

# The Pet Project

Pets & People Together Forever



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www.ThePetProjectFL.org  
www.RescueBank.org

## Our History

The Pet Project for Pets began in 2002, born of the belief that companion animals should remain with their families who love and need them. At that time, people who were diagnosed with HIV/AIDS were being advised by social workers they would have to surrender their companion animals because their disability benefits would not allow for the luxury of keeping them.

In many cases these heartbroken people would forgo buying their medications in order to feed their pets as there were no social programs that would help them. Facing a life-threatening illness is difficult enough and no one should have to choose between medicine and giving up their best friend. Over time, it became known that others were dealing with the same sad predicament. Senior citizens and people who were terminally ill or disabled were choosing to feed their beloved companion animals with the money they needed for their own necessities and were refusing medical attention for fear of losing their cherished companion. In 2007 we expanded our services to include providing for and fostering the companion animals of people with disabilities, serious illnesses and advanced aging.

The success of the expansion gave birth to many more new ideas for growth and partnerships benefiting the clients of the Pet Project. In 2010 a partnership with the Humane Society of Broward County allowed the Pet Project to provide vouchers to their clients for free pet vaccinations and reduced veterinarian services. In 2011 a three year relationship was established with Natural Balance Pet Food allowing us to serve more clients. In 2012 a gift/grant from the Petco Foundation of \$55,000 was awarded, allowing the purchase of a box truck for increased hauling and distribution of pet food.

2015 marked an historic advancement in the undeniable growth and admirable benefit that the Pet Project was bringing to the Broward and Miami/Dade residents. The Rescue Bank, a national nonprofit organization that works with pet food companies to distribute their donated pet food and supplies to approved 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations throughout the country, selected the Pet Project as their Florida affiliate. The Pet Project receives, warehouses and distributes this donated product for the Rescue Bank to approved Florida 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations. As one of Rescue Bank's approved organizations, the Pet Project is able to acquire a portion of the donated products, providing substantial savings in the cost of pet food and supplies distributed to clients of the Pet Project. Thanks to this relationship, the Pet Project is able to support a pet in the 'Keeping Pets with Their People' program for only \$250 a year, much less than either the average cost of pet ownership or the expense to taxpayers of maintaining them in shelters.

Now serving nearly 2,500 clients in Broward and Miami-Dade counties, the Pet Project for Pets is one of the largest pet retention organizations in South Florida and dedicated to keeping people and their pets together. Preserving the human/animal bond improves the quality of life for both. These families would, otherwise, have no other option but to relinquish their beloved pet to a shelter. Surrendering a pet has the double detriment of not only grieving the loss of a "family member" but also the reality of a pet's unknown future in an overcrowded shelter.

***The Pet Project for Pets strives to keep pets in their homes with the people who love them most.***



**Our Board of Directors** consists of six very dedicated members. All donate substantially to the Pet Project for Pets. The Board is active in fundraising and planning. Each Board Member creates and oversees one fundraising event per year which is a very good way for the Board members to stay in touch with our supporters and be part of our outreach efforts, make new friends and show the community that we are a united team at the Pet Project for Pets. The Board of Directors meets on the first Wednesday of each month except August.

**Paul Gallucio, Board of Directors, CEO/Chair (Board member since 2009)**

Paul is a multi-faceted business investor nationally. He brings 45+ years of investments knowledge and experience to the Board. He splits his time as a Ft. Lauderdale / New York resident overseeing his investments. He is a "Hands On" CEO and has a dedicated strong focus on the continued financial stability and program growth of The Pet Project through the utilization of consistently effective business management strategies.



**Michael Camardello, Board of Directors, Secretary (Board member since 2013)**

Michael is a successful Realtor in South Florida as well as an accomplished investor and brings 30+ years of strategic investing and selling experience to the organization. Michael coordinates multiple fundraisers for the organization and is an active volunteer. He is dedicated to assisting with the development and monitoring of operating budgets as well as maintaining the financial stability of The Pet Project.

**Robert Russotto, Board of Directors, Treasurer (Board member since 2019)**

Robert is a successful Realtor. Born and raised in Broward County, his home is designated as a national wildlife habitat. He was also in banking for 13 years prior to obtaining his real estate license in 1994. Robert has been a volunteer for The Pet Project for five years and raises money annually for the Push Ups for Pets event. He is dedicated to maintaining the financial stability of The Pet Project.



