



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**1,340 POUNDS OF PET FOOD AND SUPPLIES DONATED TO LONG ISLAND CARES
THROUGH MASSAPEQUA ELEMENTARY PET FOOD DRIVE SPONSORED BY BETHPAGE**

**Birch Lane Elementary School Honors 21 Students
for their Efforts to Help Feed Long Island Pets**

Bethpage, NY – June 22, 2012 – Twenty-one elementary students were honored this week for their contributions to the Birch Lane Elementary Pet Food Drive, which collected 1,340 pounds of pet food and supplies for Long Island Cares’ Pet Pantry. Organized by 5th grade teacher, John Coyne, the pet food drive was sponsored by Bethpage Federal Credit Union and created in response to the growing demand for food banks to supply pet food to local families in need.

Birch Lane students grades K-6 collected pet items such as dog food, collars and leashes, dog and cat treats, birdseed and small toys. For each day an item was donated, students received one “Pet Card” featuring fun pet facts, created by Pet Peeves and printed by Austin & Williams. Once four cards were collected, that student received a piggy bank from Bethpage Federal Credit Union, and was automatically entered into a raffle to win one of three prizes, provided by Bethpage: first prize: \$50 VISA gift card; second prize: 4 tickets to a Long Island Ducks game at the Bethpage Ballpark; third prize: \$25 VISA gift card.

“We’re very proud of the children at Birch Lane Elementary School for hosting this very special food drive to support the Long Island Cares’ Pet Pantry. Working together with their teachers, parents and Bethpage Federal Credit Union, they are making a difference in the lives of families impacted by hunger by helping them feed their dogs and cats, and keeping families together,” said Paule Pachter, Executive Director Long Island Cares, Inc. – The Harry Chapin Food Bank.

“Bethpage is honored to support the pet-owners of Long Island by partnering with Birch Lane Elementary School, the Long Island Cares’ Pet Pantry, Pet Peeves and Austin & Williams. We’d like to take this opportunity to honor teacher John Coyne who recognized a need in his community and took action to ensure that families with pets can remain together. We are happy to have helped by awarding students for their participation in this worthwhile cause,” said Linda Armyn, Senior Vice President, Bethpage Federal Credit Union.

The pet food drive ran May 29 through June 15, with an awards ceremony on June 19.

The Pet Pantry at Long Island Cares was created in 2009, in partnership with the Animal Relief Fund, to help stem pet hunger and abandonment, and is one of 220 food pantries that provide pet food to local families in need.

For more information, visit the Bethpage website at www.lovebethpage.com or call 1-800-628-7070.

Bethpage Federal Credit Union is a not-for-profit financial cooperative, existing solely to serve its members and has experienced rapid growth in recent years to become a strong alternative to banks. Bethpage was approved for the largest federal community charter in the U.S. in 2003 and now is Long Island’s largest credit union and leading community financial institution with over 196,000 members, 26 branches and 60 shared service center locations throughout Nassau and Suffolk Counties. As a financial cooperative, Bethpage offers better rates, lower fees and a full menu of personal and commercial financial services.

Bethpage maintains branch locations in Bay Shore, Bay Shore King Kullen, Bethpage, Central Islip, Commack King Kullen, Elmont, Farmingdale, Freeport, Glen Cove, Hempstead, Huntington, Levittown King Kullen, Lynbrook, Massapequa, Melville, Mineola, North Babylon, Patchogue, Port Jefferson, Riverhead, Seaford, Smithtown, Roosevelt, West Babylon and Westbury with over 350 surcharge-free ATMs in King Kullen, 7-Eleven, CVS and Costco locations throughout Long Island. For more information, call 1-800-628-7070 or visit www.lovebethpage.com.

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