D.C. Startup Wins Pet Care Innovation Prize by Purina

Barkly Pets Receives Additional Funding and Immediate Industry Exposure at Global Pet Expo

ORLANDO, Fla., March 21, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- Five pet-focused startups pitched their businesses in Orlando to win the 2017/2018 Pet Care Innovation Prize powered by Purina, and Washington D.C. startup Barkly Pets earned the honor just hours before the opening of the pet industry's biggest trade show, Global Pet Expo. Barkly Pets is the highest rated dog walking app designed to simplify everyday and essential pet care needs with services available to users 365 days a year in 60 minutes notice or less. As the grand prize winner of the Pet Care Innovation Prize, Barkly Pets was awarded an additional $10,000 from Purina and a dedicated booth at Global Pet Expo courtesy of the show organizers at the American Pet Products Association.

Barkly Pets was selected by a panel of industry judges including Lindsay Beaton, Managing Editor of Petfood Industry magazine, Bryan Jaffe of Cascadia Capital, Gila Kurtz of Dog is Good and Bill Broun, Blair Morgan and David Narkiewicz from Purina's 9 Square Ventures Division in a culminating event where each business was given less than 10 minutes to make a final pitch to win the grand prize. Although the Pet Care Innovation Prize is a competition, the businesses have sought to be more collaborative than competitive throughout the course of the program.

"We are humbled to be honored as the Pet Care Innovation Prize grand prize winner. The opportunity to spend time with industry experts at Purina and our fellow finalists throughout the program gave us insight into how can better serve our customers and the pet professionals we empower daily to care for their pets," said Chris Gonzalez, co-founder of Barkly Pets. "We have a very high burden of trust with our customers to let us into their homes and care for their loved ones while they are away, and being named the Pet Care Innovation Prize grand prize winner is a major validation of our mission and approach to business."

Barkly Pets will be showcasing their business at Global Pet Expo in booth 2481 with a dedicated space, but the remaining finalists will also have a presence at the show. The other four startups AnimalBiome, BareItAll Petfoods, Fetch Labs Inc, and PupJoy will be stationed right next to Barkly Pets in the adjoining space, providing with all of the businesses with valuable visibility to the pet product industry's most qualified buyers, retailers and investors.

Last fall, five finalists were selected from more than 85 global applicants, each winning $10,000 prize and support from the Pet Care Innovation Prize team including Active Capital, Cultivation Capital, and Purina, a global leader in pet care. Earlier this year, the startups traveled to St. Louis, where Purina's global headquarters is located, for a Pet Care Business Boot Camp, a multi-day accelerator program to get advice, mentorship and access to business partners.

"Purina's founder, William Danforth, dared his people to dream big, work hard and lead by example, and the Pet Care Innovation Prize is one way that we hope to embody that spirit by helping others succeed," said Blair Morgan, Co-Lead of Purina's 9 Square Ventures Division and Vice President of Innovation at Purina. "We congratulate Barkly Pets and look forward to seeing the great things that they and all of this year's finalists will do in the industry to help make pets lives better."

Since the first competition in 2016, past Pet Care Innovation Prize finalists and winners have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars in equity and prizes from investors and accelerator programs across the US. The winner of the first Pet Care Innovation Prize, Obe, has seen continued success since participating in the program. For updates on past finalists and a closer look at the 2016/2017 Pet Care Innovation Prize class of entrepreneurs, visit www.petcareinnovationprize.com.

ABOUT THE PET CARE INNOVATION PRIZE

The Pet Care Innovation Prize aims to help entrepreneurs through its mission to support and connect innovative early stage companies with pet-related products and/or services for sale. The competition is open to companies that focus on key areas of dog and cat needs, care and ownership including pet food, nutrition, care, play and technology. Visit petcareinnovationprize.com for updates on the next competition.

About Active Capital:
Active Capital is a St. Louis-based impact investing leader, helping startups and investors come together to grow innovative products and initiatives. Active Capital manages the Pet Care Innovation Prize.

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

About Cultivation Capital
Cultivation Capital is a St. Louis-based early stage venture capital firm focused on investing in high potential technology, life sciences and FinTech companies. Cultivation Capital is managed by a team of experienced entrepreneurs, and has invested in 36 companies that have exceeded $500 million in total capital raised. For more information, please visit www.cultivationcapital.com

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