**Rex Vacca, Board of Directors (Board member since 2016)**

As past president of Wilton Manors Westside, Rex developed many events including Garlic Palooza, that built community involvement. As a Pre-Planning Advisor, he has devoted his expertise in assisting individuals with their final legacy planning. Additionally he co-authored the "Pet Legacy Plan" which was launched September 2017.

**Deidra Bergmann, DO, FACOS, Board of Directors (Board member since 2007)**

Deidra is a retired Physician and General Surgeon. Post retirement she invests her time volunteering for multiple pet and animal welfare organizations. Additionally, she focuses on LGBTQ causes and HIV/AIDS related organizations.



**Don Sanders, Board of Directors (Board member since 2017)**

Don is Vice President of Marketing for one of the nations largest multifamily housing tax credit developers and brings 20+ years of national marketing experience to the Board. As a Wilton Manors resident, he actively represents The Pet Project at fundraisers, on the Broward & Miami-Dade LGBT Chamber of Commerce. His focus is on continued development and improvement of marketing communications for The Pet Project.

**Sue Martino, Board of Directors / Executive Director (Board member since 2008)**

Sue Martino, Executive Director of The Pet Project for Pets, holds the only salaried position of this organization. Sue is an accomplished Realtor in New York and South Florida. As Executive Director of The Pet Project, Sue is responsible for recruiting, managing and organizing events and a multitude of volunteers. Sue was recently appointed to the Broward County Animal Care Advisory Board by Senator Nan Rich.



# You Can Help

Make a Tax Deductible Donation

Shop with Smile. Amazon and make us your Charity of Choice

Volunteer Your Time and Talent

Attend and Support our Events

Organize a Fundraiser

Host a House Party

Tell Your Friends

Bequeath to the Pet Project in your Will or Estate Planning

Donate and Shop at:



**Hidden Treasures**  
THRIFT BOUTIQUE

All Sales Benefit:

## The Pet Project

Pets & People Together Forever



The Pet Project for Pets, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) organization founded in 2002. To learn more about the impact the Pet Project has in preserving the bond between people and their pets, please visit our website:

[www.ThePetProjectFL.org](http://www.ThePetProjectFL.org)

## Let's Keep In Touch

Find us on Social Media:



@PetProjectForPets



@PetProject4Pets



@PetProject4Pets



@PetProjectForPets

Subscribe to our email updates:  
[www.thepetprojectfl.org/join.html](http://www.thepetprojectfl.org/join.html)

The Pet Project for Pets, Inc.  
Headquarters, Food Bank and  
Hidden Treasures Thrift Store  
2200 NW 9th Ave. (Powerline Rd.)  
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(954) 568-5678

## PEOPLE and PETS TOGETHER FOREVER



# The Pet Project

Pets & People Together Forever



## Pet Retention

## Surrender Prevention

## Adoption Innovations



## What Would YOU Do?

Imagine being in such financial despair that you could not afford to feed your pet and the only option was to surrender that beloved companion to an animal shelter. This would be an unthinkable predicament for any pet owner but it is a grim reality for thousands of people and their pets every year in South Florida.

Pet owners with limited income who are elderly, disabled or seriously ill are faced with this dilemma every day. Often their pet is the only friend or “family” they have left in their lives. Being forced to surrender a pet carries a double detriment of the grief endured by the owner and the trauma experienced by the animal when they are admitted to a shelter. Moreover, the shelters are already occupied at their maximum with dogs and cats waiting to be adopted and, sadly, not all will be placed in their own homes.



## Who We Help

Pet owners who are living on fixed incomes such as seniors relying on Social Security, disabled, seriously ill or those temporarily impacted by a catastrophic event or economic crisis are qualified to apply for assistance from the Pet Project. Once enrolled, their pets will be provided with food, supplies, vaccines and reduced cost veterinary care when needed for the rest of the pet’s life. If a pet outlives their owner, the Pet Project will find them another home and continue to provide for their needs for the rest of that pet’s life.



