SUPPORTING SOCIAL CONNECTION FOR OLDER ADULTS

PETS PROVIDE OLDER ADULTS WITH VITAL SOCIAL CONNECTION.

1 IN 3 ADULTS AGE 60+
FEEL LONELY.

THE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF SOCIAL ISOLATION INCLUDE:

- ANXIETY
- DEPRESSION
- CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE
- COGNITIVE DECLINE
- LOWER QUALITY OF LIFE
- INCREASED USE OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES

PET ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

OLDER ADULTS ARE AT A HIGH RISK OF SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS.

1 IN 4 SENIORS LIVE ALONE.
56% of Meals on Wheels home-delivered meal clients live alone

1 IN 3 ADULTS AGE 60+
FEEL LONELY.

PETS IMPROVE THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH OF THEIR HUMAN CAREGIVERS.

- IMPROVED CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH
- INCREASED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
- INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERACTION
- STRONGER COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

“I can’t imagine life without Ruby. She is always here to cheer me up and keep me company.”

MEALS ON WHEELS CLIENTS HAVE STRONG BONDS WITH THEIR PETS, REPORTING IMPROVED WELL-BEING AND DECREASED LONELINESS.

- 100% believe their pet brings happiness to their life
- 100% feel that their pet is a member of their family
- 98% say their pet makes them feel less lonely
- 97% say their pet comforts them when they have bad feelings
- 96% feel their pet makes them healthier

CLIENTS WITH PETS REPORTED HIGHER SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS THAN CLIENTS WITHOUT PETS.
SENIORS STRUGGLE TO CARE FOR THEIR ANIMAL COMPANIONS.

The most needed services are PET FOOD, VACCINATIONS, NAIL TRIMMING and ASSISTANCE IN LIFTING FOOD.

1 IN 2 CLIENTS reported being unable to access either preventative or sick/emergency veterinary care.

| 45% | were unable to get PREVENTATIVE CARE for their pets |
| 22% | were unable to get SICK OR EMERGENCY CARE for their pets |

The primary barriers to accessing veterinary care are COST & TRANSPORTATION

SENIORS PET OWNERS CAN FACE IMPOSSIBLE CHOICES.

OLDER ADULTS MAKE HEARTBREAKING SACRIFICES TO CARE FOR THEIR PETS.

MORE THAN 1 IN 5 reported going without food themselves to feed their pets.

“I am on a fixed income, and it is very hard for me to keep food on the table for myself, let alone my dog.”

29% have gone without necessities for themselves—such as MEDICAL CARE, PAYING BILLS, UTILITIES—to provide for their pets.

MEALS ON WHEELS PET PROGRAMS KEEP OLDER ADULTS AND THEIR PETS TOGETHER.

1 IN 2 CLIENTS have no one outside of Meals on Wheels to help them with their pets.

“I am so blessed to have found her. I think we both needed each other, and I give thanks for her every day.”

44% of Meals on Wheels Members provide PET SERVICES.

97% of clients say that Meals on Wheels support makes it possible TO KEEP THEIR PET.

MEALS ON WHEELS PET SERVICES VARY BY PROGRAM BUT MAY INCLUDE:
- PET FOOD
- SUPPLIES (cat litter, leashes, treats, toys, etc.)
- VETERINARY CARE
- GROOMING
- EMERGENCY BOARDING
- DOG WALKING

SUPPORT MEALS ON WHEELS PET PROGRAMS TODAY.

Information data sources available at www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/facts. © September 2023 Meals on Wheels America