New Virtual Therapy Cat Visits for Seniors Available Throughout May

Purina Cat Chow Teams Up with Pet Partners and Institute on Aging to Provide Free Virtual Therapy Cat Visits for Seniors during Mental Health Awareness Month

ST. LOUIS, May 2, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- In honor of Mental Health Awareness Month this May, Purina® Cat Chow® has announced a partnership with Pet Partners®, a national non-profit known for its Therapy Animal Program, and Institute on Aging (IOA), a non-profit dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for aging adults, to help more senior adults experience the therapeutic benefits of cats.

Throughout the month of May, seniors over age 60 can call Institute on Aging's 24-hour toll-free Friendship Line at 800-616-5152 to schedule one of 50 free virtual therapy cat team visits with Pet Partners.

Pandemic Impact on Seniors

"The Covid-19 pandemic took an emotional and mental toll on every population, but aging adults with health concerns were disproportionally affected both physically and socially," **said Mia Grigg, Institute on Aging's Vice President of Integrated Care Services.** "At IOA, calls to the Friendship Line, our hotline for adults over 60, jumped by 30 percent, demonstrating an urgent need for connection and emotional support."

Therapeutic Benefits of Cats

"While nothing replaces the emotional connection of petting a cat, research shows engaging with virtual pet content can still be impactful, while also keeping all parties safe," **said C. Annie Peters, President & CEO of Pet Partners**. "In fact, one study cited within our recent white paper[1] showed that even watching animal videos has been correlated with a more positive effect for the viewer, leading to an enhanced mood and increased feelings of positivity."

Further research cited by Pet Partners has found that therapy animals have been shown to:

- Increase perceptions of social support, decrease levels of general anxiety, and alleviate symptoms of depression[2].
- For older adults, they have been shown to comfort people with dementia, promote socialization and engagement in older age, and decrease depression, anxiety, and irritability in seniors[2].

How to Help

Cat Chow is calling on all cat-lovers to help share the healing power of cats. From May 1 through May 31, 2022, for every purchase of Cat Chow Complete, Purina Cat Chow will make a donation to Pet Partners, up to $25,000, to support the cats in their Therapy Animal Program so more people can benefit from the therapeutic benefits of cats.

For more information, visit catchow.com/therapy.

About Nestlé Purina PetCare

Nestlé Purina PetCare creates richer lives for pets and the people who love them. Founded in 1894, Purina has helped dogs and cats live longer, healthier lives by offering scientifically based nutritional innovations. Purina manufactures some of the world's most trusted and popular pet care products, including Cat Chow, Purina ONE, Pro Plan, Fancy Feast and Tidy Cats. Our more than 8,700 U.S. associates take pride in our

trusted pet food, treat and litter brands that feed 51 million dogs and 65 million cats every year. More than 500 Purina scientists, veterinarians, and pet care experts ensure our commitment to unsurpassed quality and nutrition. Purina promotes responsible pet care through our scientific research, our products and our support for pet-related organizations. Over the past five years, Purina has contributed more than $150 million towards organizations that bring, and keep, people and pets together, as well as those that help our communities and environment thrive. Purina is part of Nestlé, a global leader in Nutrition, Health and Wellness. For more information, visit purina.com or subscribe here to get the latest Purina news.

About Pet Partners

Pet Partners is the national leader in demonstrating and promoting the health and wellness benefits of animal-assisted therapy, activities, and education. Since the organization's inception in 1977, the science proving these benefits has become indisputable. With thousands of registered teams making millions of visits annually, Pet Partners serves as the nation's most diverse and respected nonprofit registering handlers of multiple species as volunteer teams. Pet Partners teams visit with patients in recovery, people with intellectual disabilities, seniors living with Alzheimer's, students, veterans with PTSD, people who have experienced crisis events, and those approaching end of life, with the goal of improving human health and well-being through the human-animal bond. With the release of its *Standards of Practice for Animal-Assisted Interventions* and international expansion, Pet Partners is globally recognized as the industry gold standard. For more information on Pet Partners, visit www.petpartners.org.

About Institute on Aging

Founded in 1975, Institute on Aging (IOA) is one of California's largest community-based nonprofit organizations providing comprehensive health, social, and psychological services for older adults and adults living with disabilities. IOA's mission is to enhance the quality of life for adults as they age by enabling them to maintain their health, well-being, independence, and participation in the community. Long considered one of the most innovative and diverse organizations of its kind, Institute on Aging annually touches the lives of more than 50,000 older adults and adults with living disabilities, together with their circles of care, through programs designed to alleviate isolation and enable seniors to continue living independently in the community. Learn more at www.ioaging.org.

Sources

1. "Benefiting from the Power of the Human-Animal Bond When Personal Interaction is Not Possible", Pet Partners White Paper, August 2021.
2. "Empirical Support for Therapy Animal Interventions," Pet Partners White Paper, February 2020.

SOURCE Purina Cat Chow

For further information: Media Contact: Janette Artea, 214-202-0698, jartea@golin.com

---

Additional assets available online: Photos (2)