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Pet Partners Therapy Animals to Provide On-site Support and Ease Athletes' Anxiety During Verizon New York City Triathlon

-Registered therapy animals will provide smiles and comfort to the more than 2,000 expected participants in this year's race on July 11, 2021-

(Bellevue, WA) – Pet Partners, the nation's leading organization registering therapy animals for animal-assisted interventions, is proud to participate in the upcoming [Verizon New York City Triathlon, owned and produced by Life Time](#), to aid in reducing stress and anxiety the athletes may be facing. July marks the return of this event as the international-distance race was canceled due to heat in 2019 and COVID-19 in 2020. Volunteer therapy animal teams will be onsite during race packet pickup on Saturday, and will also be available on race day at the first aid stations along the running course and at the starting line for the swimming portion of the race.

“Research has shown that the simple act of petting a dog lowers the stress hormone cortisol, and social interaction between people and pets actually increases levels of the feel-good hormone oxytocin,” said C. Annie Peters, President and CEO of [Pet Partners](#). “We're thrilled to be a part of the NYC Triathlon by having therapy dogs available during both days of the event to share the healing benefits of pets with race participants.”

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 each year in hospitals, nursing homes, schools, libraries, and airports; deploy after natural, human-caused, or technological disasters; and attend community and workplace wellness events.

“Whether the athletes may be experiencing pre-race butterflies from not having raced since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic or struggles that go far and above competing in a triathlon, Life Time wanted to do our part to help ease pre-race anxiety,” said Nicole Bostick, Associate Director of Marketing for the New York City Triathlon at Life Time. “Pet Partners' participation in this year's event is an important part of our overall commitment to the health and well-being of our participants.”

Life Time, the nation's premier healthy lifestyle brand with more than 150 destinations in 41 major markets across the U.S. and Canada and producer of the Verizon New York

City Triathlon, will also have Bonnie Marks, PsyD, a senior psychologist at the Sports Performance Center at NYU Langone Health who specializes in mindfulness and recovery from injury, sports psychology, and meditation, speak to athletes on Saturday, July 10; and swim advisors will be stationed at the swim start to provide shore-side support for individuals who may be inexperienced, new, or nervous about swimming in open bodies of water. More information is available at NYCTri.com.

Images, interviews, and additional information available upon request.

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About Pet Partners

Pet Partners is the leader in demonstrating and promoting the health and wellness benefits of animal-assisted therapy, activities, and education. Since the organization's founding in 1977, the science proving these benefits has become indisputable. Pet Partners serves as the nation's most diverse and respected nonprofit registering handlers of multiple species as volunteer therapy animal teams, with the goal of improving human health and well-being through the human-animal bond. More than 10,000 registered teams make more than 3 million visits annually with patients in recovery, people with intellectual disabilities, adults in residential care, students, veterans with PTSD, people who have experienced crisis events, and those approaching end of life. With the highest standards in the field and international expansion, Pet Partners is globally recognized as the industry gold standard. For more information on Pet Partners, visit www.petpartners.org.