

## Local Pet Shelters Team up with Purina to Change Perceptions of Shelter Pets

Company, St. Louis-area shelters work together to showcase personality of shelter pets and increase pet adoptions through "Meet the Real Me" Campaign

**ST. LOUIS (Oct. 5, 2015)** – Pet shelters across the U.S. are facing a perception problem. As a result of common misperceptions regarding the health, behavior and age of shelter animals, currently only 27 percent of household pets nationwide\* – and 40 percent locally come from shelters\*\*. To address this issue, Nestlé Purina and local pet shelters are working together to make sure people in the St. Louis region get to know shelter pets as they really are – friendly, attractive and wonderful lifelong companions.

This fall, from Sept. 21 through Nov. 8, Purina will reprise its successful “Meet the Real Me” campaign to challenge misperceptions of shelter pets. New for 2015, Purina and several local pet shelters will team up to host a single-day adoption event Oct. 17. The event, which takes place from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. at Soulard Park, located at 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Lafayette Avenue, will showcase shelter organizations and their adoptable pets in the St. Louis community.

“All too often, the misperception about shelter pets can result in these pets not being adopted,” said Libby Davidson, marketing associate, Purina Pet Welfare Team. “The ‘Meet the Real Me’ campaign is designed to raise awareness of the happy and healthy pets that live in our local shelters and increase pet adoption in the St. Louis area.”

Purina’s “Meet the Real Me” program includes a multimedia advertising campaign – including billboards located around the St. Louis area – featuring a series of photos that showcase the beauty and personality of shelter pets. The featured animals are currently in – or were recently adopted from – local shelter organizations.

In 2014, Purina provided its shelter partners with “Meet the Real Me” tools, including a set of photography guidelines and tips, downloadable posters and a computer monitor frame to help shelters and rescue organizations take photos that present their pets in a more positive way. These photography kits gave shelters the valuable tools they needed to showcase the true personalities of their shelter pets and increase chances for adoption. In fact, several of the photos featured in this year’s campaign were taken by shelter staff using Purina’s photography tools.

During last year’s “Meet the Real Me” digital advertising campaign, Petfinder.com – an online pet adoption website – saw a 27-percent increase in web traffic in the St. Louis area\*\*\*.

“After we began using the ‘Meet the Real Me’ photography tools, we saw an immediate increase in our pet pictures being shared,” said Steve Kaufman, executive director of the

Animal Protective Association of Missouri. “We have maintained that higher level of shares consistently, and overall our adoptions are way up from last year.”

“A great photo of a shelter pet helps a person better understand a pet’s personality and beauty,” said Davidson. “These photos begin to tell a story that often concludes with these pets finding a new home.”

During this year’s campaign, pet owners are encouraged to share photos of pets they’ve adopted on social media, using the hashtag #considerashelterpet. For more information about the “Meet the Real Me” campaign or to find adoptable pets in your area, visit [www.considerashelterpet.com](http://www.considerashelterpet.com).

**\*Purina Gateway Study, 2013**

**\*\*St. Louis Acquisition Study, 2013**

**\*\*\* Petfinder analysis**

## **About Nestlé Purina PetCare Company**

Nestlé Purina PetCare Company promotes responsible pet care, community involvement and the positive bond between people and their pets. In 2014, Nestlé Purina donated approximately \$8 million to pet-related charities and other community organizations and civic groups across the Americas. Nearly 6 million pounds - \$19 million in retail value - of Purina pet food, treats and litter was donated to more than 940 animal welfare organizations in the United States in 2014. 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.

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Additional assets available online:  [Photos \(1\)](#)