

Leading Experts Gathered At Purina's Better With Pets Summit To Explore How Pets And People's Quality Of Life Are Becoming More Intertwined Through Emotional Bonds

Day-long Summit examined emotional wellness and the evolution of the bond between pets and the people who love them through three panel discussions and experiential exhibits.

ST. LOUIS, Nov. 4, 2015 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- From a child development expert whose pet-centric curriculum is helping rehabilitate troubled adolescents to the founder of New York City's first cat café, Purina's third *Better With Pets Summit* showcased how the relationship between pets and people enhances overall emotional wellness.

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The day-long summit, which was hosted by Emmy-nominated comedian and writer, Josh Gondelman, took place at the Brooklyn Expo Center in New York City on Nov. 3 and featured three panel discussions that examined the emotional relationship between pets and people, including the reciprocal effects both have on one another. Keynote speeches were presented by Purina senior research nutritionist Arleigh Reynolds, who has researched the dog and human bond for many years in Alaska and supports of The Frank Attla Youth Program; and author and reality television personality Carole Radziwill, who shared how pet ownership has shaped her life experiences.

The first panel at the *Better With Pets Summit* examined how Millennials are changing the relationship between pet owners and cats. Purina revealed results at the summit from a recent survey that showed that nearly half of the 1,000 millennials surveyed own a cat and that 88 percent of cat owners consider themselves similar to their pets.[i] The second panel provided an in-depth look at pets' environments and the impact it may have on their stress levels, and the third panel focused on the benefits of raising pets and kids together and how it brings unique benefits that extend beyond a typical human-animal bond.

"The Purina *Better With Pets Summit* has become a platform where the best and the brightest in the industry meet and discuss how pets and people are better together," said Nina Leigh Krueger, Chief Marketing Officer for Nestle Purina PetCare. "This year, we not only explored emotional wellness across three expert panels, but attendees had access to one-of-a-kind interactive exhibits where they experienced first-hand ways to improve pet wellness."

New to the *Better With Pets Summit* this year were five educational zones which featured interactive exhibits for attendees to engage, as well as see Purina's vast expertise in the pet wellness space and connect with Purina experts. The exhibits featured educational touchscreen displays, a dedicated room showcasing healthy environments for cats, a play lab

for agility dogs with wearable technology that monitored their activity as they played, and an area where attendees can see how nutrition impacts cognition and emotional wellness in pets.

"It's incredible to see the kind of work people are doing to enhance and strengthen the bond between pets and their owners," said Carole Radziwill, author, reality television personality and a keynote speaker at this year's summit. "As someone who has experienced the benefits of pet ownership throughout my life, I'm happy to see that Purina is leading these conversations through the *Better With Pets Summit* to create a better world for our pets."

The ten panelists included Heather Lewis, an animal arts architect who is paving the way for pet wellness through pet-centric design and architecture; Jayne Vitale, a child development expert and director of the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum, a social and emotional learning (SEL) program designed to teach empathy as a skill to adolescents; Christina Ha, the founder of Meow Parlour, the first permanent cat cafe in New York City; and Dr. Tony Buffington, a cat stress expert who has spent the majority of his career examining stress in pets and the impact it can have on health.

Purina also announced at the summit that it will donate \$50,000 to The Frank Attla Youth Program, which was developed to help at-risk youth in rural Alaska gain confidence and self-esteem by adding dogs into the school curriculum and giving them an opportunity to create a unique bond with dogs, and teaching students how to care for them. The donation is part of Purina's broader support of more than 900 pet welfare organizations each year.

For more information about the *Better With Pets Summit*, visit <https://www.purina.com/better-with-pets/summit#/hero>.

About Nestle Purina PetCare

Nestle Purina PetCare Company is a global leader in the pet care industry. Nestle Purina PetCare promotes responsible pet care, community involvement and the positive bond between people and their pets. A premiere global manufacturer of pet products, Nestle Purina PetCare is part of Swiss-based Nestle S.A., a global leader in nutrition, health and wellness.

[i] Penn Schoen Berland. 2015 Cats & Millennials Survey. 2015.

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