

**For Immediate Release**

**Animal Medical Center Presents 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Living Legends Awards With Virtual Celebration**

*Honoring Companion Animals Who Overcame Major Health Issues*

(New York, N.Y. – May 4, 2021) The Animal Medical Center (AMC) presented its 13th Annual Living Legends Awards today, honoring pets who overcame significant health challenges thanks to the life-saving care they received at AMC, along with their owner’s love and commitment. The tribute to this year’s legends can be viewed at: [www.amcny.org/LivingLegends2021](http://www.amcny.org/LivingLegends2021).

The 2021 Benefit Co-Chairs are: Donna Acquavella, Tina Santi Flaherty, Laura Garner, Nancy Kissinger, Sharon Amsterdam Koplín, Emilia S. Krimendahl, Elaine Langone, Robert Liberman, Ellen Marcus, Marianne Mebane, Elizabeth Moore, Katharine Rayner, Lisa Schiff, Ann Tisch, and Janet York.

“I am honored to share these very special Living Legend stories; they are a true example of the importance of the human-animal bond. These pets survived incredible odds thanks to their veterinarians, care teams, and the dedication of their families,” said Kathryn Coyne, President and Chief Executive Officer of AMC. “Particularly during the pandemic, these heroic efforts are an inspiration to animal lovers everywhere.”

The 2020 Living Legends honorees are:

**Mina** is a beautiful five-year-old Domestic Shorthair cat. When she arrived at AMC’s ER, Mina had trouble breathing, her gums were blue, and she was in distress. A CT scan revealed fluid in her chest that caused scar tissue to surround her lungs. This scar tissue prevented her lungs from expanding, making it impossible for Mina to breathe. She was diagnosed with chronic chylothorax, a condition that has no reported medical or successful surgical interventions. Mina’s parents elected to move forward with surgery, despite the seemingly insurmountable odds. Dr. Dan Spector and his team performed open-chest surgery and removed all the scar tissue encasing Mina’s heart. Mina came through surgery and spent the next week in AMC’s ICU with daily improvement.

Mina is the “first cat” to ever survive this surgery for this disease, and her case has been written up for a veterinary medical journal. Mina’s miracle survival will offer hope to other cats and their families when faced with this disease.

**Newton**, a sweet 14-year-old soft-coated Wheaten Terrier, almost lost her life due to several recent life-threatening diseases, compounded by a previous history of inflammatory bowel disease, kidney disease, and hypothyroidism. At the start of the pandemic, Newton had progressively lost the ability to walk on her hindlegs, resulting from a large blood clot in her aorta diagnosed through an ultrasound by AMC’s Radiology Specialists. The clot was obstructing almost all of Newton’s aorta. AMC’s Interventional Radiology Specialist, Dr. Chick Weisse, performed a procedure that has never been done before - he placed a stent in her aorta, which allowed blood to flow normally again, giving Newton a new chance at life.

Although still paralyzed in her back legs, AMC's Rehab team was able to slowly strengthen her muscles and nerve connections and, after just a few months, Newton miraculously regained the ability to walk and engage in her favorite activity of hunting squirrels in Central Park. But soon after, Newton was back at AMC's ER with trouble breathing. She was diagnosed with arrhythmia, which required immediate intervention. Due to Newton's prior history, she was also a very high-risk anesthetic and surgical patient, so AMC's Anesthesiology Specialist, Dr. Melissa Smith, had to develop a special protocol for the surgery. AMC Cardiology Specialist Dr. Philip Fox performed a surgical technique, which he pioneered, using a special trans-diaphragmatic pacemaker. By the time Newton made it to the OR, she was in full congestive heart failure. Any other dog undergoing cardiac surgery during congestive heart failure, with a history of aortic clots, would probably have died. But Newton did well and went home with a good quality of life. Then, Newton was diagnosed with large cell lymphoma. Despite her high risk for complications, Newton has been doing well during her chemotherapy treatments and is now in remission.

AMC Resident, Dr. Madison McKay and AMC's Internal Medicine team have been managing Newton's care. You may not believe that it would be possible to still be alive with all these problems, but Newton is thriving. She shows up twice weekly to rehab at AMC, she walks in the underwater treadmill, and balances on physio balls. Newton is a true miracle. Newton's story is a perfect illustration of the exceptional teamwork of a truly interdisciplinary team at AMC as they collaborated on her extremely complicated case. While it is a testament to the care Newton received, the dedication of her owner, and her own strength and character, it is even more notable because it all occurred during the height of the COVID pandemic.

### **Jackie Santi Flaherty Award for Courage**

**Rosa** is a beautiful 10-year-old Yellow Labrador Retriever Guide Dog. She was trained to be a Guide Dog for the first two years of her life. When Rosa went to her forever Mom, Jasmin, she was provided with lifelong veterinary care at AMC through The Frank V.D. Lloyd Fund for Guide Dogs.

Over the next six years, Rosa tirelessly guided Jasmin every day. They lived together, ate together, played together, and they were happy together. During a routine wellness visit at AMC, doctors felt enlarged lymph nodes and ran a battery of tests. Rosa was diagnosed with Large B-Cell Lymphoma. Jasmin agreed to intensive chemotherapy which Rosa handled incredibly well. In fact, she went into remission without any side effects. Rosa was able to go out every day, live and work with Jasmin and lead a normal life. Rosa's cancer returned and she underwent a second round of chemotherapy, which ended successfully in January 2021. Typically, the prognosis for dogs with this type of lymphoma is about a year, but it has been two and a half years, and Rosa is doing very well. Rosa spent six years taking care of her forever Mom, Jasmin. Now, Jasmin has devoted the last year to take care of Rosa, the special Guide Dog who has given so much.

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## About Animal Medical Center

The Animal Medical Center (AMC) is the world's largest non-profit animal hospital with 100+ veterinarians providing the highest quality medical care across more than 20 specialties and services, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Our mission to provide the best in care, research, and education has been the foundation of our work for over a century. Learn more at [www.amcny.org](http://www.amcny.org).



**MINA**



**NEWTON**



**ROSA**

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