



For immediate release

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AARF Starts Silver Paws for Seniors

Innovative foster program matches mature pets with mature adults

Research has shown that caring for pets brings significant physical and mental health benefits to senior citizens. The Silver Paws Program, organized by Atlanta Animal Rescue Friends Inc. (AARF), connects mature pet lovers with homeless mature pets. Providing foster care and, in many cases, permanent homes for these cats and dogs allows program participants to reap physical and health benefits.

A recent study of patients suffering heart attacks revealed that those with pets were four times as likely survive than those without pets. In addition, petting a dog or a cat has been linked to lower blood pressure and even help calm arthritic inflammation. Walking a dog can improve muscle tone and flexibility. Caring for a pet can provide an increased sense of purpose and usefulness for retirees and mature adults. A 2003 study revealed that interactions with pets increases serotonin (the “happy” hormone) and decreased cortisol (the “stress” hormone).

Unfortunately, many retired and elderly pet lovers are hesitant to own pets because of the costs of veterinary services, food and supplies. Many mature adults who could provide loving homes are also worried about the fate of a dog or cat if they can no longer care for the pet. As a result, many seniors forego the joy and companionship of a pet. Meanwhile, homeless mature pets are almost always overlooked at shelters, even though they often make the best pets—they are generally calmer and gentler than their younger, friskier counterparts.

Part of AARF’s overall foster program network, Silver Paws foster parents participate in foster orientations and trainings with other fosters, which can serve as an antidote to the isolation many mature adults face. The program covers the cost of veterinary care, food and supplies for the foster pets, alleviating the financial concerns that are common.

Since it may take months or years for an older pet to become adopted, the program allows Silver Paws foster parents to become permanent caretakers for their pets. In these cases, the program will continue to pay for costs associated with the pet, but the dog or cat will no longer be available for adoption. The pet will remain in the care of the foster for the remainder of the pet’s life, or until the

foster can no longer care for the pet. This provides a caring, permanent home for a mature pet and a loving companion for a mature adult.

For more information on the Silver Paws Program, visit www.SilverPawsProgram.org. To support this program, send a donation to Atlanta Animal Rescue Friends, Inc., P.O. Box 5336, Atlanta, GA 31107 and designate the Silver Paws Program as the beneficiary of your donation.

Atlanta Animal Rescue Friends Inc. (AARF), founded in 2002, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit animal welfare organization licensed by the state of Georgia. AARF is run solely on adoption fees, private donations and charitable grants, without government support. All donations are tax-deductible. For more information, visit www.aarfatlanta.org or call (678) 318-1886.