

## **JASA's PETS Project Receives Major Grant from Amie's Place Foundation**

The Jewish Association for Services for the Aged (JASA) is pleased to announce that it has received a grant of \$40,000 from Amie's Place Foundation to expand the Pets and Elder Team Support (PETS) Project within Manhattan. The PETS Project provides volunteer and financial support to help older adult pet owners keep their animal companions for as long as possible. The grant will enable the PETS Project to expand its program to serve up to 150 clients in Manhattan from Battery Park to 125<sup>th</sup> Street.

The Amie's Place Foundation grant will help JASA hire a new staff person to support the expansion and will ensure that more seniors are able to receive the critical pet assistance they need. The new social worker will act as a liaison to seniors living throughout Manhattan and will provide overall support to the PETS program.

JASA believes that companion pets play a crucial role in maintaining the mental and physical health of seniors, especially those living alone and with limited opportunities for social engagement. Seniors with pets suffer less from depression, require fewer doctors' visits, and have lower blood pressure than those without an animal companion. Although the benefits of pet ownership for seniors are great, many older adults have limited physical and financial resources, making it difficult to provide their pets with adequate ongoing care. JASA's PETS Project addresses this problem through the recruitment and mobilization of over 90 volunteers between the ages of 13 and 73 who perform basic pet care tasks for seniors in the program. The PETS Project has also built relationships with local pet care professionals and provides referrals for veterinarians or groomers. In addition to assistance with pet care tasks, PETS Project clients also receive clinical social work services and partial financial support for their pet care expenses.

Support from Amie's Place Foundation will better position JASA to provide much needed help and support to senior pet owners in Manhattan. By keeping seniors and pets together, JASA enables seniors to continue living independently in their homes and communities with dignity and autonomy.

### **About the Jewish Association for Services for the Aged (JASA)**

The Jewish Association for Services for the Aged was established in 1968 to identify and respond to the needs of the most vulnerable elderly regardless of race, religion or ethnicity. In the 40 years since its inception, JASA has developed a comprehensive and integrated network of services that provides a continuum of community care for seniors in New York City, Nassau, and Suffolk Counties, enabling seniors to remain in their communities longer. With 26 community-based senior centers and over 50 offices extending from New York City to Long Island, JASA and its affiliated home care and housing corporations constitute one of the largest community-based, voluntary social service agencies serving the aged in the United States, providing services to more than 55,000 elderly residents each year. In 1997, the Pets and Elder Team Support

(PETS) Project was created to address the needs of senior citizens who require assistance in caring for their pets due to frailty, illness, and/or inadequate income.

<http://www.jasa.org>

### **About Amie's Place Foundation**

Amie's Place Foundation was established to fund organizations that provide programs for people who need help caring for their pets, who risk losing them during times of crisis, and who face barriers limiting access to their pets when they most need each other. In light of the profound healing effect that pets have on individuals who are going through a difficult, sometimes life-changing event, the Foundation works to provide necessary pet-care assistance and to promote public awareness of the unique bond a beloved pet and its human companion share. Grants have funded the first senior center and hospital-based program in New York City and are models for replication by other institutions. Amie's Place Foundation has funded a limited number of programs which it believes can serve as best practice models for programs around the nation to prevent the unnecessary separation of people and pets who need each other.

<http://www.amiesplacefoundation.org>