



# Annual Report

2022

LENDING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR PETS

# BIG COUNTRY, BIG IMPACT

In 2012, the LEAP program began as a partnership between the Texas Veterinary Medical Foundation (TVMF) and Meals on Wheels Central Texas (MOWCTX) in Austin. We started with a goal to provide basic wellness veterinary care to 40 pets belonging to homebound MOWCTX clients at no cost to them. After 10 successful years, LEAP has expanded to serve more than 800 pets annually in 10 metropolitan areas!

In 2022, we saw continued growth for LEAP. We have increased the number of pets served in established markets and expanded services to new markets to include rural and regional areas of Texas. We are pleased to share that LEAP services are now in 10 metro areas of the state: Austin, Dallas, Bryan/College Station, Houston, Abilene, Collin County, Montgomery County, Lubbock, Victoria and Kingsville.

Expansions into Amarillo and Fort Worth are expected in early 2023.

Not only does LEAP positively influence the pet-owning population by providing care to some of our neediest neighbors but it also provides Texas Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA) veterinarians with opportunities to give back to their communities.

One such TVMA member, Dr. Russell Ueckert, acted on the call to serve his community and committed to participating in LEAP as a volunteer veterinarian. Thanks to continued partnerships between Dr. Ueckert, TVMF and Meals on Wheels Plus, Inc., LEAP serves around 200 animals annually from Abilene and surrounding areas.





In donating his time and services to LEAP, Dr. Ueckert provides necessary wellness care to animals belonging to elderly, homebound and low-income clients. Routine check-ups with a veterinarian are critical, and LEAP facilitates care for those animals who may not receive it otherwise. The program also allows Big Country Veterinary Clinic to restore an animal's health and eliminate suffering from treatable conditions.

For Dr. Ueckert, his favorite part of LEAP is experiencing the heartfelt appreciation of owners.

"They know their beloved friend would not have received the care they needed if it were not for TVMF," he said. "My staff and I get to be the recipients of that praise, and that makes it all worthwhile."

When asked about the importance of giving back, there was certainly no shying away

from his heeded responsibility to serve within his chosen profession.

"Without our communities, our work would have no purpose," he said. "We have the responsibility to return something to the people around us who are in need. Veterinarians are in a unique position to provide meaningful services that give back to the communities in which we live and work. Every veterinarian should serve his or her community and profession with a portion of the time and talents that he or she is endowed with. Our future will be better for what we give."

Together, veterinarians, clinics and passionate individuals embody TVMF's mission to support the veterinary profession and our communities in Texas by providing resources, education and programs for the responsible stewardship of animals.



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**Ritchie Rud has a big heart  
for pets and their owners**

LENDING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR PETS

# EVERYDAY HEROES

As a volunteer-based and partnership-centered program, there are many selfless people who assist in operating LEAP. TVMF has established relationships with many veterinary volunteers who contribute their time and professional expertise. We also have created many loyal partnerships with community nonprofits and transportation volunteers. While transportation volunteers are rarely at the forefront, they are essential for transporting beloved pets to their local veterinarian.

Ritchie Rud, who was nominated by Executive Director Betty Bradley of Meals on Wheels Plus, Inc., received the 2022 Everyday Hero Award from the Abilene Reporter News. Ritchie, a former Meals on Wheels volunteer, reconnected with the organization when he returned to Abilene after being recently widowed. While delivering meals, he learned of LEAP and the partnership between Meals on Wheels Plus, Inc. and TVMF. Hearing of the program, he was reminded of his late wife's love for animals. From taking care of his own



rescue cats and dogs to transporting pets owned by his homebound neighbors, Ritchie knows his wife would be proud of him.

Over the last year and a half, Ritchie has transported 206 pets through 341 trips to and from Big Country Veterinary Clinic. Many of those trips involved multiple pets, multiple visits and consistent follow-up with Meals on Wheels clients. He also extended his volunteer services to transport pets to the local groomer,

a kindness Ritchie pays for out of his own pocket.

"Ritchie Rud has a big heart for pets and their owners," Bradley wrote in her nomination. "He's even bought sweaters for pets recently groomed because he knows they will be cold without the heavy blanket of fur they once had."

# KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER

The importance of animals to their owners cannot be overstated. Many clients have stated that they would willingly give up their own food or medication to care for their beloved pets. By caring for the pets of our disadvantaged community members, LEAP is promoting and preserving these important human-animal bonds. The simple act of veterinary care enhances the quality of life for vulnerable adults and ensures that none of our LEAP clients must choose between caring for their pets and their own necessities.

