

## **FLAGLER COUNTY SENIOR SERVICES RECEIVES \$1,000 GRANT FROM MEALS ON WHEELS AMERICA TO SUPPORT CLIENT PET SUPPORT PROGRAM**

*Much-Needed Funding Helps Keep Flagler County Seniors and Their Pets Together*

Knowing that seniors with pets are 36% less likely to report loneliness and have 21% fewer doctor visits\*, Senior Services is proud to announce that it has received a \$1,000 grant from Meals on Wheels America to support its client pet support program. Funding will be used to provide food, supplies and care for Flagler clients with pets – all of which can be financially and physically burdensome.

In total, Meals on Wheels America has granted \$300,000 to 162 local Meals on Wheels programs through the *Meals on Wheels Loves Pets* initiative this year. Funding is made possible in part through a donation from Banfield Charitable Trust (BCT), who in October of 2015, handed over all funding and grants administration responsibilities for their popular Pet Assistance Grant Program to Meals on Wheels America. To date, the grant program has distributed more than \$2.1 million in funding and pet food donations to over 300 local Meals on Wheels programs across the nation.

“The *Meals on Wheels Loves Pets* initiative is just another way that Meals on Wheels can deliver so much more than just a meal,” said Meals on Wheels America President and CEO Ellie Hollander. “Through grant funding, educational opportunities and in-kind donations for our member programs, we hope to grow current pet programs and help those looking to start new ones.”

Along with its meals on wheels program, Senior Services provides non-medical in-home services (homemaking, personal care, and respite), adult day care, transportation, case management, congregate dining and recreation at the George Wickline Senior Center, counseling and information and referral. An energy assistance program is also in place to assist seniors, 60 years and over, with FPL bills. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8 AM – 5 PM. First time callers with program and service questions can call 386-586-2324 x 324.

Meals on Wheels America is the oldest and largest national organization supporting the more than 5,000 community-based programs across the country that are dedicated to addressing senior isolation and hunger. This network exists in virtually every community in America and, along with more than two million staff and volunteers, delivers the nutritious meals, friendly visits and safety checks that enable America’s seniors to live nourished lives with independence and dignity. By providing funding, leadership, education, research and advocacy support, Meals on Wheels America empowers its local member programs to strengthen their communities, one senior at a time. For more information, or to find a Meals on Wheels provider near you, visit [www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org](http://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org).

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\*Sources: Stanley, I. H., Conwell, Y., Bowen, C., & Van Orden, K. A. (2014). Pet Ownership may Attenuate Loneliness Among Older Adult Primary Care Patients Who Live Alone. *Aging & Mental Health*, 18(3), 394–399. <http://doi.org/10.1080/13607863.2013.837147>; Siegel, J.M.

(1990). Stressful life events and use of physician services among the elderly: The moderating role of pet ownership. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 58, 1081-1086.

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