

For Immediate Release

Animal Medical Center Hosts 11th Annual Living Legends Luncheon: Event Honors Companion Animals Who Overcame Major Health Challenges

(New York, N.Y. – May 14, 2019) The Animal Medical Center (AMC) held its 11th Annual Living Legends Luncheon on May 7th, honoring companion animals who survived challenging health issues, thanks to their owners' love and commitment, along with the exceptional care and treatment they received from the specialists at AMC's Cardiology and Surgery Services.

The event was co-chaired by Dorothy Goldstein, Alison Minton, Kane Nussbaum, Joanne Ronson, Carol Sandow, and Janet York. Guests included Nancy Kissinger, Donna Acquavella, Elaine Langone, Emilia Saint-Amand Krimindahl, Ellen Marcus, Tina Santi Flaherty, Roy Zuckerberg and Tara Kelleher.

This year's Living Legends honorees are:

- **Oliver**, a mixed breed puppy, was diagnosed with a rare congenital heart defect and referred to AMC's Cardiology Service for evaluation. The team embarked on an innovative, high-risk surgery, which proved to be very successful. Today, Oliver is a happy, healthy and energetic member of his family.

- **Flapjack**, a domestic shorthair feline, developed a serious chest infection, which resulted in two hospitalizations. Flapjack was referred to AMC's Emergency Service, where a CT scan revealed that Flapjack had an abscess near his esophagus, a condition unheard of in cats and rarely seen in dogs. Thanks to AMC's Surgical Service, Flapjack underwent a first-of-its-kind surgical procedure, which was a complete success.

The second Jackie Santi Flaherty Award for Courage was presented to Lola, a sweet Havanese, who was rushed to AMC's Emergency Service with convulsions resulting from hypoglycemia. Further diagnostic testing revealed a malignant pancreatic mass, which was removed by AMC's Surgery Service. Over the next two years, Lola underwent chemotherapy treatments at the Cancer Institute at AMC. Today, Lola is healthy, with no evidence of cancer.

“The Living Legends Luncheon is a wonderful event because it provides AMC with a distinctive setting to showcase a few examples of the extraordinary work that goes on at our hospital every day,” said Kathryn Coyne, Chief Executive Officer of AMC. “This event is also a celebration and recognition of the amazing bond that exists between people and their pets.”

AMC's Living Legends Honorees

OLIVER, a mixed breed puppy, was adopted at eight weeks from a North Carolina rescue group. The entire family, including another dog named Harper, instantly fell in love with Oliver. Although eating and drinking well, Oliver wasn't growing as he should. Then, at the age of 16 weeks, Oliver's belly became unusually swollen, so the family took him to the local veterinarian. Following extensive testing, it was determined that Oliver had a very rare congenital heart defect, in which a chamber of his heart that should have been a single chamber was divided into two by a large membrane. There was a hole in the membrane, but it was too small to allow blood to flow normally from Oliver's abdomen to his heart, so his body was deprived of the oxygen and nutrients it needed to grow healthy and strong. Oliver's veterinarian recommended specialty care at AMC. After reviewing the test results, Dr. Philip Fox, head of Cardiology, told the family that very few attempts had ever been made to repair this type of defect, but he believed that AMC had the expertise and technology to save Oliver's life. Dr. Fox and his team embarked on an innovative high-risk surgery, in which a very small catheter was passed from a vein in Oliver's leg up to his heart. They used fluoroscopic and echocardiographic guidance to identify the tiny hole and place the tip of the catheter inside. Once inside, a balloon was inflated at the tip of the catheter, and its tiny cutting surfaces widened the opening to allow for normal blood flow. Four months later, Oliver has doubled in weight. His symptoms are completely resolved, and he's a happy, energetic member of the family. Lisa, Oliver's owner, understands how fortunate they are to have found AMC. "We absolutely believe that this was the only place that we could have gotten this outcome. Anywhere else, and I don't think he would have made it."

FLAPJACK, a two-year-old male domestic shorthair feline, was rescued by "Paul the Cat Guy, Inc.," a rescue group located in Queens. Flapjack adjusted easily to his foster home, but soon stopped eating, was out of breath and seemed lethargic. Paul took him to the local veterinarian. Flapjack was diagnosed with a serious infection in his chest, given antibiotics, and hospitalized so that tubes could be inserted to drain a large build-up of fluid around his lungs. Flapjack recovered and returned home, but the symptoms reappeared after a few weeks. The protocol of hospitalization, chest tubes, and antibiotics was repeated, but when his infection could not be cleared, the vet sent Flapjack to the ER at AMC. A CT scan at AMC revealed that Flapjack's persistent infection was secondary to an abscess (a cystic mass of infection very near his accessory lung lobe) adjacent to the esophagus. Although this condition had never previously been seen in a cat, and is only rarely seen in dogs, AMC's surgical team had a solution. Flapjack underwent surgery to open his chest and remove the abscess. The first-of-its-kind procedure was successful, and Flapjack was able to return home after three days, where he was lovingly fostered until his adoption was finalized. Flapjack is a social media star and his medical bills were paid entirely through the generosity of his followers, including Kristin, his adoptive owner, who waited patiently throughout his health scare until Flapjack could move to his forever home.

The Jackie Santi Flaherty Award for Courage

When a friend found Lola tied to a bench, and abandoned in Central Park, Dominique willingly took Lola in until a permanent home could be found for her. Lola, a Havanese, followed

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Dominique everywhere, even into bed, where she snuggled against Dominique's neck that very first night. That was it. Despite being told by her husband and others that she was crazy (they already had a German shepherd), Dominique was hooked and not long after, so was her husband. One morning in March of 2015, Dominique awoke to find Lola next to her having convulsions. Dominique rushed Lola to AMC's ER. When the convulsions recurred the next day, they returned to AMC, where Lola was found to be hypoglycemic (having low blood sugar). Further testing detected a pancreatic mass. Lola was transferred to AMC's Surgery service for removal of the mass, which was later found to be an aggressive form of pancreatic cancer. Lola was referred to AMC's Oncology service, where Dr. Nicole Leibman, Director of the Cancer Institute, started her on chemotherapy. Lola underwent chemotherapy treatment for two years, first in pill form, then through injections to avoid adverse kidney effects. Lola has now been off chemotherapy for over a year and has had no evidence of the cancer recurring. There have been a couple of bumps along the way, including a bout of pancreatitis and an ACL tear, but Lola, the "miracle" dog, has come through it all with great success, thanks to the Cancer Institute at AMC and her loving and devoted owners.

About Animal Medical Center

The Animal Medical Center is the world's largest non-profit animal hospital with 100+ veterinarians providing the highest quality medical care across 17 specialties. AMC's pioneering clinical research advances veterinary knowledge, and our education programs train the next generation of veterinary leaders and provide pet owners with quality pet health information. AMC is proud to offer our services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To learn more, visit: www.amcny.org

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