Jewish Federations of North America

Center on Aging, Trauma, and Holocaust Survivor Care

Innovative Technology Tools to Support Social Connection and Aging in Place

Presenters:

Lily Bernard, Director of Education and Client Support, The Blue Card

Linda Blumberg, Vice-President of Development, Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies (The Network)

Daryna Marchenko-Bernhardt, Technology and Volunteer Coordinator, Council for Jewish Elderly Senior Life (CJE SeniorLife)

Jim Murphy, Senior Vice President of Healthcare, Ageless Innovation

Reducing Isolation with PCTI Supported Technology

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Linda Blumberg, Vice-President of Development

Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies (The Network)

Daryna Marchenko-Bernhardt, Technology and Volunteer Coordinator

Council for Jewish Elderly Senior Life (CJE SeniorLife)

The Network's National Network Program

- The Network
- History of National Network Program
- Uniper Care
- CJE SeniorLife Case Study
- PCTI Approach and Uniper
- Impact - Lessons Learned

National Network Program History

- 2020 – Two-year grant for JFNA Innovations in Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed Supportive Services for Holocaust Survivors utilizing technology to address social isolation.
- Target population: homebound Holocaust survivors struggling with social isolation. Expanded in 2022 to include other older adults and their caregivers.
- Partnership with Uniper Care to use their technology.
- Services delivered using a PCTI approach.
- Grant renewals through 2025.
- 1,948 unique older adult clients served to date and 120 caregivers.

Meet Uniper TV

Uniper TV is an **Interactive Community** Empowering Older Adults Independence and Reduce Loneliness



Effectively Improving Older Adults Wellbeing:
Physical, Social, and Mental Health

PROPRIETARY AND CONFIDENTIAL

Aging-In-Place Engagement Platform

Accessible Care Platform

Multilingual



Personalized Content

Interactive Activities, Cognitive Exercises, Educational Videos, Physical Activities



Community Network

Connection to natural and formal supports



Uniper Personal Coaches

Helps drive behavior change



PROPRIETARY AND CONFIDENTIAL

Uniper TV Applications

- My Schedule
- Video Library
- Games
- Family Video Calls & Photo Album
- Tele-Health
- Group Meetings
- Live Classes
- Community News



Like iOS, A platform for many more applications to come (Both In-house and 3rd party)

Holocaust Community Services Program History

- Founded in 1999 as an inter-agency program of **JUF**
- Administered by **CJE SeniorLife** (since 2015)
- **HCS** provides services for Holocaust survivors including:
  - Financial assistance for home care, medication, food, transportation, and emergencies/urgent needs
  - Case management & counseling
  - Socialization & events
  - Access to Uniper Platform through NJHSA Grant (since 2020)
  - Support groups & wellness classes
  - Reparations assistance
  - Training, education, advocacy, and legacy programs

How does HCS help?

2024 Overview



2025 YTD

January – May

- Financial: **1,534** (total served)
- Non-financial: **96**

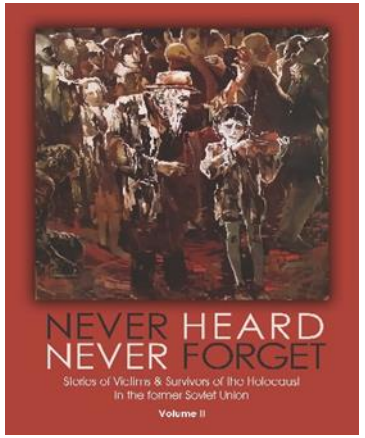
- Attrition**:73**
- New clients: **27**

  - Average age **88.8**
  - **21** are over 100 or turning 100 this year!

Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed



uniper



CJE SeniorLife
Holocaust Community Services

uniper

Holocaust Community Services at CJE Senior Life began enrolling clients in Uniper in summer 2020.

