

Tree of Hope Raises \$3 Million for Homeless Pets

Petco Foundation's holiday fundraiser reaches goal to help shelter animals.

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An annual holiday fundraising campaign conducted by the Petco Foundation met its goal of \$3 million to support local animal shelters across the nation.

During the holiday season, the interior walls at Petco stores were decorated with paper tree ornaments for the Tree of Hope initiative. Customers helped build the "tree" by purchasing an ornament card in increments of \$1, \$5, \$10, or \$20, or by rounding up a product purchase.

Fifty percent of the money raised goes immediately to the thousands of grassroots-level animal organizations already partnered with the retailer. The remaining half of the donations go to animal welfare groups in the areas where the money was raised throughout the year, said Petco spokeswoman Kalen Smith.

The Foundation also partnered with Iams to raise funds and help the pet-food company with its annual Home 4 the Holidays adoption drive, which found homes for more than 1 million animals. Beth Mars, director of operations and development for the Foundation, said meeting the \$3 million goal was a challenge, given the current economic situation.

"The funds raised during this campaign will benefit the lives of thousands of animals just waiting for the right forever family to find them and give them a loving home," Mars said.