



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pet Partners Welcomes Two New Members to its Board of Directors

(Bellevue, Wash. - May 19, 2025) – Pet Partners, the nation’s leading organization registering therapy animals, is pleased to announce the appointment of two new members to its Board of Directors: Camilo Zarta and Melissa Gutierrez. These distinguished leaders bring decades of experience in executive strategy and pet health innovation and will help guide Pet Partners as it continues to expand access to safe and effective therapy animal visits across the country.

Camilo is the Managing Director of Blair Heard Executive Search and the CEO and Founder of Probe Partners Group, a leading executive search and advisory firm. A nationally respected expert in board and c-suite leadership recruitment, he brings over 15 years of experience in executive search and organizational strategy. Based in Los Angeles, CA, Camilo offers deep insight into leadership development and succession planning. His work spans the consumer markets sector, including nonprofit, environmental, and mission-driven organizations. As a senior leader on the West Coast, Camilo is widely known for partnering with organizations dedicated to improving life on our planet—an ethos that aligns seamlessly with Pet Partners’ mission to enhance well-being through the human-animal bond.

Camilo lives in Los Angeles, CA with his partner, Samantha Clark, and their 4-year-old Husky-Shepherd mix named Beckham. Reflecting on his new role with Pet Partners, Camilo shared that one of his favorite quotes, by Gandhi, aligns well with the Pet Partners’ mission: “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

Melissa currently serves as Chief Executive Officer of Pets Best Insurance, LLC, in Columbus, OH, where she oversees strategy, operations, and innovation for one of the nation’s leading pet health insurance providers. With decades of leadership experience in specialty insurance and financial services, Melissa is a proven change agent with a track record of driving growth and transformation. A passionate advocate for the human-animal bond, Melissa brings both strategic vision and hands-on leadership experience to the Board. Her commitment to advancing Pet Partners’ mission is matched by her deep understanding of the pet health space.

Melissa lives in Galena, OH with her husband, Tony, and is the proud mother of three sons. The family shares their home with two beloved cats, Keisha and Elvis. Outside of work, Melissa enjoys rowing crew, gardening, cooking, and spending time with her family. “Pets have played an important role in my family,” said Gutierrez. “And I am honored to be part of Pet Partners’ efforts to broaden the impact the human-animal bond has on society’s well-being.”

“We are thrilled to welcome Camilo and Melissa to our Board of Directors,” said C. Annie Peters, President & CEO of Pet Partners. “Their unique perspectives and impressive leadership backgrounds will strengthen our ability to support therapy animal teams nationwide and elevate the beneficial role of therapy animals in public health, education, and beyond.”

As Pet Partners continues to lead the field in therapy animal registration and advocacy, the expertise of Camilo Zarta and Melissa Gutierrez will support strategic growth, broaden national partnerships, and ensure the highest standards of safety, education, and inclusion.

For more information about Pet Partners and its Board of Directors, visit www.petpartners.org.

About Pet Partners

Pet Partners is the leader in the therapy animal field. Since 1977, the organization has registered thousands of teams who have made millions of visits across the U.S. and around the world. Through the power of the human-animal bond, Pet Partners can improve the physical, emotional, and social well-being of people and animals alike. Through rigorous training, high standards, and a commitment to inclusion, Pet Partners supports volunteers working with nine different species of animals. 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, you can learn more about sharing the impact of therapy animals at petpartners.org.

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