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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**February 11, 2016**

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## ***New York Times* Reports Pet Food Pantries Are Springing Up Across The Nation**

### **San Diego Humane Society Is At The Forefront of Support Services To Help Local Pet Families Stay Together During Hardship**

SAN DIEGO, CA: Earlier this week, [\*The New York Times\*](#) reported on a national trend of pet food pantries springing up across the nation in response to pet owners struggling to make ends meet. Fortunately, here in San Diego, vulnerable pet families have an official safety net to rely on in times of financial crisis through San Diego Humane Society's PAWS program, which strives to keep pets with their families. This vital program provides relief to pet families facing hardships that may cause animals to be surrendered to local shelters through two lifeline services:

- **Pantry**

Each week, in partnership with human food banks throughout the community, PAWS Pantry provides supplemental bags of pet food to people who often face the difficult decision of feeding themselves before their companion animals.

- **In-Home Delivery**

Pet parents who are home-bound, low-income seniors, chronically ill or disabled receive monthly deliveries of pet food and animal care supplies, such as cat litter, leashes, collars, toys and treats. They are also eligible for dog-walking services, transportation to and from veterinary appointments and medical vouchers to help pay for treatment their pets may need.

Last year, this program helped more than 3,780 vulnerable pet families in San Diego. PAWS clients received over 135,400 pounds of pet food and cat litter, 355 veterinary vouchers and 662 doses of topical flea medication. "The best thing we can do for pets is to keep them out of shelters and in their homes, with the families who love and need them," said Dr. Gary Weitzman, president and CEO of San Diego Humane Society. "PAWS San Diego is our proactive approach to the systemic issues that lead to animal relinquishment."

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The National Council on Pet Population Study and Policy researched and published in the Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science, the top reasons why pets are relinquished to animal shelters as being “Cost of Pet Maintenance” and “Owners Having Personal Problems.”

Weitzman continued. “Imagine if you suddenly lost your job, your home, or if you or a family member became ill. Imagine having to choose between feeding yourself or your pet. Our pets are family, so we want to keep families together by assisting individuals facing tough times.” For more information about PAWS San Diego or San Diego Humane Society, visit <http://pawssandiego.org> and [www.sdhumane.org](http://www.sdhumane.org).

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Link to *The New York Times* article

[http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/08/nyregion/pet-food-pantries-offer-relief-to-animal-owners-struggling-with-bills.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/08/nyregion/pet-food-pantries-offer-relief-to-animal-owners-struggling-with-bills.html?_r=0)

Interview Opportunities: Dr. Gary Weitzman, President and CEO, San Diego Humane Society  
Geraldine D’Silva, Executive Director of PAWS San Diego  
Pet Owners Helped By PAWS San Diego

Photo Opportunities: Staff delivering food and pet supplies to people in need  
Animals with employees and volunteers  
Pet Owner and their pet who have been helped by PAWS San Diego

**To schedule an interview or for more information, please contact Stacy Archambault at (619) 243-3432 or [sarchambault@sdhumane.org](mailto:sarchambault@sdhumane.org).**

**Photos and B-roll available upon request.**

#### **About San Diego Humane Society**

Serving San Diego County since 1880, San Diego Humane Society’s scope of social responsibility goes beyond adopting animals. San Diego Humane Society offers San Diegans a wide range of programs and services to ‘Inspire Compassion’ in our community, prevent cruelty/neglect, provide medical care, educate the community on the humane treatment of animals and provide safety net services for all pet families needing assistance with keeping their pets.

As one of San Diego’s oldest nonprofit organizations, San Diego Humane Society has campuses located in Escondido, Oceanside, and San Diego as well as adoption centers inside Petco stores throughout San Diego County. San Diego Humane Society is supported solely through contributions, grants, bequests, investments, proceeds from the Muttique retail store and small fees for services. For more information or to view our current animals available for adoption; please visit [www.sdhumane.org](http://www.sdhumane.org).