

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Dawn Moeglin
Director of Community Engagement
330-253-4597 voice
330-996-7685 fax
dmoeglin@matureservices.org

**MATURE SERVICES RECEIVES \$1,000 FROM MEALS ON WHEELS AMERICA TO
HELP START A CLIENT PET SUPPORT PROGRAM**

All-New Program Designed to Keep Akron Seniors and Their Pets Together

Akron, Ohio, June 23, 2016 – Knowing that seniors with pets are 36% less likely to report loneliness and have 21% fewer doctor visits*, Mature Services Inc. is proud to announce that it has received a \$1,000 grant from Meals on Wheels America to continue its client pet support program. Funding will be used to provide food, supplies and care – which can be financially and physically burdensome – for clients with pets, under the Meals on Wheels Loves Pets program.

“We were honored to receive the grant from Meals on Wheels America this year,” said Karen Hrdlicka, president and CEO of Mature Services. “The generous grant makes it possible for Mature Services to expand our program and keep seniors and their pets together as well as healthy.”

As an example of the positive impact on our nutrition clients, Nita Schoolcraft declared in a recent thank-you note, “I appreciate your Meals on Wheels program so much. The food is always delicious, and a big thank you for the dog food. What a blessing! My dogs also thank you with full bellies!”

At Mature Services, we are committed to improving the lives of the seniors we serve and their pet companions. Now in our second year of distributing pet food for clients who receive home-delivered food, we will use the grant funds for pet food and pet food storage. Currently, our food program delivers 19,040 home delivered meals to 522 clients each month. Since January 2016, we have provided pet food for 155 dogs and cats.

In total, Meals on Wheels America has granted \$300,000 to 162 local Meals on Wheels programs through the *Meals on Wheels Loves Pets* initiative this year. Funding is made possible in part through a donation from Banfield Charitable Trust (BCT), who in October of 2015, handed over-all funding and grants administration responsibilities for their popular Pet Assistance Grant Program to Meals on Wheels America. To date, the grant program has distributed more than \$2.1 million in funding and pet food donations to over 300 local Meals on Wheels programs across the nation.

“The *Meals on Wheels Loves Pets* initiative is just another way that Meals on Wheels can deliver so much more than just a meal,” said Meals on Wheels America President and CEO Ellie Hollander. “Through grant funding, educational opportunities and in-kind donations for our member programs, we hope to grow current pet programs and help those looking to start new ones.”

###

About Mature Services

Mature Services provides high-quality programs to empower the economic, social, physical, and mental well-being of adults as they age. Our programs include homecare, alcohol and substance abuse treatment and prevention, mental health counseling, job training, home-delivered and congregate meals, emergency food pantry, and volunteer opportunities. Founded in 1975 as a senior citizen program, it has since become an independent, nationally respected organization with offices throughout the state. For more information, visit www.matureservices.org.

About Meals on Wheels America

Meals on Wheels America is the oldest and largest national organization supporting the more than 5,000 community-based programs across the country that are dedicated to addressing senior isolation and hunger. This network exists in virtually every community in America and, along with more than two million staff and volunteers, delivers the nutritious meals, friendly visits and safety checks that enable America’s seniors to live nourished lives with independence and dignity. By providing funding, leadership, education, research and advocacy support, Meals on Wheels America empowers its local member programs to strengthen their communities, one senior at a time. For more information, or to find a Meals on Wheels provider near you, visit www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org.

**Sources: Stanley, I. H., Conwell, Y., Bowen, C., & Van Orden, K. A. (2014). Pet Ownership may Attenuate Loneliness Among Older Adult Primary Care Patients Who Live Alone. Aging & Mental Health, 18(3), 394–399. <http://doi.org/10.1080/13607863.2013.837147>; Siegel, J.M. (1990). Stressful life events and use of physician services among the elderly: The moderating role of pet ownership. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 58, 1081-1086.*