



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### *Hand in Paw's 2020 Tweety Lasker Award*

**BIRMINGHAM, AL:** Dr. Jim and Katie Lasker presented the 2020 Tweety Lasker Award to the UAB Trauma and Burn Intensive Care Unit for their exceptional service and dedication to incorporating the healing visits of Hand in Paw Therapy Teams on Monday June 22, 2020 at Hand in Paw. In attendance were Jim and Katie Lasker, Therapy Team Kay and Oliver, Margaret Stinnett, Executive Director for Hand in Paw and Erin Townsend, Assistant Nurse Manager from the UAB Trauma and Burn ICU. The award was presented in the Lasker Training Center and observed by Beth Franklin, Founder of Hand in Paw and Kiersten Atkinson, Director of Volunteers and Programs. Special guests were the beloved greyhounds, Real and Sister, who are fortunate members of the Lasker family.

In 2007, as a tribute to his beloved and devoted greyhound Tweety, Dr. Jim Lasker established The Tweety Lasker Award. This memorial provides \$10,000 each year to support Hand in Paw's (HIP) healing work. It also recognizes a Program Partner (facility) that has worked in collaboration with HIP to bring therapy visits to their clients/patients. The selected facility is presented a Brad Morton bronze statue of Tweety to proudly display.

Dr. Jim Lasker states, "When Tweety passed away I really thought a great way to memorialize her would be to have a gift made in her honor given to Hand in Paw who provides so much comfort to many people across our community."

Tweety captured Jim and Katie Lasker's hearts and enjoyed helping Hand in Paw raise funds through painting for Picasso Pets several times. With her passing, Dr. Lasker wanted to set up a memorial that assured HIP teams continue to serve the community. Jim and Katie continue to rescue greyhounds from the Alabama Greyhound Adoption Center, adding these loyal family members two at a time.

The UAB Trauma and Burn Intensive Care Unit (TBICU) provides critical care for trauma and burn patients requiring intensive therapeutic interventions. Patients in this Unit have life-threatening conditions or injuries which require continuous close observation or specialized monitoring and the care of an extensive medical staff. The medical staff has expressed gratitude for HIP teams and the huge difference they make for patients and staff.

Erin Townsend explains, "Our patients and our staff love the visits. It's a pretty demanding unit and the nurses work so hard and they just light up when they see the dogs come. They could be having the worst night ever - super busy, haven't sat down, haven't eaten, haven't gone to the bathroom - and they will see one of those dogs come down the hallway and it changes their perception of the whole night. We are very thankful for Hand in Paw and everything they do. It has been such a morale booster for the Trauma & Burn Intensive Care Unit and we are very grateful and very honored."

HIP Therapy Team Kay Guess and Oliver (a Bichon Frise), regularly visit the UAB Trauma and Burn ICU. In their 3 years as a HIP Therapy Team, Oliver has displayed a calm demeanor and love of both children and adults. They also visit Helena Elementary School, participate in Hand in Paw's violence prevention programs, and serve in community events. "Hand in Paw Therapy Teams are among the most generous volunteers in Birmingham and Tuscaloosa. The humans and especially their incredibly compassionate pet partners find joy in service." – Margaret Stinnett

We are pleased to present the 2020 Tweety Lasker award to UAB Trauma and Burn Intensive Care Unit for going the extra mile for Hand in Paw volunteers and their patients. (Prior recipients are attached)

For more information contact Margaret Stinnett, HIP Executive Director (205) 451-3231.

PRIOR TWEETY LASKER AWARD  
RECIPIENTS

2007	Children's of Alabama
2008	UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center
2009	The Bell Center for Early Intervention Programs
2010	YWCA of Central Alabama
2011	Glenwood Autism and Behavioral Health Center
2012	The Exceptional Foundation
2013	UAB Center for Palliative and Supportive Care
2014	Ronald McDonald House Charities of Alabama
2015	Big Brother Big Sisters of Greater Birmingham
2016	Bruno Cancer Center at St. Vincent's
2017	Children's on 3rd Physical Therapy & Occupational Therapy Department
2018	Children's Outpatient Hematology and Oncology Clinic
2019	St. Martins in the Pines

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ABOUT HAND IN PAW

With a mission to improve human health & well-being, Hand in Paw is Alabama's premier Animal-Assisted Therapy provider and Animal Advocacy Organization. Hand in Paw's professionally-trained volunteer handler and animal Therapy Teams help improve people's day to day lives in several medical centers, schools, and human service organizations throughout North Central Alabama and Tuscaloosa. Our volunteer teams make thousands of beneficial visits through community events and participating facilities each year, helping countless children with special needs, at-risk youth, struggling students, and people with chronic and terminal illnesses. At no time has Hand in Paw charged for its services. For more information, visit [www.handinpaw.org](http://www.handinpaw.org).