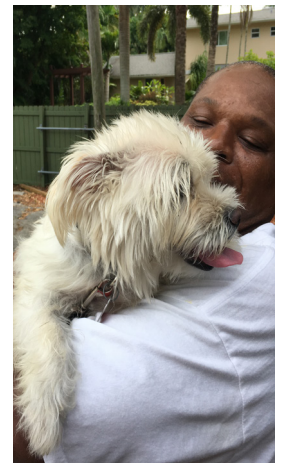
## How We Help

The Pet Project for Pets is the rescue before the rescue. By providing pet food, supplies, vaccines and veterinary care as needed, The Pet Project has enabled thousands of pets to stay in their homes with the people who love them most and out of overcrowded shelters where their future would be uncertain.



## Why We Help

The Pet Project keeps people and their pets together - *forever!* Countless studies have concluded that the bond between people and their pets is vital to physical and emotional wellbeing. Caring for a pet improves the quality of life for both.



# PET PROJECT

## ANNUAL REPORT 2019

### WHO HELPED US

On behalf of all the pet project pets and their people, a sincere Thank You:

**The Batchelor Foundation**

**The Jim Moran Foundation**

**Community Foundation of Broward**

**Miami Foundation / Animal Welfare**

**William H. Donner Foundation**

**GreaterGood.org**

**Tuesday's Angels**

**BCEFA (Broadway Cares Equity Fights Aids)**

**June Wise Foundation**

**Pride Foundation**

Our Local Donors:

**RE/MAX Experience / Jason Johnson & Chris Krzemien**

**RE/MAX Experience / Michael Camardello**

**Better Homes & Gardens / Robert Rusotto**

**Hunter's Nightclub / Mark Hunter & Patrick Volkert**

**The Pub / Michael Connell & Jim Walker**

**Neil Burmeister**

**Jayant Goyle / Greg Dudzek**

**Smarty Pants Bar / Mark Tison & Fritz Sherer**



### ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2019

In accordance with our mission statement, we accomplished the following in 2019:

**Maintained and provided for 1688 pets / a total of 1149 clients**

**Provided 144,000 pounds of pet food / 72 tons given to clients for their pets (average 12,000 Lbs per month)**

**Distributed 1,000,000 Lbs of Pet Food & Supplies to the local 501(c)3 Pet Rescues/Sanctuaries in South Florida**

**Distributed 900,000 Lbs of Pet Food & Supplies to 501(c)3 Pet Rescue in Central Florida via our DeLand Warehouse**

**Distributed 500,000 Lbs of Pet Food & Supplies for Hurricane Dorian relief to the Bahamas**

**Provided annual vaccinations for 254 pets**

**Provided reduced cost Veterinarian care for 182 pets**

**Fostered a total of 160 pets**

**Found Forever homes for 93 pets whose owners were unable to care for them, or passed away**

## Letter from Executive Director

Yes, every year as a donor or a volunteer for any organization, you are going to hear the refrain: "We couldn't have done it without you."

And, yes, that is true. Spot on. No question.

However, the fact that I spring into action every morning of the year is ONLY made possible by the fact that I know you "have my back."

This isn't an easy job. I'm not asking for you to feel sorry for me because I sure don't. I love what I do. But this is an emotionally taxing and physically demanding job.

As we intake food and supplies for the pets in our program and as we give or deliver those supplies to the homes of disabled or elderly owners, we are always haunted by the wish that we could do more.

The rescue groups that are supported by our Rescue Bank food and supplies come to us with tales of trials and heartache that they encounter in their own rescue efforts. I see them working tirelessly to improve the welfare of the animals they take into their care.

And, we do not always have the luxury of being successful. Not every owner can get all he or she needs to provide for and protect their own beloved companion.

Not every rescue group can save or protect every animal they would wish to keep from harm.

But we make a huge difference in the lives of the pets and their owners. We distribute the goods we receive with diligence and care.

For we know that you want every dollar or volunteer hour you commit to our cause to MATTER.

And so, with your ongoing support, our group will always dedicate your dollars to doing what makes some animal's life better and, in some cases, saves that animal's life.

You made a big difference in 2019. You have helped keep 1688 pets from being surrendered to shelters where they would be highly unlikely to be adopted. With your help and financial contributions, we can "grow the good" that we do in the months and years ahead.

I thank you. The clients of Pet Projects thank you. The pets thank you.

And we wish you the very best of this holiday season!

