members new address and fresh start, Peanut and Cuddles have been reunited with the member.

While this situation was definitely outside the planned framework of the program, working together the outcome has been a positive one, serving our member and keeping her family together.
Meet Baby

Our member reported to her case manager she was very happy with the program. She said that she could tell that the woman that brought Baby home really cared about her and that she even teared up a bit when she brought her back home. She said “They took very good care of her. They even gave her a bath and clipped her toenails”.

Proprietary and Confidential
Baby

The case manager went out to member’s home for her quarterly home visit and brought the advanced directives form as the member has a limited support system. The member resides alone and has a small dog, Baby that she loves and is very protective of. The case manager helped the member fill out the form at the visit and called her Vet for the rabies vaccination certificate. The next week the case manager received a notification that the member was in hospital and had been taken there by EMS. The case manager spoke to the hospital social worker and they reported the member’s dog had been left alone in the apartment and the member did not have anyone to take care of her.

The member asked the case manager to have her Baby fostered and a request was sent immediately to PACC 911 for them to pick up and foster Baby. Mercy Paws went out to the member’s apartment and worked with the apartment manager to get in. The case manager happened to be at that same apartment complex visiting another member when the foster coordinator from Mercy Paws/PACC 911 was there to pick up Baby. The foster coordinator told the case manager that she had been trying to find the dog in the apartment for almost an hour. They finally found her hiding under the bed. The responding Mercy Paws coordinator said that she would bring baby to her home and then put her in the foster program if the member was going to be inpatient for an extended amount of time.

The member returned home a few days later, but was weak and unable to take care of her dog right away. Baby was able to stay in foster care until the member was stronger and ready to have her home. Baby returned a few days later she and our member were reunited, safe and happy.
Outcomes:

**Member satisfaction** – we are the only plan doing this in Arizona

**Decreased Stress** for members during treatment

- Able to focus on their own health/recovery
- Can receive pet updates through their case manager
- Members know their pets will not go to a shelter, no matter the outcome
- Health care for the pet as needed during their stay

**Member and Pet Advance Directives** discussed together

**Willingness to seek/accept care** allows for earlier intervention and decrease in hospitalization time which translates to members at home and plan savings.
Thank you

Valerie Black
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Mike Cunningham
CunninghamJ@MercyCareAZ.org