



**FACES – (Finding a Cure for Epilepsy and Seizures) – at NYU Langone Comprehensive Epilepsy Center  
Awarded \$103,814 One-Year Grant From Amie's Place Foundation To Support  
The FACES Pet Relationship Project (PRP).**

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At FACES -- (Finding a Cure for Epilepsy and Seizures) -- we continue to work together to make a difference and improve the quality of life for all of those affected by epilepsy and seizures. As professionals dedicated to comprehensive holistic treatment protocols, we recognize that families with pets share a special relationship that also provides another healing treatment tool when struggling with catastrophic illness.

Based on discussions with Amie's Place Foundation, who funds organizations that create programs dedicated to keeping families and pets together, we designed a questionnaire to determine whether pet relationships are important to our families who are presently being treated for epilepsy or seizure disorder.

78% said that when they receive treatment, having their pet close by brings them great comfort. 50% of those questioned said that they live in the tri-state area and it would be helpful for them to have some pet-care assistance when caring for an ill family member.

FACES shared these valuable findings with Amie's Place and is pleased to announce that the Foundation has awarded FACES with a \$103,814 one-year grant to support the FACES Pet Relationship Project (PRP). A growing body of scientific research suggests that pets can have a positive healing impact on our health and quality of life. This study will examine a trial of children and/or adults with treatment resistant epilepsy and see how they respond to treatment while developing a pet relationship. A trial of 20 children and/or adults with treatment resistant epilepsy will decide on a pet of their choice. The patient/family will complete an application explaining why they want a pet and why they want to participate in this program. For the first 2 months, they will be randomized to receive a pet or not to receive a pet. (FACES will work with the ASPCA and the Humane Society to assist patients with pet adoption). Investigators will measure quality of life and mood ratings of all patients. After 2 months have passed, all patients receive the pet of their choice and will continue to be monitored for an additional 2 months. Medications will remain stable. The primary purpose would be to determine if those with treatment resistant epilepsy experience additional health

benefits from their pet relationships. We will collect data on all individuals every 2 months and perform a systematic interview to assess the impact of the pet on their lives.

FACES is looking to determine if those with epilepsy or seizure disorder experience additional healthy benefits from their relationship with a pet. Consistent with our goal to improve the quality of life for people with epilepsy, FACES seeks to identify and provide another healing treatment tool by promoting the animal-human bond.

This “first-of-its-kind”, FACES Pet Relationship Project (PRP) is in honor and recognition of John Gianutsos. Dr. Orrin Devinsky, Director, NYU Langone Comprehensive Epilepsy Center states, "John was a spectacular researcher, colleague, and inspirational friend. His pioneering work continues to improve the lives of many patients with neurological disorders." The relationship he shared with Dr. Devinsky reflects how deeply meaningful relationships, such as the human-animal bond, impact each other.

Additionally, Amie’s Place Foundation has allocated to FACES twenty-five (25) free six-year sponsored memberships, totaling \$6,250 from its grant to MedicAlert Foundation International, *“Keeping Families Connected Free Memberships Program for qualified pet owners”*. This will provide FACES epilepsy and seizure disorder patients - who are also pet owners - with 24/7 emergency services and medical ID’s which will ensure that their pets are taken care of should they face a crisis.

#### About FACES

FACES began when a group of parents, adult patients, and doctors came together in 1994 to advance research, clinical care, and education, and to tackle the social and behavioral problems that complicate epilepsy. Since its founding, FACES seeks to improve the quality of life for all people affected by epilepsy through research, education and awareness, and community-building events. Most importantly, we are committed to finding a cure. FACES is an organization affiliated with NYU Langone Medical Center and its Comprehensive Epilepsy Center. [www.nyufaces.org](http://www.nyufaces.org)

#### About Amie’s Place Foundation

It all began in 1982 in Long Beach, Long Island, with the exceptional work of Lewis Gelfand, DVM who provides pet care treatment and assistance for people too ill to care for their pets. Based on Dr. Gelfand’s work, Amie’s Place Foundation was established in New York City to fund organizations that provide programs for people who need help caring for their pets, who risk losing them during times of crisis, or 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 relationship a beloved pet and its human companion share. Grants have funded the first Senior Center and hospital-based programs at The Caring Community/1998 and St. Vincent's Hospital/2003 in Greenwich Village, New York City. Amie's Place Foundation has funded programs that include Beth Israel Hospital, JASA, Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals, MedicAlert Foundation International, PAWS NY, Search and Care and Schervier Nursing Care Center. The Foundation encourages national replication of programs that help prevent the unnecessary forced separation of people from their pets simply because no one is there to help them. [www.amiesplacefoundation.org](http://www.amiesplacefoundation.org)