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## **Pet Partners Hires Two New National Directors of Field Relations**

**Bellevue, WA** - Pet Partners, the nation's leading organization registering therapy animals for animal-assisted interventions, announced the addition of Dr. Taylor Johnson and Jackie Vasquez-Theodorakis to their staff as national directors of field relations. Their responsibilities will include supporting, aligning and growing Pet Partners' brand and identity at local and regional levels.

"As our Therapy Animal Program continues to expand, it's important that we're able to assist the growing needs of our regional therapy animal teams and community partners and provide the necessary support to increase local presence," said Annie Peters, President and CEO of Pet Partners.

Prior to joining Pet Partners, Dr. Johnson served as victims services coordinator for Ahimsa House, a nonprofit dedicated to helping human and animal victims of domestic violence across the state of Georgia. Dr. Johnson also served as an Animal Care Coordinator for Rescue 2 Restore, a program designed to show the power of the human-animal bond by using structured rescue dog training programs and therapy dog interactions within the Georgia Juvenile Justice system. She obtained her bachelor's degree in psychology and master's degree in mental health counseling from Georgia State University. She then, continued her education and obtained her doctor of philosophy in general psychology with a concentration on animal-assisted therapy from Walden University.

Vasquez-Theodorakis served as the director for Gabriel's Angels, a nonprofit organization that works to inspire at-risk children through pet therapy, before joining Pet Partners. She has earned her bachelor's degree in education from Arizona State University and master's degree in education from Missouri Western State University. Vasquez-Theodorakis also volunteers as a Pet Partners therapy animal handler with her dogs Tova, Walter and Reba.

Pet Partners is the leader in improving human health and well-being through the human-animal bond, registering nine species of animals with their human handlers as therapy animal teams. Pet Partners teams make more than 3 million visits per year in hospitals, nursing homes,

schools, libraries, airports, and at employee well-being events. Pet Partners also advocates for legislation that promotes human health and well-being through its grassroots advocacy program, and educates handlers and the public about the positive impact of animal-assisted interventions (AAI).

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**About Pet Partners**

*Pet Partners is the national leader in demonstrating and promoting animal-assisted therapy, activities and education. Nearly forty years since the organization's inception, the science that proves these benefits has become indisputable. Today, Pet Partners is the nation's largest and most prestigious nonprofit registering handlers of multiple species as volunteer teams providing animal-assisted interventions. Therapy animals, such as those who participate in the Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program, provide affection and comfort to members of the public, typically in facility settings such as hospitals, assisted living, and schools. These pets have a special aptitude for interacting with members of the public and enjoy doing so. Therapy animal handlers volunteer their time to visit with their animals in the community. For more information about Pet Partners, visit [www.petpartners.org](http://www.petpartners.org)*