- 358 clients served with Uniper 2020-2025
  - 207 Holocaust survivors
  - 151 non-survivors
- 116 clients are currently enrolled in Uniper
- 33 clients enrolled in Uniper via partnership with Age Options

cje SeniorLife
Holocaust Community Services

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HCS Content on Uniper

- CJE Special Events: Songs of the Holocaust
- CJE Live Events: Café Europa Celebrations, Holocaust Survivor Day luncheons
- Joint Programming with Anu Museum of Jewish People in Tel-Aviv
- Weekly Wellness Class
- Creative Memory and Brain Exercises
- Monthly Poetry Readings
- Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention
- Telehealth/Counseling

Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed

- Communications

  Bilingual staff

  Marketing (co-branded flyers in Russian and English)

  Individualized outreach & onboarding (“voice and choice”)

  Avoidance of Triggers

- Consideration of cultural differences & trauma history

  Trustworthy, neutral, safe platform (e.g. health/well-being)

  Programming in client’s native language/cultural interest

  Providing autonomy & empowerment (ease of use, menu of choices)

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Holocaust Community Services

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Evaluation and Client's Satisfaction:

- 1. Annual Evaluation Interviews – in alignment with Uniper and the NJHSA cohort

- 2. Ongoing support for users to boost engagement and impact:

I. Care Managers' Engagement (trust, empowerment, sensory issues, language barrier)

II. Technology Coordinator Support

III. Partnerships between Uniper and HCS

(Uniper's in-person and virtual demo to staff and clients, bi-annual outreach to new clients)

cje SeniorLife
Holocaust Community Services

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Case Studies:

- **Rita,** 83 y.o. survivor born in Kiev, Ukraine; was evacuated to Kazakhstan during the WWII, has family, can not attend in-person events but wants social connection: https://youtu.be/mLIXYA_yIK8
- **Aron**, 100 y.o. survivor born in Warsaw, Poland; was in Warsaw Ghetto and Auschwitz, no family in Illinois, very limited technology use: https://youtu.be/rzJ3IpQ-nLE

Engagement Leads to Outcomes

Healthier Behavior → Improved Health

Healthier Behavior		Improved Health	
⬆ 61%	**Exercised more**	⬇ 13%	**Falls** (STEADI)
⬆ 46%	**Formed new connections**	⬇ 36%	**Loneliness** (UCLA 3)
⬆ 75%	**Increased self-confidence**	⬇ 36%	**Anxiety** (GAD)
⬆ 74%	**Improved their Mood**	⬇ 34%	**Depression** (PHQ)
		⬇ 28%	**Unhealthy Days** (CDC)

* Based on a 2022 study of **1,424** active members conducted by 7 *Area Agencies on Aging* across Florida

Impact – Lessons Learned

Annual evaluation in December 2024 by Uniper Care of Engaged Participants:

- 80%+: significant increase in their sense of belonging and social connectedness.
- 65%: increased physical activity with many citing improved mobility and overall physical health.
- 75%: noticeable improvements in mood and mental resilience.
- 68%: improved confidence in managing their personal health.

Impact – Lessons Learned

- Dedicated agency staff keep clients engaged and improve their experience.
- Higher frequency of Uniper utilization increases connectivity, leading to decreased social isolation and an increased sense of emotional and physical well-being.
- Ongoing outreach is important to boost engagement.
- Agencies report the importance of bilingual staff.
- Challenges: confusion with technology and declines in health and cognitive abilities.
- Post COVID, clients who are no longer homebound use Uniper less.



Assisting Holocaust Survivors in Need

Presented by LilyAnne Bernard
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The Blue Card: Mission and Vision

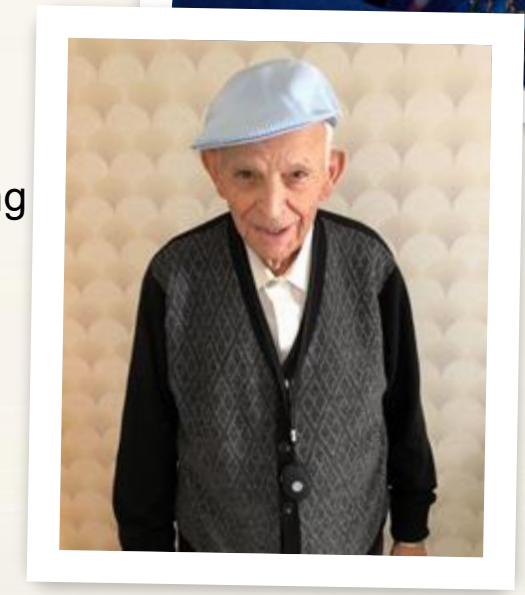
The Blue Card was founded in 1934 by the Jewish community in Germany to aid Jews facing persecution under the Nazi regime. As antisemitic restrictions escalated, many turned to The Blue Card for critical support.

