



Colorado State University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences Partners with Amie's Place Foundation to Support the Pets Forever Program

June 2016, Fort Collins, Colo.

Colorado State University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences has been awarded a \$30,000 grant from Amie's Place Foundation, a New York-based not-for-profit foundation that funds organizations dedicated to keeping families and pets together.

Pets Forever is a non-profit program founded in 2009 which functions in partnership with Colorado State University to provide pet-care assistance at no charge for vulnerable community members with pets. It involves a collaborative effort among several local companies, organizations, and Colorado State University departments. In the words of Mark D. Stetter, D.V.M., D.A.C.Z.M., Dean & Professor of CVMBS, "At the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, we are passionate about improving the health of animals, people, and the planet through innovative teaching, research, outreach and clinical service. The grant from Amie's Place Foundation supports the College's mission."

The goal of Pets Forever is to preserve and promote the human-animal bond by helping low-income, elderly, and disabled Larimer County residents keep their pets as long as possible while improving the health and well-being of these pets and their human companions and providing a unique intergenerational service learning experience for undergraduates, graduates, and professional veterinary medical students at CSU. Additionally, the program will provide the framework and model for other academic institutions considering programs that can help meet the needs of the local community.

Numerous studies of the role of companion animals in the health and well-being of senior citizens and the disabled have shown that having a relationship with a pet in the home is associated with better overall physical and mental health and provides a meaningful sense of purpose. For example, people with pets are more physically active, require fewer medical appointments, have lower blood pressure than those without an animal companion and can also help lower the risk of depression, isolation, and anxiety. However, often low-income, senior, or disabled community members may have limited physical and financial resources, making it difficult to provide their pets with adequate, ongoing care. Pets Forever was created to address this problem by mobilizing volunteers to help Larimer County residents with their pet care needs.

The Pet Forever program focuses on providing in-home animal care, companion dog walking, transportation of animals to and from the veterinarian or groomer, and home delivery of pet food and supplies. It also offers limited financial support for veterinary care and other needs. Program volunteers, the majority of whom are CSU students, assist about 150 clients each semester. This unique, service-

learning experience matches undergraduates and graduates at CSU with local community members and their pets and forges intergenerational relationships built on compassion and assistance.

This grant from Amie's Place Foundation will help cover annual expenses for Pets Forever, including support for Pets Forever to become a model for other academic institutions considering programs to help meet the needs of the local community, one of the goals of Amie's Place Foundation.

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 to fund organizations providing programs for people who need assistance caring for their pets, risk losing them during times of crisis, or 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 encountering 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 Medical Center, Colorado State University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, FACES (Finding a Cure for Epilepsy and Seizures) at NYU Langone Medical Center, Hospice Savannah, JASA, Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals, MedicAlert Foundation International, PAWS NY, Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine--Center of the Human-Animal Bond, RedRover Domestic Violence Safe Housing Program, Schervier Nursing Care Center, Search and Care, and Sunnyside Community Services. 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.

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