

Pet Hug Fund Spreads Word about Therapy Dogs

Purina and Build-A-Bear Workshop team up to support therapy dogs and the Pet Hug Fund.

Posted: May 17, 2007, 5 a.m. EST

In recognition of National Pet Month, Nestle Purina PetCare and Build-A-Bear Workshop have partnered with baseball manager Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation's Pet Hug Fund to spread the word about the power of pet therapy.

The ARF Pet Hug Fund provides financial support to animal therapy teams nationwide whose goal is to give as many pet hugs as possible to those in need, such as senior citizens, hospital patients, children with disabilities and troubled youth. Many of the therapy pets directly involved with ARF were rescued from shelters.

"Many people don't realize the remarkable healing power animals possess, so we are focused on creating national programs like the ARF Pet Hug Fund to raise awareness of pet therapy and help support local efforts," said Bianca La Russa, of the ARF Pet Hug Fund. "As a pet owner and an active pet therapy volunteer, I'm constantly amazed by the number of smiles and the amount of joy our pets bring to those in need."

Dog lovers can help support the ARF Pet Hug Fund and its pet therapy teams by visiting www.purinapetlover.com to download a mail-in certificate to order a Purina Beary Limited edition Build-A-Bear Workshop mini therapy dog or cat, modeled after two therapy pets that had been rescued from a shelter. For every mini pet ordered through June 30, Purina will donate \$1 to the ARF Pet Hug Fund.

Dog lovers can also support the ARF Pet Hug Fund by visiting Build-A-Bear Workshop. Through the month of May, Build-A-Bear Workshop will donate \$1 to the ARF Pet Hug Fund for every Bearemy's Kennel Pals dog purchased at a retail location or online. In addition, Purina will match each \$1 donation made by Build-A-Bear Workshop. To locate a Build-A-Bear Workshop or to purchase online, visit www.buildabear.com.

Purina's total donation will be a minimum of \$75,000.

For more information about Animal Rescue Foundation's Pet Hug Fund, visit <http://www.pethugfund.org/>.