In 1939, the organization was re-established in the U.S. to assist Jewish refugees fleeing Europe and rebuilding their lives. The name comes from the original blue cards given to donors in Germany, marked with stamps for each contribution—a symbol of solidarity and hope.

Following the Holocaust, The Blue Card expanded its mission to help survivors resettle in America. Today, we continue to provide direct financial aid and essential services that support the physical and emotional well-being of Holocaust survivors.

As the survivor population ages, their needs grow more urgent. The Blue Card remains dedicated to ensuring they live with dignity and security.





The Blue Card Since 1934

Assisting Holocaust Survivors in Need

Our Programs

- Emergency Cash Assistance
- Holocaust Education
- Tech Friendly Aging
- Health and Wellbeing
- Emergency Prevention
- Outreach

The Blue Card
Since 1934
Assisting Holocaust Survivors in Need

Telephone Emergency Response System Program



- As Holocaust survivors—many now in their 80s, 90s, and beyond—age in place, they face high risks of isolation, injury, and limited mobility. Two-thirds live alone, over 50% live in poverty, and many struggle with chronic conditions and trauma-related anxiety.
- Falls are the leading cause of injury-related death among older adults. Every 19 minutes, one dies from a fall; over 25% fall annually, with 1 in 5 falls causing serious injury. Survivors often delay seeking help due to fear or language barriers, worsening outcomes.
- The Blue Card's TERS Program provides free emergency alert systems to at-risk survivors. Worn as a pendant or wristband, each unit connects to live operators who speak the survivor's language—offering not just fast help, but comfort and cultural understanding.
- In partnership with trusted providers, The Blue Card has distributed tens of thousands of devices nationwide. For Holocaust survivors, this program is more than safety—it's dignity, independence, and peace of mind.

.

The Blue Card Since 1934
Assisting Holocaust Survivors in Need

The Life Alert Unit Saved Holocaust Survivor, Ida's, Life:



The life alert unit saved Holocaust survivor, Ida's, life:

Ida *and her family were forced to flee her small town in Belarus when the German Army invaded in 1941. Ida and her family escaped toward Ukraine, taking trains but mostly walking for days with other refugees to avoid German-occupied towns. They suffered from starvation, diseases, and fear of being caught by the Nazis.*

All Ida remembers is being cold, wet, and hungry all of the time.

Ida's mother passed away due to starvation and other issues related to their flight. Ida was only 4 years old. Orphaned and alone, Ida and her 2 brothers were moved from orphanage to orphanage, where they became sick with tropical malaria, and continued to suffer from starvation, sickness and depression.

Today, Ida battles cancer and lives alone far from her 2 kids. She still suffers from the malnourishment and depression she faced as a child, but wants to live independently and stay in her home. The Blue Card helps her stay independent by providing her with a free life alert unit, so she has access to medical assistance 24/7 should she ever need.

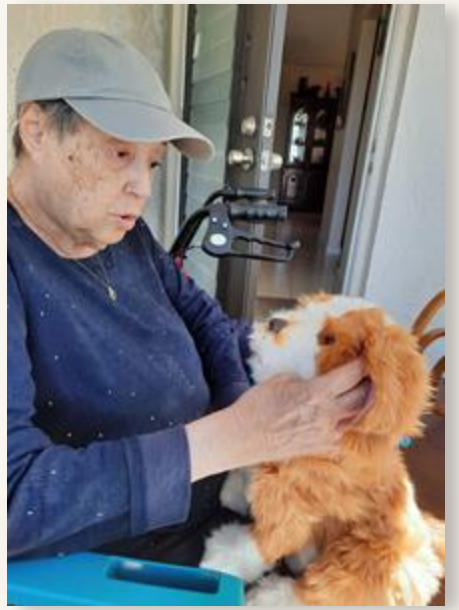
Recently, Ida fell in her bathroom, cut her head and lost consciousness.

