

DOROTHY GRAHAM & THE GRAHAM FAMILY FOUNDATION

DONOR PROFILE



Olga and Dorothy Graham, at Olga's 95th birthday in 2002. Photo courtesy of PAWS Prints Fall 2009

Olga and Victor Graham, Dorothy's parents, loved animals. Recalling her parents as "cat people," Dorothy remembers that the family always had felines around to provide great companionship. More than simply pets, the Graham family cats were true members of the family. From early on, Dorothy learned that pets are fundamental to a person's well-being.

For over a decade, Dorothy Graham has honored the compassionate legacy of her parents through the creation of the Graham Family Foundation. Thanks to Dorothy's connection to the PAWS' mission of preserving the human-animal bond, the Graham Family Foundation has awarded PAWS more than \$175,000 in grants since the foundation's formation in 2005.

Dorothy recalls her mom as a giving person her whole life: first serving as a teacher and tutor to "hardest-to-reach" kids in New York and the Bronx; later, Olga volunteered in nursing homes. It was this foundation of demonstrated selflessness, as well as growing up in a cat-loving home, which cemented for Dorothy the true importance of the human-animal bond for all.

Dorothy inherited Olga's values of giving back and supporting people in need. She became involved in the AIDS movement in the 1980s, helping to bring services to those affected by HIV/AIDS in the East Bay. Dorothy remembers this devastating time as "a period of incredible loss where I was seemingly going to funerals constantly."

Through her work in the HIV/AIDS field, Dorothy first heard about PAWS. She was immediately connected to the PAWS mission and began making small consistent donations. Throughout her life, Dorothy saw first-hand how "important pets are to consoling

people" and, as she puts it—not just as animals but "members of the family...fundamental to people's well-being."

After her mom passed away in 2005, Dorothy reflected on the values exemplified by her parents and decided to create a foundation to support organizations like PAWS. In 2007, a cornerstone grant from the Graham Family Foundation provided seed funding for PAWS to establish a program to support seniors. PAWS was one of the very first organizations to receive support from the foundation.

Dorothy sees offering services to seniors as a natural extension of PAWS' original mission of serving people with AIDS. This was the beginning of a significant commitment on behalf of the Graham



Dorothy Graham with Shanti Executive Director Kaushik Roy at Petchitecture 2017. Photo courtesy of J'Adore le Chien Pet Photography

Family Foundation to helping all people in need keep their pets fed and healthy—a cause that, as Dorothy states, is "one of the most meaningful interventions you can make in someone's life."

With recent first-ever funding from the City of San Francisco to assist seniors in-need and bolster Care Navigation services, PAWS is now more sustainable than ever.

Dorothy highlights the importance of supporting PAWS' services, such as the provision of vouchers for veterinary care, through her own experience caring for an ailing pet. "I had a very beloved cat, Pepsi, and unfortunately he got very sick with cancer," recalls Dorothy. "He had a very sad experience, and it was very traumatic for me."

Her personal experience underscores why Dorothy is so happy to support PAWS with grants that help cover expenses related to vet care vouchers for clients in need. **"It's important to me to help people keep their pets healthy as long as possible.** When people's pets get sick, having the money to take care of them shouldn't be an additional stressor in their lives," says Dorothy.

Dorothy sees the difference made by her grants and considers them a very meaningful intervention in the lives of people in need. "For not a huge amount of money, a little bit can go a long way."

This is the enduring legacy of Olga and Victor Graham.