



Council on Aging- Meals on Wheels offers Kibbles of Kindness Program

The Council on Aging Meals on Wheels Program currently serves over 260,000 meals a year to seniors in Sonoma County. We found many seniors were sharing their Meals on Wheels Meals with their beloved pets. Since 2012, through the generous support of our sponsors, Western Farm Center and Banfield Charitable Trust, the Council on Aging had been providing the Kibbles of Kindness program to area seniors who cannot afford to purchase pet food.

It is proven that seniors rely on their pets for the emotional support, love and companionship they provide, and the resulting studies have shown that owning and handling animals significantly benefits health and wellness in the senior population. In fact, pets may help elderly owners live longer, healthier, and more enjoyable lives. There are a number of explanations for exactly how pets accomplish all these health benefits. First of all, pets need walking, feeding, grooming, fresh water, and fresh kitty litter, and they encourage lots of playing and petting. All of these activities require some action from owners. Even if it's just getting up to let a dog out a few times a day or brushing a cat, any activity can benefit the cardiovascular system and help keep joints limber and flexible. Consistently performing this kind of minor exercise can keep pet owners able to carry out the normal activities of daily living. Pets may also aid seniors simply by providing some physical contact. Studies have shown that when people pet animals, their blood pressure, heart rate, and temperature decrease.

Many benefits of pet ownership are less tangible, though. Pets are an excellent source of companionship, for example. They can act as a support system for older people who don't have any family or close friends nearby to act as a support system. Studies showed that people with pets were better able to remain emotionally stable during crises than those without. Pets can also work as a buffer against social isolation. Often the elderly have trouble leaving home, so they don't have a chance to see many people. Pets give them a chance to interact. This can help combat depression, one of the most common medical problems facing seniors today. The responsibility of caring for an animal may also give the elderly a sense of purpose, a reason to get up in the morning. Pets also help seniors stick to regular routines of getting up in the morning, buying groceries, and going outside, which help motivate them to eat and sleep regularly and well.

Kibbles of Kindness Program: The Council on Aging will provide dog or cat food monthly for seniors who cannot afford to buy pet food.

Requirement: Senior participants must be on the Meals on Wheels Program to receive pet food through the Kibbles of Kindness Program.



WESTERN FARM CENTER
21 West 7th St. Santa Rosa, CA
707-545-0721