



SUN PHOTO BY SUE ERWIN

Grace Colon and Roger Eaton hand a bag of cat food to Margaret Pennell.

# ‘Eaton’s Eats’ provides pet owners with free kibble

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STAFF WRITER

Although it was raining, that didn't deter people from lining up outside the Animal Welfare League of Charlotte County to receive free pet food.

The Animal Welfare League is teaming up with Roger D. Eaton, Clerk of the Circuit Court, to provide free food for those pet owners who have lost their jobs or have been forced to go without a paycheck due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"This pandemic has impacted a lot of our community's families, and that includes the family pets," Eaton said. "We are working to make sure that pets continue to have nutritious pet food in their bowls. We are all in this together."

On Wednesday, more than a dozen staff members from Eaton's

office helped distribute several pallets of dog and cat food donated by Walmart and Chewy.com.

Cheryl Meysner came to pick up some food for her three cats.

"I was working at a local factory and I was let go in March," Meysner said. "This will be a great help."

Margaret Pennell considers herself an AWL "matriarch" since she's volunteered for the organization for the past five years. She came to pick up a bag of food to feed her five cats.

"I'm retired now or else I'd be in there doing 15 loads of laundry right now," Pennell said.

Eaton has also created "Roger's Rescues," which provides adoption fees for one cat and one dog per month, to help them secure a forever home.

"Last month we adopted out Sarge, a 6-year-old, large,

mixed-breed," Eaton said. "It such a positive thing to match someone who is able to get a pet without paying the fee."

Karen Slomba, executive director of the Animal Welfare League, said pets important to families, especially during this stressful time.

"Keeping families together, healthy and happy is one way we can help others," Slomba said. "We are seeing so many members of our community impacted and we hope that this will bring a little peace to families with pets in this time of need."

Pending food supply, additional distributions may be scheduled in the upcoming weeks.

For more information, contact the shelter at 941-625-6720.

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