When she slightly recovered, the only thing she was able to do was to press the life alert button. An ambulance came in 4 minutes, and at the same time her son was contacted.

Now, Ida is doing well, back at home and her stitches have been removed. ***The Blue Card life alert unit saved her life that day.***

The Blue Card
Since 1934
Assisting Holocaust Survivors in Need

Companion Pets Program – Bringing Comfort, Connection, and Joy to Holocaust Survivors



- Through our partnership with **Joy for All**, The Blue Card provides lifelike robotic cats and dogs to Holocaust survivors facing aging, isolation, and loss. These pets replicate the look, feel, and gentle sounds of real animals—offering companionship without the responsibilities of live pet care.
- Research shows that robotic pets reduce **loneliness**, **anxiety**, and can improve **cognitive engagement**. For survivors—many of whom live alone, struggle with memory loss, and bear deep emotional trauma—these pets provide a rare sense of comfort and connection.
- One survivor said her cat was the first “thing” to make her smile in years. Another recalled her childhood pet before the war—finding healing in that connection.
- The pets respond to touch and sound with purring, barking, or tail movements, creating meaningful interaction. No feeding, walking, or vet visits required—making them ideal for survivors with mobility or memory challenges.
- More than a gesture, this program brings **dignity, joy, and emotional support** to those who need it most.

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Joy for All Companion Pets: Impact & Benefit

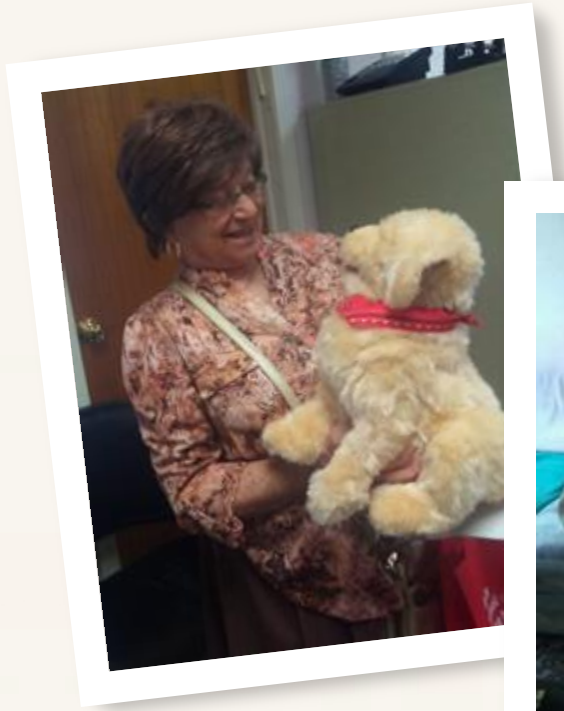
- Low-cost/high impact
- Rapid deployment
- Low/no barrier to technology
- Sustainable (i.e. no novelty effect)
- Impact @ scale: 700,000+ Companion Pets adopted to date
- Older adults: Alzheimer's and Related Dementias and/or Social Isolation and Loneliness
- Evidence based: over a dozen published studies on the efficacy of the Pets
- Primary benefits:
  - Improved Quality of Life
  - Reduced feelings of depression, isolation and loneliness
  - Helped to provide a sense of purpose
  - Mitigated dementia-related decline and associated behaviors
  - Provided an engaging experience that calms individuals without use of medication
  - Improved cognitive activity and capability
  - Support for care partners (professionals and family members)



