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PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Pet Peace of Mind Programs Keeps pets and Families Together During Hospice Care

(Southwest Michigan) May 5, 2010 – Hospice at Home in South Haven is pilot testing a new program, Pet Peace of Mind, which recognizes and actively supports the unique bond between hospice patients and their pets. The program allows patients to complete their end of life journey without worrying about their pet's current or future needs. The initiative provides volunteer pet care services for patients who are unable to care for their pets. Offering the Pet Peace of Mind program places Hospice at Home in a select group of hospice providers that have joined a national network committed to ensuring this important patient need is met. The program will expand to the other services areas of Hospice at Home over the summer.

“Over and over again we work with hospice patients who are struggling to care for their pet or wish to continue to keep their pet although they are too ill to care for it,” states Beth Fones, South Haven Hospice at Home Volunteer Coordinator. “Recently, we worked with a local nursing facility so that a patient could keep their cat when they moved into the facility. It meant so much to the person,” continues Fones. Pet Peace of Mind is funded through a grant from the Banfield Charitable Trust. “Hospices work hard to meet both the physical and emotional needs of their patients and we want to create a program that helps support the emotional side in a significant way,” states Dianne McGill, executive director and CEO of the Banfield Charitable Trust. “The human-pet bond is incredibly special. If we can help keep a patient and their pet together, we’ve accomplished what we set out to do.”

Hospice at Home is seeking volunteers, donations, and pet services partners for this program. Current partners include: Phoenix Road Animal Hospice, Al-Van Humane Society, Rovers Retreat, and Decadent Dogs.

Hospice at Home is the non-profit community hospice focusing on the patient and family regardless of the patients' diagnosis, treatment choices, or ability to pay. It provides quality care to people adjusting to living with a serious illness, to people facing death, to people anticipating the death of a loved one, or to people healing their grief after the death of a loved one. Hospice at Home places an emphasis on the emotional, social, and spiritual needs of those who need care and those receiving support services. Serving Berrien, Cass, Van Buren, and Allegan Counties, the care is coordinated by a team of physicians, nurses, hospice aides, social workers, spiritual care counselors, bereavement coordinators, and trained volunteers. Extending this care, Lory's Place, a bereavement and education center that builds hope and strength for every grieving family, is available to anyone in Southwest Michigan or Northern Indiana.

For more information about the Pet Peace of Mind program, volunteering, or Hospice at Home, call 1-800-HOSPICE, or go to www.hospiceathomecares.org.

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