



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sunnyside Community Services and Amie's Place Foundation Partner for a Third Year to Keep the Elderly and their Animal Companions Together

June 2016, Sunnyside, New York

Amie's Place Foundation, a New York-based not-for-profit Foundation that funds organizations dedicated to keeping families and pets together, has renewed funding for a third year to Sunnyside Community Services (SCS) to support its Pet Pals program, for a total of \$52,500 since the program's inception. Pet Pals is an innovative program that connects homebound seniors and family caregivers with local volunteers to provide assistance with pet care, such as regular walks and grooming, cleaning litterboxes, or taking the pet to vet appointments. Since 2014, SCS's dedicated Pet Pals volunteers have provided almost 500 hours of pet-care assistance visits to homebound seniors, making it possible for them to fully enjoy their pets and the company of volunteers, their new friends. With this third grant from Amie's Place Foundation, SCS can further expand the Pet Pals program to meet the growing need and continue providing comprehensive, quality-of-life services for seniors and their pets.

The family pet may provide more than companionship for older adults. Having a relationship with a pet has been linked to lower blood pressure for its human companion and also has been shown to reduce stress, and inspire more physical and mental activity. However, older adults may find themselves increasingly less able to satisfy the demands of taking care of their pet. While the well-known benefits of animal companionship are many, without help some people may find they have no other option except to give up their beloved animal companions. Thanks to Amie's Place Foundation and Sunnyside Community Services, the Pet Pals program and our dedicated

team of volunteers offer a solution, providing essential services to homebound seniors which helps ensure our seniors and their pets can safely stay together for as long as possible. In the event that a senior must enter the hospital for a short-term stay, Pet Pals volunteers also provide peace of mind by temporarily fostering their pet until they can return home.

SCS' Pet Pals volunteers not only look after the pets, but also our seniors. The program can help to connect our seniors with pets with other services through SCS, such as Meals on Wheels, the new CARE NYC program for family caregivers, or Adult Day programs. According to Sunnyside Community Services' Executive Director, Judy Zangwill, "Pet Pals allows for priceless acts of kindness that improve the quality of life for companion animals, seniors, and family caregivers on so many levels." CARE NYC a new SCS program for family caregivers, developed under the auspices of the recent grant from the State of New York's Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Initiative to support family members who care for family members living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

To volunteer or to get more information on the SCS Pet Pals program, call Sunnyside Community Services at (718) 784-6173 ext. 479, or email info@scsny.org.

About Sunnyside Community Services (SCS): SCS is multi-service, nonprofit organization that provides services to 14,000 people of all ages each year. SCS offers a range of life-enhancing programs for youth and families that include pre-kindergarten and after-school programs for children; college prep and career programs for teens and young adults, and adult literacy for English-language learners. For older adults SCS offers a lively center for active older adults providing hot meals and a variety of education and fitness options; caring and dedicated home care services; friendly visiting and Pet Pals; respite and resources for family caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's or chronic illness, a social adult day program, and more. For more information call (718) 784-6173 or visit www.scsny.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 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.

<http://www.amiesplacefoundation.org>

Media contact Danielle Gates Communications Coordinator dgates@redrover.org 916.429.2457 ext. 314.