

5 Questions with Ann Marie Glaviano

By Hilary Decent For The Sun June 22, 2011 2:40PM

For pet owners, taking a vacation can be a tricky thing. They have to decide whether to travel to a pet-friendly location, to leave their pet with a friend or pay high prices for boarding. Pet owners who suddenly become sick can face a similar dilemma, but instead of being rewarded with a pleasant trip at the end of it, they can find their world turned upside down. Ann Marie Glaviano can help.



Dogs come to Ann Marie Schrage-Glaviano's for attention as she cares for them at her Naperville home. Mary Beth Nolan~For Sun-Times Media

1. How did you identify a need for your not-for-profit?

“Six months before being diagnosed with lupus, I got Medici, a Papillion. By fall 2004, I was feeling better, but then Medici was diagnosed with the same thing. It’s not common, but cats and dogs can get it. I understood how he felt. He had treatment, but one day I came home to find him shaking with a funny look on his face. I rushed him to the vet, but he had developed a blood clot and he died in my arms, 500 feet away from the vet’s office. I was devastated. After that, I worked with the Lupus Foundation to start a not-for-profit to help pets needing temporary care while their owners were sick. We now have 80 volunteers across this area and 140 across the country.”

2. How are dogs affected when their owners are sick?

“Molly Malone was a Corgi/Stafford Terrier mix. When her owner developed cancer in her brain, we found a pet sitter to take care of (the dog). Molly wasn’t happy, so we called in a pet communicator (psychic). Molly would sit staring out of the window. Molly told her the volunteer wasn’t giving her enough kisses. When we took her to visit her owner in a rehabilitation hospital, Molly immediately ran to her owner, and they started kissing each other. Her owner said to her, ‘Let’s go home,’ which was the message she had been sending during the past few weeks. Molly was looking out of the window waiting for her to come get her. Alas the owner was never well enough to go home, and the pet communicator had to ask her if she was ready to accept a new role in her life. Molly agreed, adding she would only be happy living with a woman, which is eventually what we able to help make happen.”

3. If I need surgery and can’t afford to board him, what can I do?

“I’m really a matchmaker. If you tell me where you live and how long you need help for, I will find a pet sitter. The average is between one and three months. All it takes is a \$100 donation. We can also help by starting up a ‘chip in’ fund. Often family members and friends will contribute to the cost of care, for example food and any necessary vet fees, while you are unable to care for the pet yourself.”

4. I love animals and would like to volunteer in some way. What opportunities do you have?

“If you are already working as a pet sitter, volunteering can help give you tax breaks. Or this can be a way to help if you want to start a pet sitting business. If you are able to foster a pet, we will have a local rescue center do a check for us. You do need a fenced yard for this. We also need help with donations of money and supplies.”

5. I know you love all animals, but you seem to have a really strong affinity to dogs?

“To me they are the manifestation of unconditional love that God has for us. They are always there for you no matter what. They are little angels in fur coats.”