

# ARDEN WOOD soaring WING



Gift and Estate Planning Newsletter

## Address Uncertainty—Plan Ahead

**C**an't predict what's next? It's tempting to put planning on hold. Unfortunately, loose ends can lead to future stress and rash decisions.

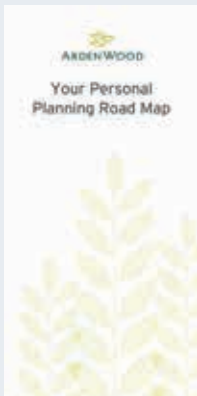
Consider this: Planning under "normal" circumstances allows you to slow down and review your options. For example, taking the time to be mindful when creating an estate plan gives you the opportunity to record your values and make sure your wishes are followed. A thoughtful estate plan can also tell your story through the causes you support after your lifetime.

### A WELL-PLANNED ESTATE HELPS YOU:

- **Make the most of your assets.** Meeting with qualified professionals helps you grow your wealth over the long term.
- **Protect family and loved ones.** An up-to-date estate plan keeps loved ones safe. Reviewing it regularly means adjusting for changes in personal relationships, tax laws, births, deaths and state of residence.
- **Be tax smart.** Certain assets can be tax burdens (or at least tax surprises) to your family. Planning helps you keep them in the loop and possibly avoid a tax hit altogether.
- **Continue helping others after your lifetime.** Gifts to Arden Wood may provide you financial benefits in addition to the fulfillment that comes from helping others.

### WE CAN HELP

By planning your estate now, you not only support your loved ones, you ensure the organizations you care about, like Arden Wood, continue to receive your support. Contact John Mitchell at [jmitchell@ardenwood.org](mailto:jmitchell@ardenwood.org) or (415) 379-2200 to learn more about including us in your future plans.



## STEP-BY-STEP PLANNING

Having a solid plan is the best way to help you and your loved ones rest easy about the future. Creating your estate plan also gives you a chance to consider your long-term plans for your favorite nonprofit organizations, like Arden Wood. Our FREE guide, *Your Personal Planning Road Map*, lays out the process in a simple, step-by-step manner. Request your copy today by using the enclosed reply card.



## EXPLORE YOUR LEGACY AT ARDEN WOOD

Wherever you are in the process, your estate plan is a powerful way to show your love for your favorite causes, such as Arden Wood. Please contact John Mitchell at (415) 379-2200 or [jmitchell@ardenwood.org](mailto:jmitchell@ardenwood.org) to learn more about ways to make a difference.

# Is Your Estate Plan Missing Something?

If you're taking another look at your existing estate plan, or just starting your planning journey, be sure to include the following items—in addition to a will—to make things easier for you and your loved ones. In most cases, you won't need to involve an attorney.

### CHECKLIST OF ESSENTIAL ITEMS:

1. **A high-level overview** that lays out the basics of your finances and plans. Include:
  - Where to find your will and other documents and who the key people are—your agents under the powers of attorney and executors or personal representatives.
  - Financial assets—where accounts are held and who owns them.
  - Insurance coverage—property/casualty, health, life.
  - Property and vehicle information.
  - Regular household bills that you pay.
2. **A detailed description of your finances** that includes account numbers, contacts at financial institutions, etc.
3. **A personal property memorandum** that is referenced by your will and states how you want property distributed and/or sold. This allows you to assign sentimental or valuable assets to specific people without having to change your will if you change your mind.
4. **A plan for your pets** to ensure that your furry friends are taken care of. A legally binding pet trust can be created, or you can make provisions in your will for how you want your pets cared for in your absence.
5. **A list of your passwords**, which includes online account details. Use an online platform or app, or save them on a flash drive for security. Also, be sure to update your list whenever you change a password.
6. **Advance directives, powers of attorney and other end-of-life planning tools** to communicate your basic wishes. Add personal messages and detailed plans for your funeral, memorial and other specifics.
7. **An ethical will**, which is your opportunity to hand down your values in a document or video. Think of it as a personal record of your life—how you've lived it and how you want to inspire others.

# Shine a Light on Your Values

**T**aking time to think about and document what's important—and why it's important—can help you connect more deeply with the people and places you hold dear.

For example, supporters of Arden Wood share a commitment to healing, spiritual growth and graceful living consistent with the teachings and practice of Christian Science.

Here are some ideas for how you can forge more meaningful connections and pass along your generous spirit.

- Have you done an activity recently that made you happy? Consider a cause related to that activity. For example, if you enjoy a particular hiking trail, find a local conservation group to support.
- If you feel connected to a current event, see if nonprofits you support are responding and ensure they are set up for success.
- Go beyond dollars and cents. Volunteering is a great way to give back, especially for local charities that may not have the administrative staff that their larger counterparts have. Also, inviting friends and family can be an effective way to introduce them to your passions.
- Your values can unlock others' generosity. Letting loved ones know what you care about can help you connect. It could even inspire them to support the causes you cherish.

Tell your story by keeping a running document (a generosity journal or ethical will) that gives an account of who you gave to, why you gave to that nonprofit, how it made you feel and how that nonprofit's mission fits into your overall value system.

While the name "ethical will" might be new to you, the concept probably isn't. This record of the experiences you've had, the lessons you've learned, and the causes you've chosen to support is a meaningful way to share your story and your values. It is also deeply satisfying to family members to learn and understand the reasons for the beneficiary choices you made.





# An Estate Plan Based on Connection



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**P**at and Penny Barrett have put together—with the help of an attorney—an estate plan that provides for themselves, their children and the charities they love. Each had an early experience with Arden Wood—Penny took a class in Christian Science nurses training and Pat stayed at Arden Wood to study and pray at a pivotal time. That early connection with Arden Wood has grown in them both ever since. Penny notes, “There are lots of areas where I give time and money in the community, and the areas that get the most are where I have a personal connection. I have that kind of connection to Arden Wood.”



*Penny and Pat Barrett*

Another aspect of their beneficiary decision-making is the size of the charitable organization. In their words, “The small organizations that don’t have huge endowments or foundational support inspire us to give because we can have more effect. We look at the impact our dollars can have and where our faith and love rest.”

Estate plans are very individual, depending on personal preferences, one’s view of the future and family circumstances. Having a plan helps you reduce legalities that can gobble up portions of your estate. A plan gives you the ability to decide what’s going to happen to your estate after you’re gone.

Pat and Penny have set up trusts for their daughters. There are no grandchildren, so they decided to determine where their funds go after their daughters pass. In their words, “We’ve been able to ensure that the charities we love will be supported.”

Pat explains, “Underpinning all our giving decisions is commitment.” Penny wholeheartedly agrees!

Like Penny and Pat, you can use your estate plan to support Arden Wood. To find the gift that fits your charitable goals and financial needs, contact John Mitchell.



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