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MICHIGAN HUMANE, PETSMART CHARITIES LAUNCH PROGRAM TO BENEFIT DETROIT RESIDENTS

A \$45,000 grant from PetSmart Charities provides essential funding for the new initiative.

(DATE), DETROIT, MI- A joint effort from Michigan Humane and PetSmart Charities® will see the launch of a comprehensive initiative to support Detroit residents' access to veterinary medicine and pet care resources beginning in January 2021.

"We're continually evolving as an organization and the next step is to expand our existing relationships with animal lovers in our community. This initiative will help us better understand how to engage with our neighbors and tailor our services to meet the needs of the community," says Matthew Pepper, Michigan Humane president and CEO.

The Access to Care program will engage the assistance of Letty Azar, who has over 20 years of experience in senior health care and human services. Azar most recently served under the Duggan administration in the city of Detroit as the Department of Neighborhood's District 4 Manager, focusing on community engagement and city services for the residents of Detroit's far east side neighborhoods.

Azar shared this regarding her decision to partner with Michigan Humane on this work: "Access to preventive health care and food insecurity sadly are long standing issues in low-income communities and when one person in the home is vulnerable, we know others residing there are as well, to include our pets. The opportunity to support Michigan Humane's development of an access to care model for our most vulnerable citizens and their pets isn't just rewarding, it's one of the most comprehensive and impactful programs I've had the honor to work on."

Ms. Azar will work with the residents and community leaders of Detroit's Warrendale neighborhood to determine the ways in which Michigan Humane can best deliver services and support. This initial phase of the program is made possible through a grant from PetSmart Charities.

"We know that making the effort to understand the specific needs of communities will allow better service to the pets and people in that community," said Kelly Balthazor, regional relationship manager at PetSmart Charities. "We are proud to support the development of the Michigan Humane Access to Care program, which will provide additional critical resources to thousands of pets and people in Detroit."

(Contribution from PetSmart Charities)

The information gathering portion of the project is expected to take between six to nine months and will form the basis of programs developed to increase the access to care for pet owners in Warrendale. Michigan Humane anticipates connecting with approximately 3,000 residents to determine their pet-related needs. The overall goal of the project is to develop a sustainable model for pet owners to connect with resources for the companion animals that they share their lives with.

Michigan Humane already has several programs through which metro residents can request support for their companion animals including the pet pantry, the One Health medical care initiative and Operation DINGO, which is a partnership with Detroit Animal Care and Control to support pet owners. The organization also, in partnership with Strategic Staffing Solutions, continues to provide focused outreach efforts in the North End neighborhood through the Pets for Life program.

ABOUT MICHIGAN HUMANE

The Michigan Humane, founded in 1877, is the oldest and largest nonprofit animal welfare organization in the state. Each year, Michigan Humane achieves 100 percent placement of more than 10,000 healthy and treatable animals through compassionate care, community engagement, and advocacy for humane treatment. Michigan Humane operates four shelter and veterinary centers in Detroit, Rochester Hills, Westland and Howell; seven adoption partnerships with Premier Pet Supply, Petco, and PetSmart; and both a Cruelty Investigation Department and a Statewide Animal Response Team. Learn more at michiganhumane.org.

About PetSmart Charities®

PetSmart Charities, Inc. is a nonprofit animal welfare organization with a mission to find lifelong, loving homes for all pets by supporting programs and thought leadership that bring people and pets together. In addition to finding homes for almost 5600,000 shelter pets each year through its in-store adoption program in all PetSmart stores across the U.S. and Puerto Rico, PetSmart Charities provides funding to non-profits aligned with its mission ~~through four key areas of grant support: Preventing Pet Homelessness; Helping Shelter Pets Thrive; Supporting the Bond Between People and Pets; and Emergency Relief and Disaster Support~~. Each year, millions of generous PetSmart shoppers help pets in need by donating to PetSmart Charities using the pin pads at checkout registers inside PetSmart stores. In turn, PetSmart Charities efficiently uses 90 cents of every dollar donated and has become the leading funder of animal welfare in North America, donating ~~more than about~~ \$451300 million to date. PetSmart Charities, a 501(c)(3) organization, has received the Four Star Rating from Charity Navigator, an independent organization that reports on the effectiveness, accountability and transparency of nonprofits, for the past 174 years in a row -- placing it among the top one percent of charities rated by this organization. To learn more visit www.petsmartcharities.org

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