For pets like Ranger, LEAP can be the difference between receiving veterinary care or not. Ranger is a beloved companion to her owner, Ms. Ham, who receives services from Lubbock Meals on Wheels. Ranger is not only her best friend but he is also her unofficial "seeing-eye dog" as Ms. Ham is nearly

blind and relies on him to help navigate steps and obstacles. Through LEAP, Ranger received not only his annual wellness exam, vaccines and flea and heartworm preventatives but also a dental surgery from Oden Veterinary Hospital, where he had multiple teeth extracted. Ms. Ham is ecstatic to have her best friend feeling so much better and shared that "Ranger is back to his old playful and happy self!"

Many of the seniors served through Meals on Wheels programs live alone, and for many, their pets are their primary daily companions. By keeping pets like Ranger healthy, the LEAP program is removing a significant source of potential stress for their owners, giving them the comfort of knowing their furry companions will receive the veterinary care they need.

**LUBBOCK MEALS ON WHEELS  
CLIENT MS. HAM AND RANGER**







LENDING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR PETS

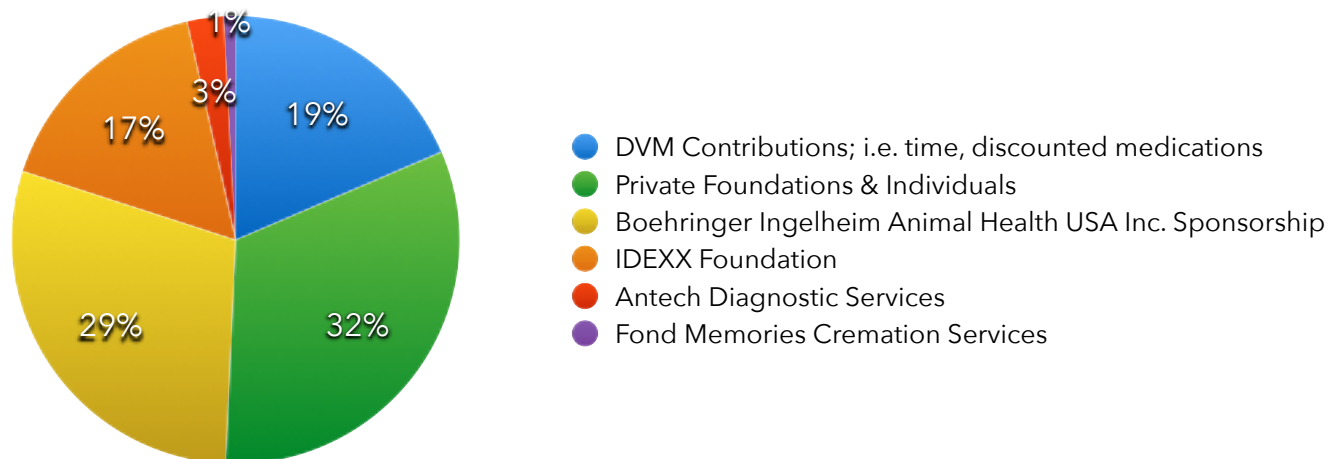
# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The LEAP program continues to provide services in partnership with Meals on Wheels organizations serving Brazos, Callahan, Collin, Dallas, Harris, Hays, Kenedy, Kleberg, Lubbock, Montgomery, Taylor, Travis and Williamson counties. Again, what started as a small pilot program with 40 pets in 2012 is now serving more than 800 pets per year! Support from our loyal donors and volunteers helps us continue to expand this important program.

We are thrilled to share 2022 program achievements:

- 840 pets belonging to 526 Meals on Wheels clients have received annual wellness exams, vaccinations and a year's supply of flea and heartworm preventatives;
- 32 veterinary professionals have volunteered their expertise including Texas Veterinary Medical Association member clinics, the Texas A&M School of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences Small Animal Hospital and the Texas A&M Kingsville Veterinary Technology Program;

- Numerous pets were seen for follow-up care to address issues identified in the annual wellness exam, including 21 dental surgeries, two tumor removals, one amputation and one TPLO surgery.
- Treatment protocols were developed for several pets to aid in the management of conditions such as diabetes and thyroid issues.



Meals on Wheels clients continue to receive these services at no cost to them. Veterinary partners donate their time and expertise, while vaccines, Frontline Gold and Heartgard are donated by Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health, and wellness blood profiles are donated by Antech and the IDEXX Foundation. TVMF continues its commitment to raising additional funds to cover gaps in donated products and services, including funding for additional testing, medications and surgeries as determined by the needs of the individual pet.