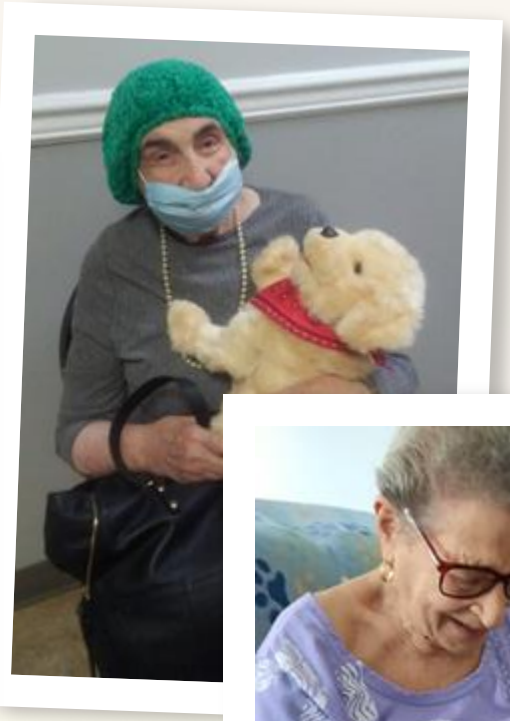
AGELESS INNOVATION'S Joy for All COMPANION PETS

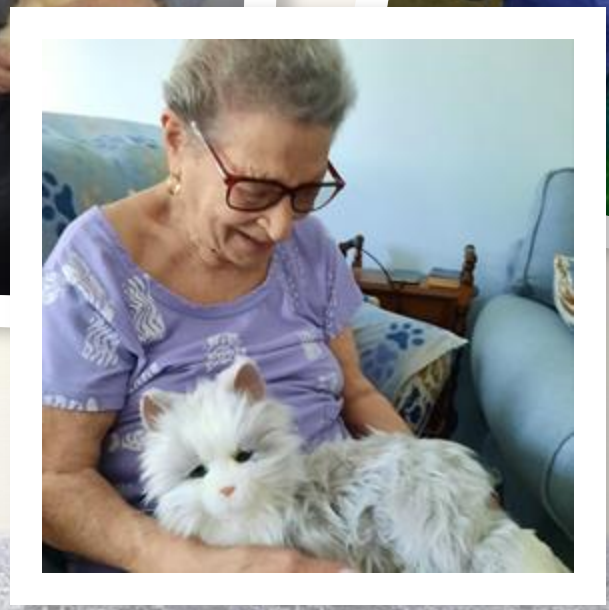
The BLUE CARD Since 1934
Assisting Holocaust Survivors in Need

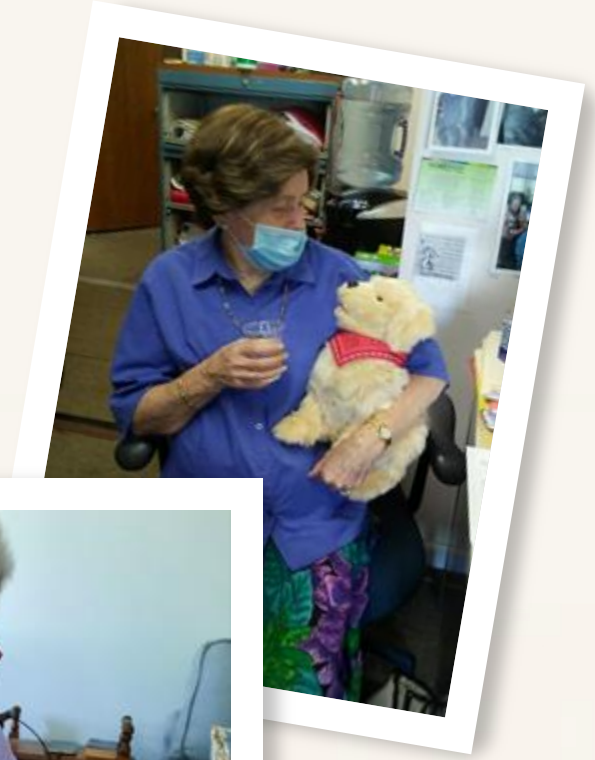
Survivors Enjoying Our Companion Pets Program











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Psychological Benefits of Companion Pets for Holocaust Survivors – Insights by Dr. Eva Fogelman



Companion pets offer comfort, reduce anxiety, and evoke positive memories for Holocaust survivors, especially those living alone. Backed by research, these pets help ease trauma, promote relaxation, and provide a sense of connection.

