

Pets Play an Important Role

Adapted from Cheryl Culbertson



As we grow older, knowing that you're loved, or that someone cares about you, isn't necessarily enough, and that need to feel needed-and appreciated for what you do-increases. Pets fulfill this need because they depend on their owners for care and attention. In return, the pets offer love and unqualified approval.

Studies have been documented that petting a dog or cat lowers blood pressure in hypertensive patients and that older people show improved alertness when caring for a pet. Pets often seem to be especially valuable for some people experiencing major life chances, such as illness or the loss of a loved one.

Depressions can often be avoided. Pets also encourage their owner to be more physically

active by playing with them or taking them on a walk. Pets amuse us, make us laugh and improve our overall morale.

Pet owners tend to remain more interested in events in their community and in their surroundings. They are not as lonely as perhaps they once were. They prevent or reduce absent-mindedness or bewilderment by communicating the sense of time and by maintaining a rhythm of the day. "forget oneself and one's problems" and to "live one's free time in a meaningful and interesting way".

Pets need love, companionship and attention no differently than the rest of us. If you know of an older adult that could use a friend, a companion, please consider contacting your local shelter. Thank you!