

Sam's Hope Celebrates 6 Years of

“Keeping Pets & Their People Together”



Wendy, a poor homebound senior citizen, used to share her Meals on Wheels food with her 3 beloved dogs, leaving little more than canned soup and tuna for herself. But, since she has been receiving home-delivered pet food and supplies from Sam's Hope, Wendy is now meeting her own nutritional needs as well as those of her pups...and their transformation has been amazing! With proper and adequate nutrition, their eyes are shiny; their coats are glossy; they are happy, healthy and active; and they keep their mom mentally healthy. It's a win-win for all.

Ellie's cat, Charlotte, was suffering from severe dental problems for over a year, which resulted in considerable weight loss and pain. After a trip to the Sam's Hope vet for a checkup, dental cleaning and extractions, Charlotte is thriving, much to the delight of her elderly mom, who depends on Charlotte's love and companionship.

Social isolation, especially among seniors is a common problem. A recent study shows that regular interaction with pets not only alleviates feeling of loneliness but brings much joy to senior pet owners.

Of the many millions of dogs and cats surrendered to shelters or abandoned each year in the United States, approximately a million of the surrenders or abandonments were due to the owners' financial inability to provide for the basic needs of their pets, such as pet food and veterinary care.

Sam's Hope is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to saving the lives of companion animals by keeping those facing economic and health challenges and their pets together through our Pet Food, Veterinary Care Assistance and Home-Delivered Pet Food Programs.

Sam's Hope was founded by Marianne Iaquinto in February 2013, inspired by her beloved Shih Tzu, Samantha, as well as her awareness of the economic climate that forces many pet parents to surrender or abandon their pets.

“It's hard to believe that 6 years have passed since we made our first pet food delivery to Jesus Focus Ministry Food Pantry in Southampton,” Marianne says, “and the progress we've made as an organization. Though we have come a long way since, we have barely scratched the surface of the need that exists in our backyard, especially amongst the poor elderly and their beloved pets.”

In its 6 years of operation, Sam's Hope has distributed 550,000+ pounds of pet food to 20,000+ pets, awarded 361 veterinary care assistance grants, and provided home-delivered pet food and supplies to 322 pets of both homebound

and low-income elderly, ill, disabled and unemployed pet parents in Bucks, Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties.

Marianne points out that the benefit to a pet of staying with his or her family is obvious—a safe place to live and thrive. The alternative is not desirable: approximately 6 to 8 million dogs and cats enter overcrowded shelters each year, and up to 5 million more are abandoned. Shelters are a last stop for about 50% of the animals that end up there, since only 50% are reclaimed or adopted; the rest, unfortunately, are euthanized.

The benefit to pet owners who keep their pets is immeasurable. As Dr. Edward Creagan, an oncologist at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, puts it: “A pet is a medication without side effects that has so many benefits. I can't always explain it myself, but for years now I've seen how instances of how having a pet is like an effective drug. It really does help people.”

And while pets benefit all who love them by providing comfort, companionship, affection and unconditional love, Sam's Hope believes that the elderly, especially those who are homebound with little contact with the outside world, benefit the most—and research backs this up.

Studies have shown that senior citizens who are pet owners are four times less likely to be diagnosed as clinically depressed than those who don't own a pet. They are also less likely to be lonely or have feelings of isolation, and they make fewer trips to the doctor and have fewer minor health problems. This is due to the feeling of being needed and having another being to care for—a reason to get up in the morning and a reason for going on.

Sam's Hope was created in honor of Marianne's dear Samantha, who passed away on May 10, 2012 at the age of 11. She had many health issues throughout her life. Thankfully, Marianne was able to provide her with all of the care and love she needed until the very end. It is the mission of everyone at Sam's Hope to ensure that all pets can live as Samantha did—in a loving forever home with uncompromised care.



If you are in need of help for your pet, please visit www.samshope.org and complete an application for assistance. If you would like to help the organization in its mission to save Southeastern PA's pets, you can donate using PayPal at www.samshope.org.