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## **Pet Partners Launches New Chapter in North Texas**

**Bellevue, Wash.** – Pet Partners, the nation’s leading organization in registering therapy animals for animal-assisted interventions, announced today the launch of its newest chapter, Pet Partners of North Texas. Designed to meet the growing demand for therapy animal teams throughout the DFW Metroplex area, North Texas 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 North Texas 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 North Texas Chapter, Pet Partners has added two new members to its staff.

Sharyn Casey holds the title of Executive Director of Pet Partners of North Texas. She comes to the Pet Partners staff with years of experience in leadership, strategic planning, non-profit management, and fund development, having formerly served as the state director for Best Buddies Texas. Casey received her bachelor’s degree in elementary and special education from the University of Delaware. If you are part of a business or organization in the North Texas area and would like more information about the healing power of therapy animals, Casey can be reached at [sharync@petpartners.org](mailto:sharync@petpartners.org).

Carrie Atkinson is the Program Manager for Pet Partners of North Texas. As a long-time Pet Partners volunteer, she has served as a handler with three of her Jack Russell terriers since 2008 and an evaluator since 2015. Prior to her role with Pet Partners, Atkinson worked as a certified medical coder at US Anesthesia Partners in Dallas. Thanks to her diverse professional background, she brings years of customer service experience, management, and organizational

skills to her new position. If you live in the north Texas area and are interested in the Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program, you can reach Atkinson at [carriea@petpartners.org](mailto:carriea@petpartners.org).

“With their previous work experience and their passion for sharing the human-animal bond with others, Sharyn and Carrie are 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 reaching more Texas residents through our Therapy Animal Program.”

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](http://www.petpartners.org).