

PURINA AND REDROVER TAKE THE ICE WITH IOWA WILD DEFENSEMAN DAKOTA MERMIS TO SUPPORT DOMESTIC ABUSE SURVIVORS AND PETS

Mermis Will Play With Custom Purple Leash Project Stick to Be Auctioned Off Following April 2 Game

DES MOINES, Iowa (March 27, 2023) – Purina and RedRover are teaming up with Iowa Wild defenseman Dakota Mermis and creating a custom Purple Leash Project-branded hockey stick he'll use during the April 2 home game against the San Diego Gulls at Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines, Iowa at 3 p.m. Central. The [Purple Leash Project](#) is a national initiative established in 2019 by Purina and nonprofit RedRover to provide grants, resources and support to help domestic violence shelters better serve the needs of domestic abuse survivors with pets.

Mermis, a native of Alton, Illinois, his wife, Sarah, and son, Brooks, are passionate about pets. The family read about the Purple Leash Project and contacted RedRover directly to see how they could support the cause. Dakota and Sarah have two Border Collies at home – six-year-old Kaizer and four-year-old Charlie.

“Growing up in the St. Louis area, I’ve always known that Purina makes great products that pets love. But when Sarah and I heard about the Purple Leash Project and the work they do with RedRover, we knew we had to find a way to get involved and help promote the cause,” said Mermis, who made his National Hockey League debut in 2017 and is about to complete his third season in the Minnesota Wild organization. “It’s an honor to be able to support this important program and do a small part to help keep pets and people together.”

The special purple stick Mermis uses will be auctioned off following the April 2 game with proceeds benefiting RedRover through the Purple Leash Project. Fans in attendance will also be able to bid on an authentic Dakota Mermis Iowa Wild jersey and two “Favorite Things” baskets featuring Charlie and Kaizer’s beloved pet toys and treats. Additionally, any fan who donates \$60 or more inside the arena will receive a Purple Leash Project leash compliments of Purina. The April 2 Iowa Wild game is dog-friendly; fans can bring their family dog inside Wells Fargo Arena with a special ticket. For more information on the Pucks & Paws game, visit iowawild.com/tickets/pucksnpaws.

“Since we founded the Purple Leash Project with RedRover in 2019, we knew that it would take a lot of partnership and collaboration to make a meaningful difference,” said Nina Leigh Krueger, CEO and President of Purina. “We’re so grateful to Dakota, Sarah and the Iowa Wild for their efforts to raise awareness and put this initiative in the spotlight.”

The Purple Leash Project has donated funds to several domestic violence shelters since launching in 2019, aiding the process of becoming pet-friendly. In Iowa, the Domestic/Sexual Assault Outreach Center in Webster County recently received \$20,000 to build on-site kennels, create an outdoor pet play yard, and cover veterinary care for pets.

To learn more about the Purple Leash Project, make a donation or sign up for ongoing updates, visit www.PurpleLeashProject.com.

About Purina

Nestlé Purina PetCare creates richer lives for pets and the people who love them. Founded in 1894, Purina has helped dogs and cats live longer, healthier lives by offering scientifically based nutritional innovations

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Purina promotes responsible pet care through our scientific research, our products and our support for pet-related organizations. Over the past five years, Purina has contributed more than \$150 million towards organizations that bring, and keep, people and pets together, as well as those that help our communities and environment thrive.

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