



GUARDIAN HEALS LAUNCHES PROGRAM TO SAVE PETS



Helen Szczerba, Pippi and Dr. Jeffrey Runge.

Guardian HEALS (Humans Enriching Animals Lives), a new nonprofit organization in White Plains, dedicated to saving pets' lives by helping owners pay for essential veterinary care when they can't afford it, gave financial assistance to its first patient **Pippi**, a seven-year-old Papillon, that belongs to a White Plains Hospital employee and Westchester resident **Helen Szczerba**.

"My husband was very sick for the past 10 years. He had five open-heart surgeries and we were struggling financially to the point where we lost our house. He

recently passed away," said Szczerba, "and I couldn't afford to take care of our beloved dog Pippi who had chronic medical issues. My friend at White Plains Hospital told me about Guardian HEALS. I met with HEALS veterinary partners, Dr. **Jason Berg** and Dr. **Jeffrey Runge** who found that Pippi had calcium stones in her bladder. They said that her only chance was surgery. Guardian HEALS came to the rescue with \$1,000 in financial assistance toward the surgery and my beloved dog is thriving today."

Bernadette Vinci, MS, LHEP and CEO

of Guardian HEALS, said "Those of us who are animal lovers have a very close bond with our fur babies and when they get sick it is devastating and not having the financial means to care for them and keep them healthy is beyond devastating.... There are so many people who need veterinary assistance and we are looking to raise money in order to help."

Guardian HEALS will be working with veterinary partners in New York – Bronx, Westchester, Putnam, Orange and Dutchess counties; Fairfield County, and Bergen County, New Jersey.

