



The Foundation for the National Institutes of Health Receives Grant from Amie's Place Foundation to Expand Research on the Benefits of Human-Animal Interaction

November 2, 2016 — [The Foundation for the National Institutes of Health \(FNIH\)](#) has received a \$165,000 grant award from [Amie's Place Foundation](#), a New York-based not-for-profit dedicated to keeping families and pets together, to help advance research on the therapeutic benefits of human-animal interaction (HAI) on human health and development. Such research is key to advancing our understanding of the relationships individuals have with pets in their home and communities as well as the therapeutic role animals can play in school and medical settings for special need and at-risk populations. The grant provides funding in support of the Request for Applications (RFA) issued by the [Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development \(NICHD\)](#) titled, "Animal-Assisted Interventions for Special Populations."

The research will examine the efficacy of the inclusion of animals in therapeutic interventions, rehabilitation and ongoing care for children and individuals with disabilities, neurological conditions, behavioral, emotional and mental health issues and related health outcomes, taking into account previous and existing relationships with pets in the home environment. The NICHD will announce the research grant recipients in the spring of 2017.

While conclusive evidence on the effectiveness of animal-assisted interventions is limited, previous studies have demonstrated that they promote healthy behavior and foster learning in special needs and at-risk populations. For example, physical and occupational therapy using horseback riding has shown to improve motor function, stability and muscular activity in children with cerebral palsy, and classroom-based programs have facilitated learning and social interactions for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. However, such studies rarely examine the past and current relationship these individuals have with a pet in the home. Through these grants, the NICHD will help move this research area beyond case studies to better determine the interventions most effective for specific populations and how relationships with pets in the home environment may influence the impact of these interventions.

About the Foundation for the National Institutes of Health

The Foundation for the National Institutes of Health creates and manages alliances with public and private institutions in support of the mission of the NIH, the world's premier medical

research agency. The Foundation, also known as the FNIH, works with its partners to accelerate biomedical research and strategies against diseases and health concerns in the United States and across the globe. The FNIH organizes and administers research projects; supports education and training of new researchers; organizes educational events and symposia; and administers a series of funds supporting a wide range of health issues. Established by Congress in 1990, the FNIH is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization. For additional information about the FNIH, please visit fnih.org.

About Amie's Place Foundation

It all began in 1982 in Long Beach, Long Island, with the exceptional work of Lewis Gelfand, D.V.M. 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 and is dedicated to supporting people who are at risk of losing their pets in times of crisis simply because no one is there to help them. In furtherance of this goal, Amie's Place Foundation supports programs that: provide pet-care assistance to help people through times of medical necessity to ensure they will not sacrifice their own health care needs because of concerns for the well-being of their pets; promote attention to the vital role that responsible companion-animal ownership plays within society and help overcome barriers that limit people's access to their pets when they need each other most; and support awareness that, when trying to survive illness and loss, the unique healing relationship between a beloved pet and its human companion can make a measurable difference in recovery. Amie's Place Foundation also seeks to support and promote national replication of successful programs that aim to prevent the forced and often unnecessary separation of people from their pets. For more information visit amiesplacefoundation.org.