

Pet Partner Spotlight - Paws To Angels

Pets In Omaha, Written by Eric Forrest April 22, 2014



Specializing solely in end life pet care, one Omaha business, Paws To Angels, is dedicated to treating every pet with dignity and respect. One of its primary goals is to become the standard of care in the industry for Nebraska. Paws To Angels is the pioneering leader in the state for the cremation, pre-need and aftercare service market, setting a new standard in death care. Death of a loved one is often hard to talk about, let alone

accept and live with, but Paws To Angels is here to help. We're happy to introduce you to (or get to know better) Paws To Angels and its work in our Pet Partner spotlight.

Pets play an important role in our lives. They bring companionship and love to a home, creating a strong emotional bond with pet owners. Today, the pet industry is seeing a trend of owners treating their pets as family members, especially when it comes to their healthcare and saying their final goodbyes. Pet owners want to have options and support when a pet dies, much like they do when a sibling or parent does.

“Pet parents don't know what they don't know,” **Cherie Fry**, owner of Paws to Angels says. “My role as a pet loss professional is to guide families in what they don't know, educate and support them. Pet parents and families in Omaha have never had this opportunity for options before, nor have they ever had a resource totally dedicated to end of life and death care services. I am also a resource to parents who don't know how to talk to their children and help them on their grief journeys.” Fry is seeking to run a successful business, but her primary goal is to be that helpful buffer between the end of a pet’s life and moving on in a caring and customized way.

Fry founded Paws To Angels in 2010 after the death of her dog, Chadz. She says she started this business because she learned of the “traditional” death care process when Chadz left her. “Animals would be put into trash bags, then into a freezer to wait a week or more for the crematory to pick them up. After being loaded on a truck route with 40 or more other pets to be



The Paws to Angels Chapel

cremated, I walked out the door with only a leash and collar in hand with no options or support to mourn my loss.” Cherie, like many, was unprepared for the emotions that would overcome her. She wondered what her options were in memorializing her dearly departed dog. “It was then that I made a vow to change that for pet parents. Paws To Angels is changing the death care process to make sure that pets are treated with dignity and respect and families are treated with the compassionate

care they deserve.” Pets at Paws to Angels rest in a casket with blankets, their bodies respectfully transported immediately from the home, clinic, or accident scene. Each family receives personalized care. Fry says that Paws To Angels is filling a tremendous void, “so it was not hard to decide the right thing to do... After all, doing what was right by pets and their parents is the exact reason I started my business.”

Fry is a Certified Pet Loss Professional, having successfully completed the required training class in pet-related death care services. Furthermore, she is also a Certified Pet Loss Grief Companion, one of 16 charter professionals in the U.S. completing numerous hours of pet grief education training. Lastly, she is also a Certified Cremation Specialist, completing training in both human and pet cremations. She’s a Member of International Cemetery, Crematory and Funeral Association (ICCF), Pet Loss Professionals Alliance(PLPA), International Association of Pet Cemeteries and Crematories (IAPCC), Angie's List and the Better Business Bureau (BBB). If you are wondering if she’s qualified to administer all the procedures and tasks that go along with this kind of care, the answer is overwhelmingly yes. Paws To Angels is the only full service pet loss center and resource of its kind in the state. She also has the only pet loss gift shop in the Omaha area if you are in the market for that sort of thing.

One of the main things that she wants you to remember when working with Paws To Angels is that she is there here to handle every type of family. Final arrangements are very personal and different in each case. She and her team members understand that being empathetic and flexible is important. “We provide a much softer way of handling death care and our services are geared so that a family doesn't feel forced into making a split-second decision while standing in the vet’s office. This allows families to create their own experience in the way they want to, in their time frame and in a way that is going to be good for them. Fry and her team is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week-including holidays.



You may be asking, “what causes a person to start such a service?” Once you know Fry’s background and personal experience, the answer is simple.

“I have been drawn to animals my entire life and they have always held a special place in my heart. We have an innate connection that is enhanced by love and respect. I have also experienced grief and loss in a number of different circumstances and believe that in our society we naturally don't handle death very well.” While it makes nearly everyone uncomfortable, it’s a traumatic part of life that can be made slightly more comforting if the correct, compassionate steps are taken.

One of Paws to Angels' Visitation Areas

“For us and for our pets,” Fry says, “death is as much a step in life as any other. Because death is a difficult subject, we often neglect to ask the right questions regarding our pets’ after-death care. Sometimes our neglect can come back to haunt us.”

When her beloved Chadz died, it bothered her terribly because she didn't feel her dog was “waste” and didn't deserved to be treated as such. “There were no options, no support and no education. I felt the entire process was cold. My veterinarian did a wonderful job during the euthanasia and supported me during that time, but I felt there had to be something else to meet the demands of pet parents.” Two weeks after Chadz's death she began a business plan, put her heart and soul into building and grew her idea out of her own pain. She knew she could help others deal with the issues she was experiencing.

“I see myself as a leader and not a follower. I didn't go out and copy what others were doing, thinking I could do it better. I created a different business, one born from my heart, and knew what I wanted. I went out and spoke to other pet parents and asked them about all their concerns and what they wanted to see change.”

