

Julie Bowen Honors Sarah Hyland with the First-Ever Variety Courage Award Presented by Purina

The Variety Power of Women Los Angeles Event Also Highlighted the Purple Leash Project and its Mission to Create Safe Spaces for Domestic Abuse Survivors and Their Pets

ST. LOUIS, Oct. 25, 2024 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- Purina honored actor and entrepreneur Sarah Hyland at the Variety Power of Women Los Angeles event presented by Lifetime on Thursday, October 24 for her advocacy for domestic abuse survivors. Actor Julie Bowen delivered an inspiring speech to her former co-star before handing her the award, which builds on the [Purple Leash Project](#), an innovative partnership between Purina and nonprofit [RedRover](#) to create safe spaces for domestic abuse survivors and their pets.

"Sarah's personal experience has made her a strong advocate for the role dogs play in our emotional well-being, and her love for her dogs over the years – Barkley, Carl and Boo – mirrors what so many of us feel—especially women who've been abused," said Julie Bowen in her remarks at the event. "Sarah's courage to stand up for herself has inspired countless others to do the same."

As a pet lover and survivor of abuse, Hyland has found healing in shining a light on the dark issue of domestic abuse, which can happen in all types and stages of relationships. She experienced the incredible power of the human-pet bond to provide comfort and companionship during difficult times firsthand.

"October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and, while it is not the easiest topic to talk about, it is of the utmost importance that we do," Hyland said in her acceptance speech. "There was a time when the only being I could trust with my true feelings and felt the safest with was with my dog, Barkley. He got me through the worst years of my life and I know I wouldn't be able to make it out without him."

Sarah knows firsthand the support that a pet can provide in a survivor's darkest days. That bond, however, can also be used against domestic abuse survivors, as nearly half (48 percent) reported they delay leaving because they can't take their pets with them.

Since 2019, Purina and RedRover have provided more than 55 Purple Leash Project grants to help domestic violence shelters across the country become pet friendly so that survivors don't have to make an impossible choice between their safety and the safety of their pets.

Two of the most recent recipients of Purple Leash Project grants are Women's Advocates in St. Paul, Minnesota, and LiveSafe Resources in Marietta, Georgia, which each received a grant during Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October.

"Women's Advocates is deeply grateful for the support from RedRover and Purina's Purple Leash Project grant," said Women's Advocates Development Coordinator, Tiana Daun. "This grant will help us create a pet-friendly emergency domestic violence shelter, allowing pets to stay with their owners in their own apartment so that they may heal together."

When Purina and RedRover started the Purple Leash Project in 2019, under ten percent of domestic violence shelters were pet friendly. Today, almost 20 percent of domestic violence shelters in the U.S. are pet friendly and Purina and RedRover are working to increase that number to 25 percent by the end of 2025.

"We are grateful for RedRover and Purina's Purple Leash Project grant, as this support will help us finalize the building of our pet sanctuary to become the first domestic violence shelter in Northwest Georgia to provide this life-saving program to survivors and their animal family members," said LiveSafe Resources CEO, Lisa Mello. "As the first state certified domestic violence shelter in Georgia, it has been a longstanding dream of our staff, board of directors and local law enforcement to provide this enhanced service to our community and those seeking safety in their greatest time of need."

To raise awareness of the cause, Purina also brought the "Courageous Together" statue by renowned "Fearless Girl" artist Kristen Visbal to the Variety Power of Women Los Angeles event. It depicts a woman and her dog, connected by a purple leash and taking a courageous first step forward, together, as survivors leaving an abuser.

"Through art and open conversations with advocates like Sarah, we can help drive positive change to support abuse survivors and their pets," said Nina Leigh Krueger, CEO of Purina. "Together, we can help reduce the stigma of shame for survivors and increase awareness and support of important programs and resources that are truly making a difference in their lives."

Sarah implored attendees to support domestic abuse survivors at both ends of the leash. "As Domestic Violence Awareness Month comes to a close, please don't forget what you learned," Hyland said. "Survivors deserve more."

For more information about the Purple Leash Project and Purina's commitment to supporting domestic violence survivors and their pets, or to make a donation visit Purina.com/Courage.

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, Friskies and Tidy Cats. Our more than 11,000 U.S. associates take pride in our trusted pet food, treat and litter brands that feed 46 million dogs and 68 million cats every year. Nearly 500 Purina scientists, veterinarians, and pet care experts ensure our commitment to unsurpassed quality and nutrition.

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. To learn how RedRover is creating a more compassionate world, visit RedRover.org.

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