

Dog Chow Teams-up with Justin Baldoni to Unveil Winning "Service Dog Salute" Film in NY Dog Film Festival in Honor of Veteran's Day

"A Dog Can Make a Difference" Highlights Extraordinary Bonds between Veterans and their PTSD Service Dogs

ST. LOUIS, Oct. 24, 2024 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- In honor of Veteran's Day, Purina Dog Chow and actor, director, and New York Times best-selling author Justin Baldoni have announced the winner of the new "Service Dog Salute" category of the 9th Annual NY Dog Film Festival, spotlighting powerful stories of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) service dogs and the positive impact they've made on veterans' lives.

The winning film, *A Dog Can Make a Difference* by Spencer Matches, explores the impact of PTSD on veterans and their families and the healing they've found through their service dogs, including the mother of a veteran who suffered a devastating loss and has since dedicated her life to help train more service dogs for veterans.

Viewers can watch the film at [YouTube.com/DogChow](https://www.youtube.com/DogChow), and for every view from October 24 through Veterans Day on November 11, 2024, Purina Dog Chow will donate \$5 (up to \$75,000) to the Association of Service Dog Providers.

"Each finalist film was both heartbreaking and inspiring, and underscored the importance of making service dogs more accessible and affordable for veterans," said Baldoni. "*A Dog Can Make a Difference* stood out because it was the most cohesive in its structure and the most emotionally powerful. The thoughtful narrative captured the lasting impact of PTSD on veterans not just individually but on their families, too."

Baldoni consistently delves into complex and challenging issues in his film and TV endeavors, which also serves as the founding mission of his studio, Wayfarer Studios. Additionally, his podcast, *The Man Enough Podcast*, serves as a vital platform where he engages in meaningful conversations about mental health, domestic violence awareness and redefining masculinity; fostering open dialogue and encouraging listeners to confront and address their own struggles.

"As a filmmaker, I believe in the power of shining a spotlight on sensitive topics to educate and affect change," said Baldoni. "I'm honored to partner with Dog Chow for this beautiful program to underscore the impact of PTSD service dogs and help progress towards a future where any veteran that needs a service dog can get one."

The NY Dog Film Festival celebrates the love between dogs and their people. This year, the stories of service dogs take center stage in the new "Service Dog Salute" category, introduced by Dog Chow earlier this year, which invited filmmakers nationwide to explore the unique ways PTSD service dogs transform the lives of the military veterans they serve. A panel of judges within the NY Dog Film Festival narrowed the films to three finalists, and Baldoni selected the winner.

Watching the Winning Film

For every view of the winning film *A Dog Can Make a Difference* at [YouTube.com/DogChow](https://www.youtube.com/DogChow) from October 24 through Veterans Day on November 11, 2024, Purina Dog Chow will donate \$5, up to \$75,000, to the Association of Service Dog Providers, a coalition of non-profit service dog providers, to help train more

PTSD service dogs at no cost to the veterans.

Film fans in New York City can also catch all the finalist films during the NY Dog Film Festival's NYC Premiere on October 24, 2024, at 6pm ET at the SVA Theatre in Chelsea. The event is open to the public, with free entry for veterans and members of the military courtesy of Dog Chow, along with special accommodations to ensure their comfort. To purchase tickets, visit dogfilmfestival.com/nyc-premiere.

All the Service Dog Salute finalist films will be shown in theaters across the U.S. throughout 2025 as part of the NY Dog Film Festival's annual film tour.

Supporting Veterans through the Dog Chow Service Dog Salute

Seven out of every 100 veterans suffer from PTSD at some point in their lives,¹ and the use of service dogs has been demonstrated to reduce the severity of PTSD symptoms and suicidal behaviors.² However, only 1% of those who seek a service dog receive one each year. Dog Chow is on a mission to change that.

Since 2018, the Dog Chow Service Dog Salute has highlighted the life-changing benefits that service dogs provide to veterans experiencing PTSD. Purina Dog Chow has donated more than \$1.4MM to service dog organizations to help support the care and training of more service dogs at no cost to the veterans, helped fund critical research and supported federal legislation to provide training and service dogs for veterans. Participating in the NY Dog Film Festival is the newest way that Dog Chow is helping shine a light on the impact of PTSD service dogs for veterans.

For additional information visit DogChow.com/Service.

Sources:

U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs: National Center for PTSD, "[How Common is PTSD in](#)

1. [Veterans](#)"

2. O'Haire Lab Research Summary 2022: Service Dogs for Veterans with PTSD

About Nestlé Purina PetCare

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. Purina manufactures some of the world's most trusted and popular pet care products, including Dog Chow, Purina ONE, Pro Plan, Friskies and Tidy Cats. Our more than 11,000 U.S. associates take pride in our trusted pet food, treat and litter brands that feed 46 million dogs and 68 million cats every year. Nearly 500 Purina scientists, veterinarians, and pet care experts ensure our commitment to unsurpassed quality and nutrition. 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. Purina is part of Nestlé, a global leader in Nutrition, Health and Wellness. For more information, visit purina.com or subscribe here to get the latest Purina news.

About Justin Baldoni

Justin Baldoni is an actor, director, producer, and New York Times bestselling author, whose efforts are focused on creating impactful media and entertainment. He is a founder of Monkeys Studios, an

ocused on creating impactful media and entertainment. He is co-founder of wayfarer studios, an independent production studio focused on creating purpose-driven, multi-platform content that serves as true agents for social change. Among Justin's notable works include starring in hit series "Jane the Virgin," and recently directing, executive producing, and starring in global box-office record-breaking film "It Ends with Us." Through Wayfarer Studios, Justin also produced and financed films including like "Ezra" starring Robert DeNiro and Bobby Cannavale and acclaimed new Netflix documentary "Will & Harper" starring Will Ferrell. He also hosts the popular, Webby- nominated podcast, The Man Enough Podcast, and has penned books "Man Enough: Undefined My Masculinity in 2021" and "Boys Will Be Human in 2022," which went on to become a New York Times bestseller.

About the Association of Service Dog Providers

The Association of Service Dog Providers unites non-profit organizations dedicated to serving military veterans and First Responders struggling with Post-Traumatic Stress, Traumatic Brain Injury, And Military Sexual Trauma/Sexual Assault. Our collective mission is to safeguard the well-being of these individuals, striving to prevent suicide and enhance mental health.

SOURCE Purina Dog Chow

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