*Happy Holidays*

## How did we accomplish this?

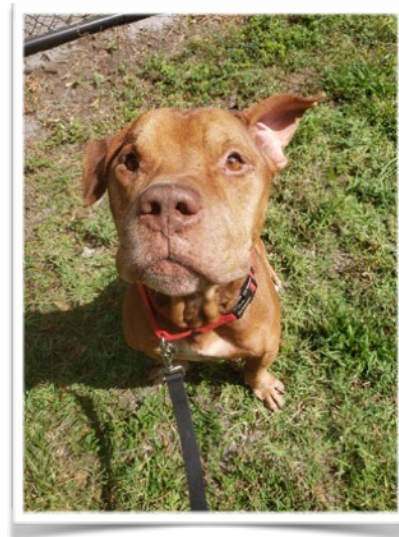
Monthly Pet Food Banks in Broward County

Monthly Pet Food Banks in Miami-Dade County

Delivery of pet food and pet supplies monthly to immobile clients

## Senior Paws

This spring, Sue Martino was nominated and approved by Senator Nan Rich to fill a position on the Animal Advisory Council for Broward County Animal Care and Adoption. The Animal Advisory Council does not operate in a regulatory or authoritative capacity, but assists Animal Care concerning animal issues or shelter programs and services. The Committee also helps administer the Animal Care Trust Fund and accepts and disburses gifts, grants and other awards of money paid to Broward County for the use and benefit of animals in the County.



The meetings are held at the BCAC shelter where a tour of the facility brought the plight of these animals far too clear to ignore. And, thus was born the idea of how to help some of the elderly dogs now held at the shelter.

The Pet Project is unique: we keep pets in their homes so they never have to be surrendered to a shelter or a rescue group. Our unique approach to animal welfare led to a pilot program in collaboration with Broward County Animal Care and Adoption.

The program, launched on August 17, 2019, at the annual Clear-the-Shelters event sponsors a rotation of six senior dogs to help get these dogs out of the shelter and into their "forever" homes.

When adopted, these senior dogs become clients of Pet Project and receive their food, heartworm medications, annual vaccinations, and access to reduced veterinary care.

Within the first eight weeks of the program, EIGHT SENIOR DOGS had been placed in homes and out of the shelter. This program is such a resounding success that we plan to expand the program with senior dogs from the Humane Society of Broward County in 2020.

In December we launched a similar project for senior cats, our "Senior Claws", in collaboration with the Humane Society of Broward County (BCAC). If you would like to help with either of our "Senior Paws or Senior Claws" programs, please contact Sue Martino at (917) 751-3173.

Your financial support is key to helping us expand and grow these new initiatives where we will focus on placing "seniors with seniors" every chance we get.

## The Pet Protector Circle

The first official gathering and "kick off" in July 2018 was hosted Jayant Goyle and Greg Dudzek, who suggested the concept of having individuals commit to annual donations to the Pet Project. The two wonderful 2019 events were hosted by Ron Lennen and Robert Russotto and then by Mike Camardello and Raul Ramos.

From July 2018, this great group of supporters continues to interest others in joining the Pet Protector Circle. We are happy to announce that the Pet Protector Circle membership has now grown in its first year to 26 members.



## Pet Legacy Program

*What happens to my pets if something happens to me?*

The Pet Legacy Program is a formal plan to ensure that your pets are well taken care of in the event of your incapacity or passing, without burdening your family and friends. We have taken the pre-planning and stress out of worrying about what would happen to your pet, and with a formal agreement in place, you can be confident that your pet will be well taken care of immediately, and without delay.

For individuals that might not think they have enough in their estate to participate in our Legacy Program, there are several insurance products that are available, and we have the professional resources to help guide them choose the right product for their needs. We encourage people to discuss their options with an estate planner and to make the necessary provisions in their will for their pets when they are doing their own estate planning.



Our Pet Legacy Program has been very well received in the community, and we're hopeful that with more and more exposure we will exceed our goals of participation in the Program in the upcoming year. We hear from many participants that our Program gives them peace of mind knowing that their beloved pets will be taken care of if anything happened to them.

I am excited to be named the Pet Legacy Program Director, and will be out in the community speaking about our Legacy Program, and encourage people that might have questions or want more information to contact me either by phone or email.

Rex Vacca  
Pet Legacy Director  
954.647.0051  
rex@thepetprojectfl.org

## Hurricane Dorian Relief

September 1 through September 5, 2019

Hurricane Dorian, the slowest moving and highest intensity hurricane in history, hovered above the Bahama islands, leaving behind devastation that was hard to imagine even as photographs showed the flattened structures, the tattered remnants of buildings that once stood but that now looked like toothpicks and strands of materials.

