



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pet Partners, in Collaboration with VCA, to Host Third Annual World's Largest Pet Walk on September 26, Encouraging People to Get Active With Their Pets

- *This day-long celebration and fundraiser helps individuals experience the important impact companion animals have on human health and well-being -*

Bellevue, Wash. – Pet Partners, the nation's leading organization registering therapy animals for animal-assisted interventions (AAI), is excited to announce its third annual World's Largest Pet Walk, set for Saturday, September 26, 2020. Sponsored by [VCA Animal Hospitals](#), this event invites people around the world to get out their walking shoes and grab their leashes for Pet Partners' signature walking event. World's Largest Pet Walk is for anyone who wants to celebrate the health benefits of being active with pets, while also fundraising to support Pet Partners and their Therapy Animal Program.

"This event is a great way for people from all walks of life to join in on the fun and exercise with their pets," said Annie Peters, President and CEO of Pet Partners. "The animals in our lives are often strong motivators to keep moving! In fact, regularly walking with our pets is associated with more physical activity, better health, and fewer doctor visits."

Participants are encouraged to walk at any time and location on Saturday, September 26, choosing a distance and path that feels right for them and their animals. "Whether you gather some friends and family for a stroll around the block or take a quiet hike just you and your animal, we want to see you taking steps with your pets," said Peters. Participants are encouraged to get outside and walk. While Pet Partners already promotes its Walk With Me™ initiative in which therapy animal teams coordinate walks with people in their community, World's Largest Pet Walk was created to encourage worldwide participation with or without therapy animal teams, all on one specific day.

One of the features of the World's Largest Pet Walk is that it can be set up in a way that works for all participants, including solo or socially distanced walking to support safe participation. Whether people walk individually, with family, or with a group, social distancing and face coverings are encouraged and participants should follow local health guidance.

According to a study conducted by the Human-Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI) and Cohen Research Group, 97 percent of doctors reported there are health benefits from owning a pet and 75 percent of doctors saw an overall improvement in health as a result of pet ownership.

"Pets improve our health while enhancing our quality of life," said Dr. Todd Lavender, president of VCA Animal Hospitals and Petcare Services. "Over the past few months, daily walk routines have become more meaningful and valuable than ever. We are proud to support Pet Partners in celebrating this treasured tradition nationwide on September 26."

There is no registration fee to walk in the World's Largest Pet Walk, but Pet Partners encourages supporters to fundraise in honor of their participation. Those interested can visit www.worldslargestpetwalk.org to learn more, sign up, and create their online fundraising page. As a special thank you to those who fundraise, Pet Partners is offering [incentives for walkers and their pets including pet bandanas, T-shirts, and leashes](#).

Funds raised through the World's Largest Pet Walk support Pet Partners' Therapy Animal Program, which is made up of therapy animal teams who bring comfort and relief to members of the public, typically in facility settings such as hospitals, nursing homes, schools, libraries, airports, and at workplace well-being events. Pet Partners teams make more than three million visits per year, touching hearts and impacting lives around the world.

Pet Partners encourages participants to share photos of their walk on social media using the hashtag #WorldsLargestPetWalk. There is also a downloadable event bib for anyone planning to participate.

For more information on the World's Largest Pet Walk, please contact Jamie Baxter at jamie@theimpetusagency.com or visit www.worldslargestpetwalk.org.

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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 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 petpartners.org.

VCA Animal Hospitals operates more than 1,000 small animal veterinary hospitals in the U.S., Canada and Japan. The hospitals are staffed by more than 4,500 fully qualified, dedicated and compassionate veterinarians to give pets the very best in medical care, of which over 600 are board certified specialists who are experts in areas such as oncology, cardiology, emergency and critical care, and surgery for animals. VCA Animal Hospitals provides a full range of general practice services to keep pets well and specialized treatments when pets are ill. As part of the Mars, Inc. family of brands, VCA is committed to its purpose—A BETTER WORLD FOR PETS®.