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Picasso Pets Raises More Than \$350,000 for Animal-Assisted Therapy Programs

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (August 26, 2024) – Hand in Paw is thrilled to announce the resounding success of the 23rd Annual Picasso Pets, held on August 17, 2024, at The Harbert Center. This year's event, themed "Wild Woof West," brought together more than 325 guests and raised over \$350,000 to support Hand in Paw's mission of providing Animal-Assisted Therapy to those in need.

The evening celebrated the incredible bond between humans and animals, featuring a special VIP Experience, a seated dinner, and a program highlighting Hand in Paw's impactful work in the community. Guests enjoyed Tito's Vodka cocktails, a photo booth, a wine pull, live and silent auctions, the public debut of this year's Picasso Pets paintings, and the opportunity to interact with Hand in Paw Therapy Teams throughout the night.

"We are overwhelmed by the generosity and support of our community," said Margaret Stinnett, Executive Director of Hand in Paw. "Picasso Pets is a unique event that showcases the healing power of animals and the dedication of our supporters. The funds raised through Picasso Pets will ensure we can continue to make a profound difference in the lives of those we serve and provide critical services to those in need."

A highlight of the evening included the presentation of the Tweety Lasker Award to the Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center in Birmingham, which Hand in Paw has been visiting for many years. Charly Murphree, chief nurse in Acute Care, accepted the award on behalf of the VA.

Another bright spot of the night was the Margaret Davis Service Award, a new honor given to a top Hand in Paw volunteer for the past year. Ronnie McBride, who has been a Therapy Team with his dog Kenzi since 2020, was recognized for his service, piling up more than 300 volunteer hours over the past 12 months. The award was named after Margaret Davis, a

long-time Hand in Paw supporter and board member, and founder of Creative Dog Training, who passed away earlier this year.

Hand in Paw extends its heartfelt gratitude to all sponsors, donors, artists, and volunteers who made Picasso Pets 2024 an unforgettable evening. Special thanks to VP Funds, Tito's Handmade Vodka, Medical Properties Trust, John 3:16, Dr. Jim and Katie Lasker, Cameron and Scott Vowell, Land Rover Birmingham, Poarch Band of Creek Indians, UAB Medicine, Pinnacle Financial Partners, Fi Plan Partners, George W. Barber, Jr. Foundation, Lynn and Benny LaRussa, Kay Aldridge, Birmingham Lifestyle magazine, Southern Company, Southern Power, Hot and Hot Fish Club, and OvenBird, for their generous sponsorship support.

For more information about Hand in Paw and how you can support our mission, please visit Hand in Paw's website, 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. www.handinpaw.org