For immediate release. Contact Lillian Shupe 908-892-3255 or lrshupe@frontiernet.net

**PHOTO CAPTION**

Northfield Bank Vice President and Business Development Officer Kari Mastrioanni, third from left, presents a ceremonial check to Dr. Susan Edwards, Psychologist/Director of Team Velvet Inc., with therapy horse, Velvet. On the left is therapy horse Precious, with Kathy Piparo, PhD, Board Secretary, and right is therapy horse Little Annie with board member Lillian Shupe.

Hi-res photo can be found at

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HRWIZik6ISOwloP9bWKD_2gRKyGtXsAv/view?usp=sharing>

**Northfield Bank Foundation Presents $10,000 Grant to Team Velvet Inc.**

RARITAN TWP., NJ — The Northfield Bank Foundation awarded a 2021 grant for mental health therapy for children to Team Velvet Inc., a 501 c-3 organization which provides equine mental health therapy to children ages 5-12 who have experienced trauma, at no charge to families.

“Children are the most vulnerable group in mental health,” said Dr. Edwards, “and our services involve clinical horse therapy, psycho-education and public education on child trauma. The most recent issue of *Counseling Today*, professional journal of The American Counseling Association, displayed as its cover story “Suicidality in Children and Adolescents” and summarized research on the alarming increase in this pediatric mental health crises. Team Velvet Inc. is honored to be awarded this grant by The Northfield Bank Foundation as part of The Foundation’s commitment to improve the quality of life of children.”

In the past three years, Team Velvet Inc. has won three national awards for its information equine child mental health videos, accessible on the Internet via [www.teamvelvet.com](http://www.teamvelvet.com) and YouTube. The works are narrated by the horses to make them most interesting to children. For more information or to refer a child, contact Dr. Susan Edwards, Team Velvet Inc., at 609 924 4330.

**About Team Velvet:** Each day there is a child who experiences the death of a loved one, is a witness to violence, is victimized by crime or intense bullying, is disfigured by an accident, or experiences countless other events — all resulting in severe childhood trauma. If left unaddressed, in the extreme, child trauma may cause flashbacks, blackouts, and may result in severe damage. Team Velvet, Inc. (609) 924-4330 provides multi-modal horse therapy for traumatized children ages 5 to 12 years with psychologist Dr. Susan Edwards. Therapy horses may be involved in interactive games, kick a soccer ball, dance, or be taught liberty performance. Children do not ride the horses; they interact while working toward goals of increased self-esteem and resiliency.