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LAURA J. NILES FOUNDATION HELPS MORRIS ANIMAL FOUNDATION IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF WORKING GUIDE DOGS

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Denver, April 8, 2008: The Laura J. Niles Foundation, an organization that encourages and supports the lives of people and animals, has pledged a \$150,000 multiyear matching grant to Morris Animal Foundation (MAF) in support of improving the health of working guide dogs. Many guide and service dogs go into early retirement due to health problems. This can be devastating to the human-animal bond and the partnership built between a blind person and a loyal canine partner.

Leland C. Selby, a spokesman for the Laura J. Niles Foundation, said, “Our Foundation is excited about their partnership with MAF because we hope that the two organizations, working together, will be able to address a serious problem in guide dogs and service dogs. It’s very disappointing if a dog has to retire at an early age. If we can find a cause and explore ways to eliminate it, it is a win-win for both the human and the animal.”

This grant is an ideal partnership for Morris Animal Foundation because Dr. Mark L. Morris Sr., the founder of MAF, improved the life of a guide dog named Buddy through novel therapy. In doing so, Buddy and his owner were able to enjoy working together for a longer period of time. Buddy suffered from kidney failure and his owner, Morris Frank, who was blind and a national ambassador and co-founder for The Seeing Eye Inc. sought help from Dr. Morris. Dr. Morris devised a special diet for Buddy, and Dr. Morris’s wife, Louise, personally packaged the meals. Due to the new diet, Buddy’s health dramatically improved. When demand for the diet increased, Dr. Morris partnered with Burton Hill, owner of the Hill’s Packing Company. This partnership turned into what is known today as Prescription Diet® pet foods. The contract between Dr. Morris and Mr. Hill stipulated that a percentage of the price of every can sold would go to the newly formed Buddy Foundation, named in honor of Morris Frank’s beloved guide dog. The Buddy Foundation later became known as Morris Animal Foundation.

Dr. Patricia Olson, president and CEO of MAF, stated, “This grant is really special to our Foundation because our history began with Buddy, and this gift allows our foundation to once again help those amazing dogs who give their owners new freedom, dedication and companionship. We will be working closely with guide dog users to better understand the causes of early retirement – just as Dr. Morris worked closely with Morris Frank.”

Dr. James Kutsch, MAF trustee and president and CEO of The Seeing Eye Inc., also commented, “I know personally that any research to solve issues that lead to early retirement of a dog guide will be both highly beneficial for the dog and greatly appreciated by the blind dog user. My last Seeing Eye® dog had to retire four years early because of a heart condition.”

To learn more about Morris Animal Foundation, please call 800.243.2345 or visit www.MorrisAnimalFoundation.org.

About Morris Animal Foundation: Morris Animal Foundation, established in 1948, is dedicated to funding research that protects, treats and cures companion animals and wildlife. MAF has been at the forefront of funding breakthrough research studies benefiting animals in some 100 countries, spanning all seven continents on earth. MAF has its headquarters in Denver, Colorado. The Foundation has funded nearly 1,400 humane animal health studies with funds totaling more than \$51 million. One hundred percent of annual donations go to fund health study programs. Charity Navigator ranks MAF as a four-star charity, the highest rating. For more information, call (800) 243-2345, or visit www.MorrisAnimalFoundation.org.