PURINA AND REDROVER BROADEN SUPPORT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS WITH PETS WITH A NEW VOICE CHAMPIONING THE CAUSE

- *Pro Football Defensive End, James Smith-Williams, to wear custom Purple Leash Project cleats for the My Cause My Cleats Campaign during the Week 13 game on December 4, 2022*
- *Journalist and Emmy Award-winning talk show host, Tamron Hall, continues to share her personal message and importance of the Purple Leash Project mission with her new puppy, Exodus, by her side*

ST. LOUIS, Oct. 4, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- This October, during National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Purina and RedRover continue their work to help domestic violence survivors escape abuse with their pets by enlisting the help of new and existing friends to shine a light on the lack of pet-friendly resources for survivors. James Smith-Williams, defensive end for the Washington Commanders, and journalist and two-time Emmy Award-winning talk show host, Tamron Hall, will lend their voices as advocates for the Purple Leash Project – a national initiative established in 2019 by Purina and nonprofit RedRover to provide grants, resources and support to help domestic violence shelters better serve the needs of domestic abuse survivors with pets.

In the U.S., 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men will experience some form of domestic abuse in their lifetime ranging from physical violence to emotional or financial abuse. For survivors with pets, leaving an abuser can be more difficult due to a lack of resources to support them through pet-friendly shelters and housing. In fact, currently, only 15% of domestic violence shelters in the United States allow pets, and almost half of abuse survivors (about 48%) will delay leaving an abuser if they can't take their pet with them into a shelter.

It's an issue that Purina and RedRover have passionately addressed for more than a decade. Enlisting the support of Smith-Williams and Hall is one way to continue to drive awareness, action and advocacy for more pet-friendly shelter across the nation.

"We can always accomplish more together than we can alone, which is why our partnerships with James and Tamron are so critical to the Purple Leash Project mission," said Nina Leigh Krueger, CEO and President of Purina. "Pets have a unique ability to break down walls, inspire empathy and help us start conversations about tough issues like domestic violence. And the conversations we are having today are driving real change in the way that abuse survivors with pets are served."

Lacing Up for Purple Leash Project

James Smith-Williams of the Washington Commanders pro football team has worked to raise awareness on domestic abuse prevention for many years. Now, with his dog Luna by his side, Smith-Williams is looking to deepen his commitment to survivors and their pets.

"As a life-long pet lover, pet owner, and domestic violence advocate, I'm proud to represent the Purple Leash Project," said Smith-Williams. "It's an honor to use my platform on and off the field to draw attention to the critical importance that pets play in the lives of survivors as companions, healers, and four-legged members of the family – especially during times of crisis."

Through the My Cause My Cleats program, pro football players can wear their hearts on their feet by picking a cause that's important to them and representing their chosen organization by way of custom-designed cleats on game day. After their respective game, all players will have the option to donate their cleats to an auction where fans can bid on the cleats. All proceeds will go toward the player's respective

causes, and in Smith-Williams's case, the proceeds from the sale of his cleats will benefit the Purple Leash Project.

Smith-Williams will reveal his custom-designed, Purple Leash Project-inspired cleats, ahead of the match-up between the Washington Commanders and the New York Giants on December 4, 2022.

"We're honored to have James Smith-Williams join us this year as a partner, and to have Tamron Hall back with us for a third year," said Nicole Forsyth, President and CEO of RedRover. "Together, their voices will help to drive change and highlight all that's already been done to support survivors and their pets. Our collective voices and actions will help bring much-needed awareness to this issue."

Continuing to Champion Survivors and Staying Connected

Tamron Hall, a lifelong pet lover whose own sister was tragically killed by an abuser, will continue to be an advocate for survivors in her third year as a Purple Leash Project partner.

"I'm honored to be partnering with Purina and RedRover again. The work they are doing to ensure safe places for domestic violence survivors and their pets is crucial to the survivor's personal journey," said Hall. "I can't imagine having to leave my Bernedoodle, Exodus, in an unsafe environment. It is truly a heartbreaking decision for someone to make, on top of the abuse they have already endured."

Throughout October, Purina and RedRover are inviting pet lovers to join James and Tamron by supporting the Purple Leash Project.

- **Amplify**: Help raise awareness about the connection between domestic violence and pets by spreading the word on social media using the hashtag #PurpleLeashProject.
- **Watch**: On December 4th, as part of the My Cause My Cleats program, James will be wearing specially designed cleats in support of the Purple Leash Project. Be sure to tune into the game.
- **Donate**: Visit PurpleLeashProject.com to learn more about the effort and how to make a donation. With a recurring donation of at least $5 a month, or a one-time gift of$60 or more, you'll receive the Purple Leash Project's limited-edition purple dog leash or cat collar featuring the Purple Leash Project motto: Walk. Heal. Together.

Looking Forward to 2025

Since the Purple Leash Project was founded in 2019, Purina has provided more than $1 million in funding and is working together with RedRover toward a goal of helping to ensure that at least 25% of domestic violence shelters are pet-friendly by 2025. To date, 34 grants totaling more than $700,000 have now been gifted to domestic violence shelters across the US by Purina providing thousands of safe nights for survivors with pets.

In 2022 alone, nine Purple Leash Project grants have been given to domestic violence shelters in need of pet-friendly renovations. Most recently, four domestic violence shelters in Missouri, Rhode Island, California and Florida received funding for upgrades that will include converting existing indoor and outdoor spaces to accommodate pets, the installation of pet-friendly flooring and a 'catio' – an enclosed cat patio.

In addition to work done through the Purple Leash Project, Purina is a founding member of the Pet and Women Safety (PAWS) Act Coalition, which works to rally congressional support for key issues impacting survivors with pets. Together with RedRover and other coalition members, Purina continues to advocate for federal resources and funding to provide more survivors the option of pet-friendly shelters and services. Earlier in 2022, the PAWS Act Grant Program received full congressional funding as part of the

Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022, marking the first time since its passage that the PAWS Act has received the fully authorized amount of $3 million in federal funding.

To learn more about the Purple Leash Project, make a donation or sign up for ongoing updates, visit PurpleLeashProject.com.

About Purina
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 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 RedRover
Since 1987, RedRover has focused on bringing animals out of crisis and strengthening the human-animal bond through emergency sheltering, disaster relief services, financial assistance, and education. Since 2012, RedRover has awarded 176 grants to shelters in 46 states, totaling more than $2.6 million and providing more than 418,700 safe nights for pets. Additionally, Safe Housing grants have created the first pet-friendly domestic violence shelter in ten states! RedRover has earned a coveted 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent charity evaluator. To learn how RedRover is creating a more compassionate world, visit RedRover.org.

SOURCE Purina

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