Heroic efforts to rescue the inhabitants of the islands, particularly of Abaco, were underway as soon as the savage storm moved on its path. Sunken craft and debris littered the island's edges making efforts to bring desperately needed food and supplies hazardous. Roadways on Abaco no longer existed or were impassable.

People come first. But the animals' plight was also horrid. Flung all over the island if, indeed, they had managed to survive the ferocious onslaught of Dorian, these abandoned and helpless animals struggled in the face of immeasurable odds.



GreaterGood.org immediately moved into action to start supplying The Pet Project with the necessary pet food, crates, and supplies. Dorian had slammed the Bahamas just as the warehouse in Wilton Manors was packed to the rafters. Truckloads of goods that would need to be kept dry were to arrive any moment.

One of Pet Project's board members, Mike Camardello, reached out and contacted Mika and Anthony Branch who donated a 3,000 square foot warehouse that could be used for the intermediate storage that was required. The first step was to move all the Pet Project Rescue Bank inventory to the new warehouse so the Wilton Manors location could receive the truckloads of supplies. John of A Best Forklift donated a forklift which expedited the already-complicated delivery and stacking as the Pet Project single forklift could not be shuttled between the two warehouses.

Coordination was critical. Forklift drivers—of which Mike Camardello was one—had to be scheduled when the trucks arrived. Red Cross' Steve and Pet Project volunteers manned the forklifts, as well. Pet food and supplies along with humanitarian supplies were shuttled daily to the local airports to provide for Wings of Rescue to take to the Bahamas.

A huge undertaking that will be ongoing for quite some time. We are proud to help and will continue to do so in all areas that will help animals be safe, well and provided for.

## A Tale of Two Little Piggies

One of our volunteers religiously checks Craigslist postings for free animals which we all know is not safe for the animals. She saw a posting for two little piggies... well, maybe a bit bigger than "little," but still, piggies. She immediately asked if Pet Project could help get a safe place until they could be adopted.





We, of course, said we'd give it our best effort, having helped a piggy or two in the past so we set out to find a piggy foster.

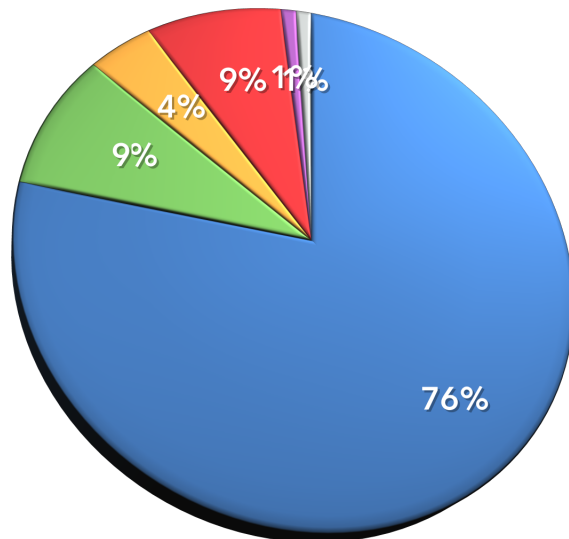
Lo and behold! One of our rescue partners stepped up to take them until a forever home could be located. "Portia" and "Pepita" settled in very nicely.

Within a few weeks, a wonderful woman who loves pigs said she would adopt them if we had them both neutered. When Pet Project reached out to our generous base of supporters, we received the necessary funds.

These two little piggies oinked and happily squealed all the way to their safe new home.

## How our money is used

- Client Services (pet food & pet supplies) \$207,091 - 76%
- Veterinarian Care \$25,000 - 9%
- Transportation (Home Deliveries) Food Banks \$15,841 - 4%
- Administration \$22,378 - 9%
- Special Diet Food \$5,000 1%
- Vaccines & Preventive Care \$5,000 1%



*Thank you for your continued support, it is because of you, we are able to do what we do.*

**TOTAL AMOUNT RAISED IN 2019: \$271,370**

### The Pet Project

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INSTAGRAM: <https://www.instagram.com/petproject4pets/>

YOUTUBE: [www.youtube.com/channel/UC30yHB7OXXKibD3RjFXY9PGw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC30yHB7OXXKibD3RjFXY9PGw)