We are deeply grateful for every partnership that facilitates a high level of care for pets in need. We are especially grateful for continued financial commitments from PetSmart Charities, IDEXX Foundation, Banfield Foundation, Burdine Johnson Foundation, Community Foundation of Texas, Donald D. Hammill Foundation, Mary E. Bivins Foundation, Austin Community Foundation, Carl and Marie Jo Anderson Foundation and other grant funders.

This support helps sustain this important program in current markets as well as to provide crucial funds for bringing LEAP to new areas.

LEAP addresses the need for an animal's basic care and addresses the long-term health of LEAP pets. Through this work, we ensure pets remain happy and healthy with their families so they may provide comfort, love and companionship. LEAP sustains all the many benefits of the human-animal bond for those who need it most.

One of the many highlights of the LEAP program is helping the pets of our homebound community members stay healthy and active, but sometimes we get sad news. Thanks to our partnership with Fond Memories, we are able to provide cremation services. Fond Memories provides the best end-of-life care available, ensuring that these pets are treated with respect and dignity.





While the numbers are impressive, the real accomplishment is seen in the everyday lives impacted through this much-needed program—the lives of our fellow community members like Meals on Wheels of Montgomery County client Ms. Allen and her dog Mini Mouse. Ms. Allen was concerned about Mini Mouse’s health as she had been acting lethargic and not active. Through the LEAP program, Mini Mouse went to see Dr. Schneider at Oak Ridge Animal Clinic, where he discovered she had an ear infection. Dr. Schneider cleaned, flushed her ear and administered medicine. Mini Mouse instantly had a change in her energy and alertness. Ms. Allen is grateful to have her spunky little dog back!

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**The generosity of LEAP is appreciated more than you can ever imagine. It absolutely shows the love you have for all our four-legged and furry friends.**

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Or there’s Ms. Thomas and Heaven, a tiny little thing at five pounds but who makes up for it with her frisky attitude. Heaven loves her pink princess bed and playing with soft squeaky toys.

Or there’s Alberto and Boo Boo who are inseparable and who doesn’t know what he would do without his best friend.

By keeping these pets healthy, TVMF and our partners are improving the quality of life for seniors and animals alike. We are keeping families intact and helping to preserve the human-animal bond. Every day, this program brings hope to others and makes a tangible difference in the lives of homebound seniors across Texas.



## LENDING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR PETS

# OUR PARTNERS

### **ABILENE**

Meals on Wheels Plus, Inc.  
Big Country Veterinary Clinic

### **AUSTIN**

Meals on Wheels Central Texas PALS  
VCA Tanglewood Animal Hospital  
Austin Vet Care  
North Austin Animal Hospital  
Austin Vet Hospital  
AM/PM Animal Hospital  
Lago Vista Animal Clinic  
VCA Elgin Family Pet Center  
VCA Lakeline Animal Hospital  
VCA Hometown Animal Hospital  
VCA Ben White Animal Hospital  
HousePaws Austin  
South Park Animal Hospital  
Whitestone Animal Hospital  
Bluebonnet Animal Hospital

### **BRYAN/COLLEGE STATION**

Brazos Valley Community Action Programs  
Meals on Wheels Program  
Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine  
and Biomedical Sciences Small Animal  
Hospital

### **COLLIN COUNTY**

Meals on Wheels Collin County

### **DALLAS**

The Visiting Nurse Association of Texas  
Meals on Wheels  
Metro Paws Oak Cliff  
Holt Veterinary Clinic  
Rutherford Veterinary Hospital  
Animal Clinic of Grand Prairie  
White Rock Animal Hospital





## LENDING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR PETS

# OUR PARTNERS

### HOUSTON

Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston  
aniMeals  
Washington Heights Veterinary Clinic  
Meyerland Animal Clinic  
Bayside Animal Hospital

### KINGSVILLE

Texas A&M Kingsville Veterinary Technology  
Program

### LUBBOCK

Lubbock Meals on Wheels  
Animal Medical Center  
Oden Veterinary Hospital  
Live Oak Animal Hospital

### MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Meals on Wheels Montgomery County  
Oak Ridge Animal Clinic  
Triangle Animal Clinic  
West Davis Veterinary Clinic

### VICTORIA

Meals on Wheels of South Texas  
Lone Star Animal Hospital



# TEXAS VETERINARY MEDICAL FOUNDATION

## MISSION

The Texas Veterinary Medical Foundation is committed to supporting the veterinary profession and our communities in Texas by providing resources, education, and programs for the responsible stewardship of animals.

## VISION

A community where the veterinary profession and the public come together to meet the needs of all animals in Texas.

## CONTACT US

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