

## Purina and Mariska Hargitay Bring the Purple Leash Project to U.S. Soccer, Launch Limited-Edition Scarves Supporting Abuse Survivors and Pets

*Hargitay joined the U.S. Women's National Team as Purina's Honorary Captain to raise awareness and support for domestic violence survivors with pets during Domestic Violence Awareness Month*

WASHINGTON, Oct. 11, 2026 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- Purina, the Official Pet Care Partner of the U.S. Soccer Federation, brought its Purple Leash Project message and mission to the pitch during the U.S. Women's National Team match against Spain, presented by Purina, at Audi Field. Actress, producer and advocate Mariska Hargitay joined the pet care leader at the match to raise awareness of the issue of domestic violence, show support for survivors and inspire soccer fans to learn more about the Purple Leash Project and ways they can help survivors and their pets find safety together.

In recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Mariska Hargitay, a longtime Purina partner and dedicated champion for domestic violence survivors, joined Purina and the USWNT as Purina's Honorary Captain. Hargitay participated in the pre-match coin toss alongside Cassidy, a 75-pound Golden Retriever, and her handler, Patrice "Pat" Eller. Together, Cassidy and Pat are part of a [Pet Partners](#) pet therapy support team that provides comfort and reassurance to children who may be called to testify in court, helping create a greater sense of safety for children and families during difficult moments. Their work reflects the Purple Leash Project's focus on the healing power of comfort, connection and support for people and pets impacted by domestic violence.

The Purple Leash Project, a Purina initiative in partnership with nonprofit RedRover, helps domestic violence survivors and their pets escape abuse and heal together by making more shelters pet-friendly. Through grants to domestic violence shelters and social service providers, the initiative supports pet-friendly shelter renovations, on-site and off-site pet housing solutions, the purchase of essential pet supplies and the cost of necessary veterinary care, helping remove barriers to safety for survivors who might otherwise have to leave a beloved pet behind. Today, only 20% of domestic violence shelters allow pets, and 48% of survivors delay leaving an abusive situation because they cannot take their pets with them.

"Seeing the Purple Leash Project take the field helped turn the stadium into a powerful show of support for survivors and the pets they love," said Mariska Hargitay. "I'm honored to continue my work with Purina on a stage like this during Domestic Violence Awareness Month to bring greater awareness to domestic abuse, help break down the stigma survivors so often face and shine a light on the need for more safe, pet-friendly spaces where survivors and their beloved, trusted companions can begin healing together."

Bringing awareness to this important cause is a key way Purina works to support survivors, helping to erase the stigma many survivors encounter. Soccer fans can show their support for survivors and the Purple Leash Project by purchasing a limited-edition, Courageous & Comfy Soccer Scarf, officially licensed by U.S. Soccer and available exclusively at [shop.PurpleLeashProject.com](https://shop.PurpleLeashProject.com). One hundred percent of every purchase is a donation to RedRover to support the Purple Leash Project mission to help keep abuse survivors together with their pets.

"At Purina, we believe survivor safety shouldn't require sacrifice. That's why we're proud to continue our work with RedRover and grateful to Mariska for helping to bring greater visibility to the need for more safe

spaces for domestic violence survivors on both ends of the leash," said Nina Leigh Krueger, CEO of Purina. "Together, we can help ensure survivors never have to choose between their safety and the safety of pets they love."

In addition to putting a spotlight on the Purple Leash Project, this game also reflected Purina's broader approach to sports collaborations, reimagining the role pets can play in sports culture, not only as companions at home, but as part of the fan experience itself. At Audi Field, Purina created the Purina Club, a temporary pet-friendly seating area where soccer fans can bring their dogs to cheer on the U.S. Women's National Team together. And, earlier this year, Purina launched its national "[For the Team Behind the Team](#)" campaign with U.S. Men's National Team player Weston McKennie and introduced the first national pet jersey for soccer fans and their pets. Purina also partnered with KC2026 on pet-centered programming at the FIFA Fan Festival Kansas City, including Dog Days, pet kits and adoption-focused community programming.

Through the Purple Leash Project, Purina has provided nearly 70 grants for more than \$2.2 million across more than 30 states to help create pet-friendly spaces for domestic violence survivors and their pets. Purina is working toward an ambitious goal of helping to provide 1 million safe nights for survivors and their pets by the end of 2030.

To learn more, visit [Purina.com/EscapeTogether](https://Purina.com/EscapeTogether).

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Q: Why did Purina partner with the U.S. Women's National Team and Mariska Hargitay?**

A: During Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Purina saw an opportunity to bring together two of its partners, the U.S. Soccer Federation and actress, producer and advocate Mariska Hargitay, to shine a light on the Purple Leash Project's efforts to support survivors with pets. The partnership aims to raise awareness of the dynamics of domestic violence, help reduce survivor stigma and highlight the importance of creating safe, pet-friendly spaces where survivors and their pets can escape abuse and heal together.

### **Q: What are the "Courageous Together" soccer scarves?**

A: The "Courageous & Comfy" soccer scarves are limited-edition scarves created by Purina in partnership with U.S. Soccer to raise awareness for domestic violence survivors and their pets. They are available at [shop.PurpleLeashProject.com](https://shop.PurpleLeashProject.com), and 100% of every purchase is a donation to RedRover to help keep abuse survivors and their pets together.

### **Q: How can fans support the Purple Leash Project?**

A: Fans can purchase a limited-edition "Courageous Together" soccer scarf at [shop.PurpleLeashProject.com](https://shop.PurpleLeashProject.com). One hundred percent of every purchase is donated to RedRover to support domestic violence survivors and their pets. Fans can also learn more about Purina's work through the Purple Leash Project at [Purina.com/EscapeTogether](https://Purina.com/EscapeTogether).

### **Q: How is Purina expanding the role of pets in sports?**

A: Purina is helping make pets part of the sports fan experience. Earlier this year, Purina launched the ["For the Team Behind the Team"](#) campaign with U.S. Men's National Team player Weston McKennie and introduced what it describes as the first national pet jersey for soccer fans and their pets. Purina also partnered with KC2026 on pet-centered programming at the FIFA Fan Festival™ Kansas City, including Dog Days, pet kits and adoption-focused community programming.

### **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 Dog Chow, 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](https://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](https://RedRover.org).

### **About The U.S. Soccer Federation**

Founded in 1913, U.S. Soccer, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is the official governing body of the sport in the United States. Our vision is clear; we exist in service to soccer. Our ambition, working across the soccer ecosystem, is to ignite a national passion for the game. We believe soccer is more than a sport; it is a force for good. We are focused in three areas: Soccer Everywhere, ensuring everyone, everywhere experiences the joy of soccer; Soccer Success, our 27 National Teams and pro leagues winning on the world stage; and Soccer Investment, maximizing and diversifying investments to sustainably grow the game at all levels. For more information, visit [ussoccer.com/ourvision](https://ussoccer.com/ourvision).

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