



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hand in Paw's 15th Annual Mutt Strut, presented by Creative Dog Training, Returns on Saturday, April 5

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Hand in Paw is excited to announce the highly anticipated 15th Annual Mutt Strut, Birmingham's premier dog-friendly 5K and 1-mile fun run, on Saturday, April 5, at Homewood Central Park. Runners, walkers, and participants of all ages and abilities are encouraged to embrace this year's energetic 80s fitness theme — think Jazzercise, neon colors, spandex, and big hair.

Presented by Creative Dog Training, Mutt Strut is a non-chip-timed race that combines fitness, fun, and philanthropy to raise funds for Hand in Paw's vital animal-assisted therapy programs. These programs provide physical, emotional, and cognitive comfort, healing, and joy through specially trained therapy animals.

Hosted by Hand in Paw's Junior Board, Mutt Strut raises awareness and funds to support Hand in Paw's mission to improve human health and well-being through animal-assisted therapy. Hand in Paw trains volunteers and their pets to provide comfort and joy at local medical centers, schools, and human service agencies. Events like Mutt Strut help Hand in Paw continue to positively impact the lives of individuals facing emotional and physical challenges across North Central Alabama and Tuscaloosa — free of charge.

"Whether you're a runner, walker, or just in it for the fun of the 80s-inspired costumes, Mutt Strut 2025 offers something for everyone," says Margaret Stinnett, executive director of Hand in Paw. "By participating, you're not just having fun with your furry friend — you're helping make a difference in the lives of people who rely on our animal-assisted therapy programs."

In addition to the 5K and fun run there will be an exciting array of activities, including:

- **Vendor Village:** Dozens of local businesses will showcase their offerings.
- **Costume Contest:** Show off your best neon fitness gear and compete for fun prizes.
- **Kid Zone:** A space dedicated to youngsters with activities and games.
- **Live Entertainment:** Relive the 80s with Magic City Disco and tunes to keep you groovin' all morning.
- **Food Trucks:** Purchase snacks and drinks to keep your energy levels high.

Mutt Strut registration and Vendor Village open at 7:30 a.m. The non-chip-timed 5K starts at 9 a.m., followed by the 1-mile fun run at 9:45 a.m. Race winners will be announced at the Mutt Strut Awards Ceremony at 10:30 a.m., along with winners of the costume contest and this year's top fundraisers.

Registration for the 5K is \$30, and the 1-mile fun run is \$25. A sleep-in option is available for those who want to support Hand in Paw by completing the race on their own time. Registration includes a race t-shirt, a matching doggie bandana, entry into award categories, access to the Vendor Village, and family-friendly entertainment.

Participants can register online at give.handinpaw.org/MuttStrut2025. Save 20% off with promo code **JAZZERCISE** through March 13. Early registration is encouraged, as this event is expected to sell out.

Mutt Strut is made possible by our sponsors: Creative Dog Training (Title Sponsor), VPFunds, 23Design, ABC 33/40, Birmingham Mountain Radio, Deborah Michelle Photography, Good Shepherd Media, and Birmingham Animal Hospital.

For more information about Mutt Strut 2025, visit handinpaw.org/mutt-strut or contact Michael Hansen (michael@handinpaw.org). For more information about sponsorship and vendor opportunities, please contact Assistant Director Amanda Summers at amanda@handinpaw.org.

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Hand in Paw is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to improve human health and well-being. 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. At no time has Hand in Paw charged for its services. handinpaw.org