Emotional Impact in Survivors' Lives:

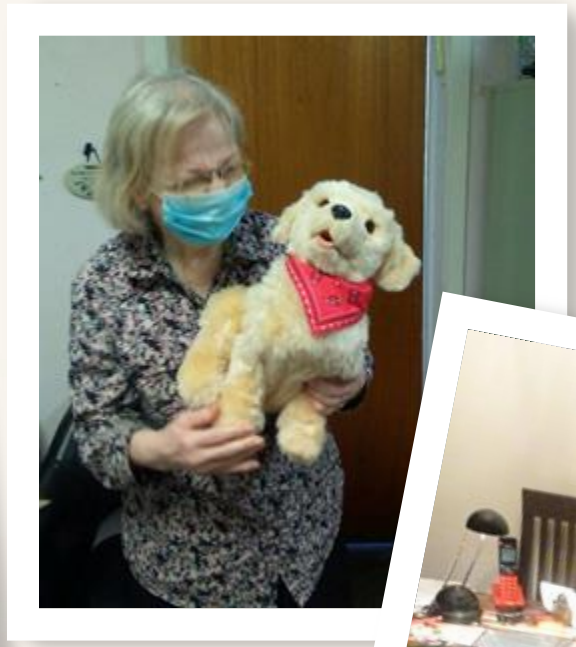
- **Martine**: Hidden in France as a child, recalled her lost wartime toy. Her new companion pet brought back joy and emotional warmth.
- **Sigrid**: After losing her real cat during COVID, her pet cat substitute helped ease grief and loneliness.
- **Dora**: Having experienced hiding in silence during the war, found emotional stability through her companion dog during the pandemic.
- **Ellen**: Uses her pet to reduce nighttime anxiety and sleep more peacefully.
- **Halina**: Living alone in her 80s, felt seen and supported by the gift of a companion pet when caring for a real animal was no longer possible.

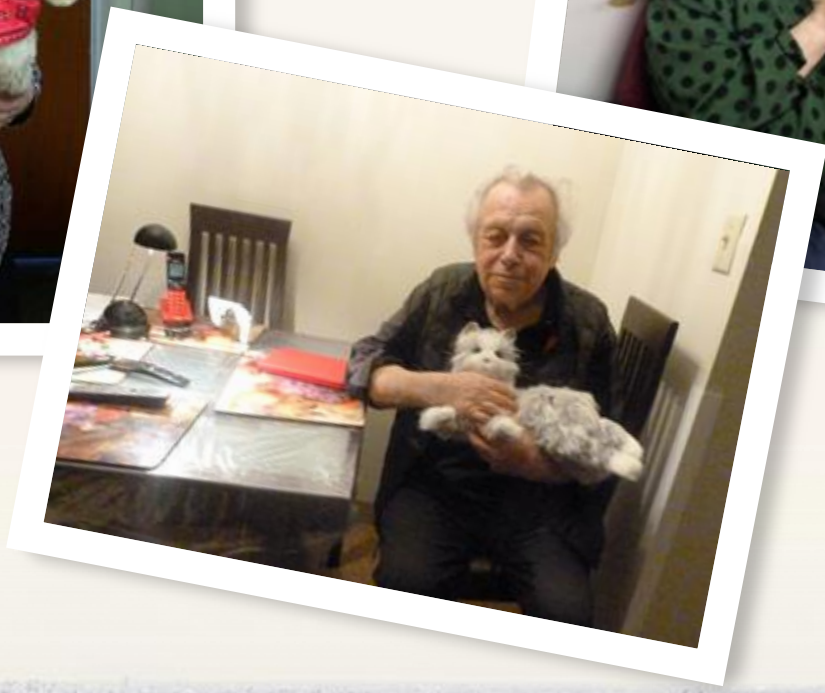
Companion pets are more than gifts—they are therapeutic tools that offer survivors comfort, reduce stress, and foster emotional resilience.

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More of Our Survivors









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A Note From Our Partners

Hi Milana,

I just wanted you to know that today spoke to Gerda W[redacted] who told me that she received her dog on Sunday. She named him Peter!
She said that she loves him. She said that she keeps him on her lap and they watch TV together. She said that he wags his tail, barks and moves his head.
She said that he is very good company and very entertaining!
She said that he looks at her and she talks tom him and he answers her. They are bonding...

Thank you so very much!

Sincerely,
Julie

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Our Reach











Assisting Holocaust
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THANK YOU!

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