

## Senior Dogs for Senior Citizens in Los Angeles

**The L.A. Department of Animal Services hopes to benefit senior citizens and shelter dogs with its new program.**

Posted: January 26, 2008, 5 a.m. EST

The L.A. Department of Animal Services is launching a program in hopes of connecting seniors of different species.

The Seniors for Seniors program matches pets, ages 7 and older, with senior citizens, ages 62 and older, who are then allowed to adopt the pet free of charge. The pet will be spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and microchipped. The program begins at city animal shelters and off-site adoption events Jan. 26, 2008.

Older pets housed at shelters are often overlooked, but typically make great companions for seniors as the majority of them are housebroken and are calmer than younger pets. Humans benefit too, and the L.A. Department of Animal Services provides several reasons that pet ownership boosts seniors' health, backed by various studies. They are:

Pets lower blood pressure – People older than 40 who own pets have lower blood pressure than those who don't.

Decreased depression – Seniors with pets are less likely to become depressed than those who don't.

More active – Seniors with pets tend to go on more walks and are generally more active than those who don't have pets.

Pets ease loss – Those who own a pet and suffer the loss of a spouse are less likely to experience deterioration in their health following the stressful event.

In addition, pets help seniors ward off loneliness, take better care of themselves, and give them a sense of security knowing that someone they love and trust is always nearby.

For L.A. shelter locations and adoption events, visit the Department of Animal Services website.