Fry sought out support after 14 months into her business plan and found Coleen Ellis, Co-Chair of The Pet Loss Professionals Alliance. This helped her finalize her business plan and education. One comment pet parents make all the time is “I don't know what to do when my pet dies or where to turn.” Fry says Paws To Angels is the answer to those questions because she knows the needs and wants of a family who suffers loss.



Cherie Fry with her pups

Our companion animals are huge parts of our lives. They have much to teach us including how to care for the dying and how to grieve loss in a healthy way so that we can emerge grateful for the life of being we have lost and stronger as we face additional challenges in our lives.

Fry says that death is a part of life. And, like the saying goes, “Saying good-bye is the most difficult thing in life. And we never learn to be good at it.” She hopes that her service can help pet parents become a little better at grieving, memorializing and moving on.

Here’s a rundown of services offered by Paws To Angels:

- *Euthanasia Guidance and Support*
- *At-Home Euthanasia*
- *Anticipatory Grief Support*
- *Truly Private Cremation*
- *Burial*
- *Freeze Dry Preservation*
- *Preplanning*
- *24/7 Availability/Assistance*
- *Visitations*
- *Funerals/ Memorial Ceremonies*
- *Grief Support for the Pet Parent, Children, and other pets in the home*
- *Pet Loss Grief Support Groups for Pet Parents and Children*
- *Gift and Retail*
- *Memorialization Pieces*
- *Living Memorialization Pieces*
- *Crematory practices*
- *Cremations Standards and Ethics*
- *Burial Standards and Ethics*
- *Pet Loss Grief Companionship*
- *Pet Loss Seminars*
- *Pet Loss and Grief Speaking engagements*

Call or email Paws to Angels for a free "Guide to Planning Ahead." You can also stop by the business which is located at 11718 W. Dodge Rd. in Omaha.

For more information about services, visit www.pawstoangels.net

Email: pawstoangelsinfo@cox.net

Phone: 402-507-0585

Fry and her business can also be found on Facebook, Twitter, Linked In, Pinterest, YouTube, Stumble Upon, Google Plus, BBB, and Angie's List.

For Further Information on the Pet Loss Professional Alliance (PLPA) click [here](#).

Fry is a native of Omaha and shares her home with three furry kids, Emmie, Savanna and Paws.



(Fry would like to offer potential customers a testimonial from one of her clients (The text below has not been altered or edited):

I thank God everyday that we found Paws To Angels and Cherie. She played an integral part in our healing process, and in giving our Miss Mollie the respect and dignity that any family member should receive. My loss happened on 7/6/13, and I have been talking about her services since. From the first moment that Cherie met us outside and took Mollie into her arms, I knew we were in the right place. During our time of grief and the overwhelming pain in our hearts, Cherie asked us to tell her about Mollie, by talking and reminiscing about our sweet little Miss Mollie it took our minds off the grief and then all of a sudden we were laughing and smiling. She was such a precious and unique dog.

The visitation helped us and our dog Maxie. This was the most important piece for me because it helped tremendously; we got to spend as much time with Mollie as we wanted. "Thank you very much Cherie." Mollie looked so pretty and clean and peaceful. She

looked just like she was sleeping and was positioned just like the way she sleeps at home. Now that is a memory I will always remember and cherish.

The grief support, options, visitation, and many other things she does are more than worth it. After all, Mollie wasn't just a dog, she was my best friend and a family member. Getting to spend the time making decisions and seeing how Cherie cares made it a more bearable experience. I am already planning for Maxie and Cherie is helping me. I won't ever lose a pet and go through it alone again because I know Paws to Angels will be there and Cherie will be by my side. Thank you Cherie.

For me and my husband money was never a thought, we cared for Mollie in life and gave her the best and knowing that we were able to do the same for her death has brought us much peace. The gifts are very special & meaningful, and everyone is different in that department, but for me, the comfort, soothing, and caring you share with a pet parent that is grieving, is priceless, and a work of magic. You have that special power, empathy, and sympathy to make that person feel like their pet is the only pet that matters at the moment. My husband & I have taken this journey with our sweet Miss Mollie, and we are forever grateful to Cherie for making our grieving process a pleasant experience. You can't place a dollar amount on that.

I can't believe there aren't more places like this; or that more veterinarians aren't working with her to continue the love and respect as they cross over the rainbow bridge. Vets took an oath to help our loved ones, and to make them feel better, and to keep them from getting sick. Their love for animals is why they became a vet, so why isn't that same love carried through from life to death?

Cherie has a great thing going because our pets are our kids and they deserve the same respect and dignity that is given to us humans. Cherie has certainly captured the market in pet funeral services. This was her calling in life and I thank God for her compassionate nature.

Pet parents deserve every right to grieve and honor their pet the same way as a human, which is why Cherie brought Paws To Angels to life. I know there are a lot of pet parents that feel the same way, so I will continually act as an advocate for Cherie.

Finally a caring person that stepped up to the plate to make sure our loving pets get the care and proper treatment they so deserve and that person is Cherie Fry of Paws To Angels.

Thank You for a wonderful and uplifting experience.

-Annette & Mike