



For Immediate Release

Animal Medical Center Hosts 10th Annual Living Legends Luncheon

Event Honors Companion Animals Who Overcame Major Health Challenges

(New York, N.Y. – May 22, 2018) The Animal Medical Center (AMC) held its 10th Annual Living Legends Luncheon today honoring companion animals who survived seemingly insurmountable health challenges because of their owners' love and commitment, along with the exceptional care and treatment they received from the specialty veterinarians at AMC's Integrative and Rehabilitative Medicine, Neurology and Surgery Services.

Kathy Rayner, Robert Liberman, Lisa Schiff, Emilia Krimendahl, Donna Acquavella and Ellen Marcus were among the nearly 200 guests. The event was co-chaired by Dorothy Goldstein, Alison Minton, Kane Nussbaum, Joanne Ronson, Carol Sandow, Petra Slater, Helene Stein, Marquam Wolfe, and Janet York.

This year's Living Legends honorees are:

- Callie the cat suffered from diabetes and a hormonal disorder called acromegaly. Common treatments for this disease do not have good success rates. Thanks to the groundbreaking work done by Dr. John McCue in AMC's Neurology Service, Callie is back to optimal health.
- Mack, an American Eskimo dog, is a therapy animal for a retired NYC firefighter suffering from PTSD. Last year, Mack's hind leg was caught under a moving truck tire. Several veterinarians recommended that his leg be amputated but that was not an option. Thanks to a novel surgical procedure performed by Dr. Pamela Schwartz in AMC's Surgery Service, Mack has returned to his active schedule.

The first Jackie Santi Flaherty Award for Courage was presented posthumously to Jake, a lovable yellow Labrador retriever with a strong determination to live, despite hind limb weakness, anemia, surgeries on both knees and a lung tumor. Dr. Leilani Alvarez, head of AMC's Integrative and Rehabilitative Medicine Service, helped to improve Jake's quality of life. This special award was established by AMC Trustee Tina Santi Flaherty in memory of her beloved dog Jackie and will be given annually to a pet who has shown remarkable courage throughout treatment at AMC.

"The Living Legends Luncheon is a very special event because it provides AMC with a unique platform to spotlight some of the incredible work that goes on at our hospital every day," said Kathryn Coyne, Chief Executive Officer of AMC. "It's also a celebration and recognition of the unbreakable bond that exists between people and their pets."

AMC's Living Legends Honorees

Callie

Callie the cat was adopted by Sarah, a veterinarian practicing in Connecticut, after being surrendered by her owner who could not manage Callie's newly diagnosed diabetes. Her diabetes was a challenge to regulate, requiring unusually high doses of insulin. In her efforts to understand why Callie's diabetes was so complex, Sarah realized that Callie had several other symptoms associated with acromegaly, a hormonal disorder. Tests came back positive, revealing elevated growth hormone levels and an associated enlarged pituitary gland. Sarah discovered that most of the common treatments, including radiation, did not have particularly high success rates so she contacted Dr. Meghan DeLucia, who had completed a residency in internal medicine at AMC. Dr. DeLucia told Sarah about some groundbreaking work that AMC neurologist Dr. John McCue was doing called hypophysectomy, a surgery to remove the pituitary gland. Dr. McCue thought Callie was a perfect candidate for this new minimally invasive technology, in which surgeons utilize the nasal passages to gain access to hard to reach areas at the base of the brain and skull. AMC is one of very few veterinary institutions worldwide using this procedure. The surgery was successful, and Callie's diabetes was resolved within 12 hours of tumor removal.

Mack

When Gibson first met Mack, an American Eskimo dog, he was three years old and very aggressive after being left alone for days in a basement with an anti-bark collar. Gibson was aware that this breed is known for loyalty, attentiveness and determination – personality traits he admired. Although it took Gibson nine months to train Mack, they have now been together for the last 10 years. Gibson, a retired NYC firefighter, suffers from PTSD and Mack is his therapy dog and lifeline; Mack senses Gibson's anxiety and refocuses his attention before the anxiety can escalate. In January 2017, Mack's hind leg was caught under a moving truck tire. Gibson rushed Mack to the closest veterinarian, who cleaned the wound and sent him to a nearby specialty hospital; the limb had an open fracture with a large section of femur missing. Although amputation was recommended, this was not an option for Gibson. He immediately contacted his girlfriend, a veterinary student in Australia, who recalled an orthopedics lecture she had heard given by Dr. Tomas Guerrero. She reached out to Dr. Guerrero, who said that the leg could be saved with the proper surgical team, but that the only place he would advise him to go in the New York area was AMC. The surgical team at AMC examined Mack and determined that surgery was indeed possible. Utilizing bone obtained from a donor bank, along with a metal rod, plates, and screws, Dr. Pamela Schwartz and her team were able to restore the bone that Mack had lost and repair his fracture. Mack was closely monitored during his post-operative stay in the hospital, as well as during his recovery at home, to prevent complications and ensure healing. It was a long road, but Mack has returned to his active schedule of running and swimming and remains at Gibson's side.

The Jackie Santi Flaherty Award for Courage

Jake was a yellow Labrador retriever who lived with a tumor for the last three years of his life (in Jake's case, a lung tumor). He was a longtime patient of AMC's Tina Santi Flaherty Rehabilitative and Fitness Service, where his treatments were instrumental in managing multiple issues including severe hind limb weakness, extremely low platelet count, and a history of invasive surgeries on both knees. Jake arrived for his weekly rehabilitation and acupuncture appointments with strong determination. He



entered the building dragging his hind legs, but continued to walk with assistive supports, gradually working his way up to walking and swimming in the underwater treadmill. After massage and acupuncture, he almost always managed to walk out on his own, with his tail high and wagging and eager for a treat. Despite his tumor, anemia and hind limb weakness, Jake was a fighter and loved by all. He died in March, just shy of his 16th birthday.

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 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.amcnyc.org.

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