

Celebrate the National Dog Show Presented by Purina® and Help Raise Funds for Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation Pets and Vets Program

Purina partners with Emmy Award-Winning Journalist and Host Maria Menounos to encourage pet owners to support fourth annual #DogThanking movement

ST. LOUIS, Nov. 12, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- In celebration of the National Dog Show Presented by Purina® and in the spirit of the Thanksgiving holiday, Purina will recognize the four-legged friends who make our lives special, especially pets that act as service animals to veterans across the country. In a national effort to raise funds to support Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation (ARF) and their service dog program, Purina invites pet lovers to share why they are thankful for their pet through the fourth annual Purina #DogThanking social media campaign.

Experience the interactive Multichannel News Release here:

<https://www.multivu.com/players/English/8399551-purina-maria-menounos-thanksgiving-national-dog-show-dogthanking/>

Pet owners are encouraged to share a personal message about why they are thankful for their pet on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram using the hashtag #DogThanking and tagging @Purina. For every unique post submitted between November 9-25 that includes @Purina and #DogThanking, Purina will donate \$1 (up to \$25,000) to Tony La Russa's ARF. ARF is a non-profit organization founded by Major League Baseball Hall of Fame manager, four-time World Series champion and philanthropist, Tony La Russa.

"Purina has a long history of supporting veterans, and we are excited to highlight the great work of Tony La Russa's ARF Pets and Vets program during the National Dog Show Presented by Purina," said Daniel Henke-Cilenti, director of marketing for the Purina brand. "The Pets and Vets program and our partnership with ARF is a wonderful demonstration of Purina's mission to enrich the lives of pets and the people who love them. We encourage pet lovers to join us in supporting our nation's veterans through ARF with our #DogThanking program."

Maria Menounos, host of leading female Apple Podcast, 'Conversations with Maria' and her dog, Whinnie, are helping to kick off this year's #DogThanking initiative.

"Whinnie and my pets have done so much for me. Having them by my side each and every day has made my life better, and I am truly grateful for each of them," said Menounos. "That's why Whinnie and I are thrilled to join in this year's #DogThanking initiative with Purina because it gives us all the opportunity to celebrate our dogs and share why our lives are so special with them. I encourage pet owners to share their posts showing why they are thankful for their pet so we can raise funds to help shelter pets find their forever homes as supportive companions to veterans who have sacrificed so much for our country."

Tony La Russa's ARF will utilize the funds raised from the #DogThanking campaign to support its programs, including Pets and Vets, which matches veterans with emotional support animals – transforming rescue dogs into skilled service animals for veterans with PTSD, traumatic brain injuries, anxiety, severe depression and more. ARF has placed more than 600 animals with military families, including 45 potential service dogs in the past year, at no expense to the veteran.

"In partnership with our friends at Purina, we've been able to do so much to pair our nation's veterans with rescue dogs that train as skilled service companions and provide powerful therapeutic and practical benefits," said Tony La Russa, co-founder of Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation. "The #DogThanking initiative is an amazing and extremely helpful way for pet lovers to get involved in this program and celebrate their own pets, while making a difference for the men and women who serve our country and the rescue pets who can support them."

Prior to this year's #DogThanking initiative, Purina Dog Chow also launched a 2018 campaign to benefit the ARF. The Purina Dog Chow Service Dog Salute paid tribute to our armed forces and the loyal dogs that serve them through a four-month-long campaign that highlighted their stories and concluded with a donation of over \$250,000 to ARF.

An annual holiday tradition, the 17th annual National Dog Show Presented by Purina will premiere on Thanksgiving Day on NBC at noon in all time zones. The show will crown one of America's great dogs as its 2018 champion, bringing canine competition and entertainment to more than 20 million viewers. More than 2,000 dogs representing more than 190 breeds will vie for Best in Show honors.

Beloved TV personality John O'Hurley, best known as "J. Peterman" on Seinfeld, will serve as show co-host, along with veteran dog show analyst David Frei. NBC Sports correspondent Mary Carillo will report from inside the show ring, and former U.S. Olympic figure skaters Tara Lipinski and Johnny Weir will offer behind-the-scenes access as digital contributors.

For more information about this year's #DogThanking initiative, check out Purina on Facebook (www.facebook.com/Purina), Twitter (www.twitter.com/Purina) or Instagram (www.instagram.com/purina).

About Nestlé Purina PetCare

Nestlé Purina PetCare Company is a global leader in the pet care industry. Nestlé Purina PetCare promotes responsible pet care, community involvement and the positive bond between people and their pets. A premiere global manufacturer of pet products, Nestlé Purina PetCare is part of Swiss-based Nestlé S.A., a global leader in nutrition, health and wellness.



About Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation (ARF)

ARF's core mission is the rescue of dogs and cats who have run out of time at public shelters, giving them a chance at life until a new home can be found. ARF couples this focus with innovative programs strengthening the human-animal bond for children, seniors, veterans, and people in disadvantaged circumstances. Through ARF, people experience the unconditional love and acceptance of dogs and cats to fulfill a mission of "People Rescuing Animals...Animals Rescuing People..."®

SOURCE Purina

For further information: Bill Etling, Nestlé Purina, 314.982.4825, William.Etling@purina.nestle.com; Cassandra Pacifico, BCW

(Burson Cohn & Wolfe), 412.394.6699, Cassandra.Pacifico@bm.com

Additional assets available online:  [Video \(1\)](#)  [Photos \(3\)](#)