



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pet Partners Launches New Chapter in Illinois

Bellevue, Wash. – Pet Partners, the nation’s leading organization in registering therapy animals for animal-assisted interventions, announced today the launch of its new chapter, Pet Partners of Illinois. Designed to meet the growing demand for therapy animal teams throughout the area, Illinois will be home to one of four newly established Pet Partners chapters. It will combine the opportunities available in the local community with the best practices put in place by Pet Partners International Headquarters, while also serving as an extension of existing Pet Partners community-based groups.

“As Pet Partners and the demand for therapy animal visits continue to grow, we are committed to dedicating more localized resources across the country to organize and guide our volunteers,” said Annie Peters, President and CEO of Pet Partners. “With the formation of the Illinois Chapter, our dedicated volunteers will be empowered to more directly focus their efforts on sharing the love of their pets with those in need.”

To manage the Illinois Chapter, Pet Partners has added two new members to its staff.

Elle Ullum is the Executive Director for Pet Partners of Illinois. She comes to Pet Partners with extensive knowledge in development and leadership, event planning, and regional coordination at nonprofit organizations, having most recently served as the director of corporate relations at Camp Kesem. In addition to her professional experience, Ullum fostered rescue animals for One Tail at a Time. She received her bachelor’s degree in political science from Miami University. If you are part of a business or organization in the Illinois area and would like more information about the healing power of therapy animals, Ullum can be reached at elleu@petpartners.org.

Jessica Hiltner is the Program Manager for Pet Partners of Illinois. As the co-founder and president of Real Dog Moms, Inc., she is well-connected in the world of Greater Chicago animal lovers. Hiltner comes to Pet Partners with vast experience in volunteer management, community development, and event planning. She received her bachelor’s degree in family

services from Eastern Illinois University. If you live in the Illinois area and are interested in the Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program, you can reach Hiltner at jessicah@petpartners.org.

“Elle and Jessica take pride in giving back to their community and helping others experience the human-animal bond, making them the ideal candidates to continue the momentum of our chapter program,” said Peters. “We are thrilled to have them on our team and look forward to spreading the Pet Partners mission.”

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.

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Pet Partners is the national leader in demonstrating and promoting the health and wellness benefits of animal-assisted therapy, activities, and education. Since the organization’s inception in 1977, the science proving these benefits has become indisputable. With more than 13,000 registered teams making more than 3 million visits annually, Pet Partners serves as the nation’s largest and most prestigious nonprofit registering handlers of multiple species as volunteer teams. Pet Partners teams visit with patients in recovery, people with intellectual disabilities, seniors living with Alzheimer’s, students, veterans with PTSD, and those approaching end of life, improving human health and well-being through the human-animal bond. With the recent release of its Standards of Practice for Animal-Assisted Interventions and international expansion, Pet Partners is globally recognized as the industry gold standard. For more information on Pet Partners, visit www.petpartners.org.