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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Love of Cats Leads to Generous Gift

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Voorhees, NJ – Motivated by the love her mother instilled in her and the family’s mutual love for cats, AWA’s cat wing will be named after the McNamee & Conlen families thanks to their generous gift of \$150,000.

Maria McNamee, Pat’s mother, enjoyed the company of cats throughout her life. Maria’s husband Chuck claimed he wasn’t a cat person, but it is hard to find a picture of him without a cat on his lap or shoulder. Their cats were always stray cats or kittens in need of a home. Well into her eighties, Maria still packed her cat Fuzzy into her car for weekends at the shore.

“My mother always had a soft spot for cats,” said her daughter Pat. “She told me that in her later years it would have been nice to have a shelter for cats, but she was not up to the task.”

Pat and her husband Paul Conlen have shared their home with many cats over the years. Their cat Buster was an inspiration to them, he not only survived being hit by a car but lived a full life despite many health issues, even sailing with them on their boat.

“We are so happy the cat wing in the new shelter will bear the McNamee and Conlen names,” states Maya Richmond, Executive Director at AWA, “not only as a testament to their love for cats but also in recognition of the cats that left an imprint on their hearts.”

The cat wing will offer homeless cats a quiet, safe environment until they are adopted into loving homes. Pat hopes this new space will continue the legacy of creating loving relationships between animals and people in the years ahead.

The new shelter/education center at AWA is scheduled to open later this year. If you would like more information about “Building a Place Where Happiness Begin,” please call Maya Richmond at 856-424-2288, x 109, or email at [director@awanj.org](mailto:director@awanj.org).

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**Animal Welfare Association**, a private, non-profit, 501(c) 3 animal welfare organization, serves the people and animals of southern New Jersey. AWA is dedicated to eliminating animal suffering, promoting the importance of the human-animal bond, and improving the role of animals in the well-being of people. Through a variety of programs including adoptions, veterinary services, pet therapy, and humane education, in 2019 over 16,000 pets were served through AWA programming. AWA is South Jersey’s leader in progressive companion animal care.



Rendering of the cat wing at the AWA shelter currently under construction.