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PET PARTNERS LOOKING FOR SOME SPECIAL ANIMALS

April 30 is National Therapy Animal Day: Consider volunteering with your pet

(Bellevue, Wash. - March 19, 2024) It's no secret animals can have a positive impact on a person's mental and physical health. That's why every year thousands of facilities such as libraries, schools, hospitals, assisted living, and more ask Pet Partners volunteers to bring therapy animals to visit and provide comfort to their students, residents, patients, and customers. This April 30 is a special day to recognize the beneficial role therapy dogs and other therapy animals, in partnership with their human companions, play in creating happier, healthier communities.

Unfortunately, there's a shortage of therapy animal teams in the United States. Pet Partners is the nation's leading registry of therapy animals, and their volunteer teams can't fulfill all the requests they receive for therapy animal visits. The need for therapy animals has never been greater to provide comfort and support, especially after the impacts of the pandemic, economic uncertainty, and social discord in recent years.

The good news is that a wide variety of species can be therapy animals, not just dogs. Cats, equines, rabbits, guinea pigs, rats, mini pigs, birds, and even llamas and alpacas are eligible for registration through the Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program, which makes more than three million visits a year.

"An animal's temperament is what determines whether they might make a good registered therapy animal with Pet Partners, not any specific species or breed," said Pet Partners President and CEO C. Annie Peters. "Many of our therapy animals are rescue pets, and they assist everyone from veterans with PTSD, seniors living with Alzheimer's, students with literacy challenges, patients in recovery, and people with intellectual disabilities. We couldn't be more grateful for all that our volunteer therapy teams do for people in need around the world."

Therapy animals have a special aptitude for interacting with members of the public and enjoy doing so. Therapy animal handlers have a strong trust-based bond with their pet and facilitate interactions that benefit all involved. The handler-animal pair takes part in an extensive evaluation process to make sure they will be successful with people in a variety of circumstances.

We have experts available to talk about the value therapy animals bring to communities, what behaviors a pet should exhibit, how the process works and more. We also have therapy animal handlers all across the United States who would love to talk about the joys of volunteering with their pets.

Pet Partners is also specifically seeking more cats and handlers to become registered volunteer teams. In partnership with Cat Person, a cat care brand, a research [study on the Cat Human Bond](#) found that cats can provide a special form of comfort that dogs cannot. Special incentives are also being offered for new cat teams.

Learn more about National Therapy Animal Day at petpartners.org/ntad. If you are interested in an interview, please contact Mary Tan at the above contact information.

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About Pet Partners

Pet Partners is the leader in the therapy animal field for registering volunteer teams. Since 1977, we have supported thousands of teams in making millions of meaningful visits across the country and around the world. Through the human-animal bond, we can improve the physical, social, and emotional lives of both the people and animals involved. Pet Partners supports volunteer teams by offering the highest quality preparation, an unmatched approach to evaluation and registration—for nine different types of animals, and a focus on connections. We elevate the importance of therapy animal visits, and our teams help build a healthier and happier world for us all. Whether or not you have a pet, learn more about sharing the human-animal bond by visiting petpartners.org.

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