



Pet Partners™

**TRAILS**

FOR

*tails*

**Hiker Guide**



# Event Overview



Welcome! We are grateful that you've chosen to be part of Trails for Tails, a unique hiking experience that brings together adventure, community, and compassion in Stowe, Vermont.

You're part of this pilot because of your adventurous spirit and dedication to helping others. Every step you take on the trail supports the Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program, bringing comfort, connection, and happiness to people in need.



## Important Dates

**March 1**

Fundraising Begins

**April 28**

Virtual Fundraising Clinic

**May 22**

Recommitment Deadline

**May 27**

Virtual Hiking Clinic

**June 16**

Deadline to mail checks, money orders, or sponsorship forms

**June 30**

Fundraising Deadline

**July 18**

Hike Day

# About Us

Pet Partners' mission is to improve human health and well-being through the human-animal bond. We prepare and support thousands of volunteers and their pets in making millions of meaningful visits annually in hospitals, schools, and anywhere vulnerable or underserved individuals would benefit from spending time with a comforting animal.



## When you support Pet Partners, you:



### INSPIRE HOPE

Our Animal-Assisted Crisis Response teams are trained and credentialed to provide emotional comfort and support in the wake of crisis events such as natural disasters and community tragedies.



### CARE FOR SENIORS

Pet Partners therapy animal teams make life-changing visits to thousands of seniors each year at retirement and assisted living facilities.



### NURTURE LEARNING

Pet Partners teams promote literacy through our Read With Me™ initiative. Research shows that when reading to a therapy animal, children feel at ease because animals just listen and don't judge.



### ENCOURAGE CHILDREN

A recent pediatric cancer study shows that therapy animals help motivate patients to participate in their treatment so they can “get better” and stay optimistic over time.



### IMPROVE HEALTH

Our Walk With Me™ initiative is a popular option for people of all ages. A stroll with an adorable therapy dog or mini horse is sometimes the perfect motivation to keep folks active and healthy.



### HONOR HEROES

Our teams visit thousands of veterans, service members, and children of deployed military parents each year at VA facilities, summer camps, and senior care communities for veterans.



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# Important Information



## What's Included

- Personal fundraising page
- Fundraising support
- Guided hike by Sunrise Mountain Guides
- Official Tails for Trails gear
- Post-summit celebration
- Golden Retriever Experience

## Sunrise Mountain Guides

We're proud to partner with Sunrise Mountain Guides, a trusted local company with over 30 years of experience in the Mount Mansfield region. Their team of certified, highly trained guides prioritizes safety, education, and personalized experiences, so you can feel confident you're in expert hands every step of the way.



## Fundraising Minimum

- \$2,000 per participant
- Hikers may choose to recommit or withdraw by May 22.
- Those who recommit agree to meet the \$2,000 fundraising minimum and will be responsible for covering any shortfall.
- Participants who raise more than the \$2,000 fundraising minimum are eligible for reimbursement of approved travel-related expenses (such as transportation or lodging). Reimbursement is capped at 20% of the amount raised above \$2,000. For example, a participant who raises \$3,000 may be reimbursed up to \$200 for eligible expenses upon submission of receipts (e.g., hotel or airfare).

# Fundraising Made Simple



Fundraising can feel intimidating, but it doesn't have to be. Most participants are surprised by how quickly donations add up once they start sharing why they're hiking. People love to support meaningful experiences!

## The 5-Step Fundraising Formula

1. **Share your why:** Make it personal and heartfelt
2. **Make a clear ask:** Tell people exactly how they can help
3. **Start early:** Early momentum builds confidence
4. **Follow up:** A gentle reminder goes a long way
5. **Say thank you:** Gratitude fuels generosity

## Fundraising Ideas

- Sponsor-a-mile (\$20–\$30 per mile)
- Birthday or anniversary fundraiser
- Matching gift challenge
- Host a small dinner, happy hour, or coffee walk
- Workplace email or casual team ask
- Social media countdown to the hike

You don't need a huge network, just a few thoughtful asks.

## Important Fundraising Dates

**Recommitment Deadline:** May 22 (to officially hold your spot)

**Deadline to mail checks, money orders, or sponsorship forms:** June 16

**Fundraising Deadline:** June 30



# Fundraising Scripts

## Email Script

**Subject:** I'm hiking for Pet Partners! Will you support me?

Hi [Name],

I wanted to share something special with you. This year, I was selected to take part in Trails for Tails, a guided hike in Stowe, Vermont, benefiting the Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program.

This cause means a lot to me because [your personal reason]. I've committed to raising \$2,000, and I'd be so grateful if you'd consider supporting my hike.

Any amount truly makes a difference and helps bring comfort and connection to people in need.

Thank you so much for cheering me on,

[Your name]

## Text Message Script

Hi [Name]! I'm excited to share that I was invited to participate in Trails for Tails, a hike in Stowe, Vermont, supporting the Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program. I've committed to raising \$2,000 and would be so grateful if you'd consider donating to my page: [Your fundraising URL] Thank you!

## Social Media Post

I'm officially training for Trails for Tails, a hiking experience in Stowe, Vermont! I've committed to raising \$2,000 to support the Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program, and I would be so grateful for your support. You can contribute here: [Your fundraising URL]

## Thank You Message

Thank you so much for supporting my Trails for Tails hike! Your generosity means more than you know and will help bring comfort and joy to so many.

## Telling Your Story

As you prepare your asks, take a moment to reflect:

- Why did you say yes to this hike?
- What role have animals played in your life?
- Why does this mission matter to you?



# Training & Trail Prep



You do not need to be an expert hiker. This experience is designed to be challenging but accessible.

## What to Expect:

- Scenic trails with varied terrain in Stowe, Vermont
- Hike length: Approximately 2.5 miles uphill
- Steady pacing with group support, breaks, and encouragement

## Helpful Habits:

- Walk or hike 2-3 times per week
- Practice with elevation when possible
- Break in footwear early
- Stay hydrated



# Packing List

## Essential

- Lightweight, moisture-wicking Pet Partners jersey
- Hiking shorts or breathable pants
- Light fleece or layer (mornings/elevations can be cooler)
- Hiking socks (preferably moisture-wicking)
- Sturdy hiking shoes or trail runners
- Light daypack (15-25L is plenty)
- At least 2 liters of water (hydration bladder or bottles)
- Snacks: trail mix, energy bars, fruit

## Optional

- Waterproof/light rain jacket
- Hat or cap
- Sunglasses
- Trekking poles
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Extra socks





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Erin Maennle

ErinM@petpartners.org

425-679-5535

