**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Hand in Paw Receives Donation From Tito’s Handmade Vodka to Support Animal-Assisted Therapy Program**

*Funding Will Enable Birmingham Nonprofit to Continue Supporting Vulnerable Populations Through Recruitment, Training, Mentoring and More*

**Birmingham, AL** – (July 20, 2023) [Hand in Paw](https://handinpaw.org/), Alabama's premier animal-assisted therapy provider, recently received a donation from [Tito’s Handmade Vodka](https://www.titosvodka.com/), also known as the [Vodka for Dog People.](https://www.titosvodka.com/dogs) The funding will enable Hand in Paw to train, evaluate, mentor and place therapy teams, as well as provide animal-assisted therapy to senior citizens and veterans in Central Alabama.

Hand in Paw serves several vulnerable populations, who benefit from the unconditional love of therapy dogs, who are trained to provide comfort and affection to people in hospitals, retirement homes, hospice care and schools. Hand in Paw receives daily requests for its services; however, it has been experiencing a shortage of therapy teams to meet the needs of the community. With the support of Tito’s Handmade Vodka, Hand in Paw will now be able to provide services to organizations, like the Veteran Affairs Hospital in Birmingham, and seniors in facilities throughout Central Alabama at no cost.

Funding from Tito’s Handmade Vodka will allow Hand in Paw to recruit and train 30 new therapy teams in one year that will visit senior citizens and veterans who may be experiencing anxiety and isolation, among other emotional issues. Additionally, the donation from Tito’s Handmade Vodka will allow Hand in Paw to launch a targeted volunteer recruitment campaign, which will ultimately help expand the nonprofit's growing “paw print” in the greater Birmingham and Tuscaloosa area.

“We are truly honored to have this support from Tito’s Handmade Vodka to expand our animal-assisted therapy program,” said Margaret Stinnett, Executive Director at Hand in Paw. “This funding will create the opportunity for dynamic growth within our organization, and allow us to continue serving our central Alabama communities.”

“We’re excited to support the work that Hand in Paw is doing to serve vulnerable populations in need,” said Lindsey Bates, Director of Philanthropy Operations at Tito’s Handmade Vodka. “As the Vodka for Dog People, we know first hand the positive impact that dogs can have, and the care that Hand in Paw is providing in Birmingham will continue to benefit the community for years to come.”

Applications are currently open for Hand in Paw’s Therapy Team, which is instrumental in facilitating the animal-assisted therapy program. All prospective service animals must be two years or older, and the owner must have owned the animal for more than six months.

Additionally, dogs and their owners are required to complete a group obedience course. These requirements ensure that both animal and owner are well-prepared to begin the intensive Therapy Team training program at Hand in Paw. To apply and schedule a screening for you and your pet, please visit [www.handinpaw.org/volunteer](http://www.handinpaw.org/volunteer).

Save the date for Hand in Paw’s Picasso Pets gala happening on August 19th at The Harbert Center! Tito’s Handmade Vodka is the proud Stage Sponsor and helps make the event possible! Purchase tickets and learn more at [www.picassopets.com](http://www.picassopets.com).

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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 a national leader in this growing field. 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).

**ABOUT TITO’S HANDMADE VODKA**

Tito’s Handmade Vodka was founded by sixth-generation Texan, Bert “Tito” Beveridge. In the mid-nineties, on a plot of land in rural Austin, he built a 998 square foot shack, rigged a pot still with spare parts, and created Tito’s Handmade Vodka. Tito’s corn-based vodka is certified gluten free. Tito’s Handmade Vodka is distilled and bottled by Fifth Generation, Inc. in Austin, Texas, and is available in Liter, 1.75L, 750ml, 375ml, 200ml, and 50ml sizes. For more information, visit [www.titosvodka.com](http://www.titosvodka.com).