



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Contact: Sidney Baxter, Marketing & Communications Manager

Email: sbaxter@pawswithacause.org

Phone: (616) 877-7297 ext. 215

JW Marriott Hosts Training Opportunity for Future PAWS Assistance Dogs

Grand Rapids, Michigan — Every year, thousands of people with disabilities are denied access to hotels and restaurants despite ADA laws protecting their right to enter with an assistance dog. Paws With A Cause® (PAWS) is addressing that reality head-on, bringing wagging tails and free trainings to the Grand Rapids community.

According to the *PAWS for Access Report* completed by Assistance Dogs International, 43% of assistance dog handlers reported being denied access to a public space within the past year, with restaurants and cafes accounting for 56% of denials, and hotels and accommodations accounting for 28%. These denials are often driven not by malicious intent, but by confusion surrounding ADA laws. PAWS is working to address these issues through education and direct engagement with businesses.

Hosted at the JW Marriott Grand Rapids, this public access training demonstrates what lawful, welcoming access for assistance dog teams should look like in both hotel and restaurant settings. PAWS trainers and assistance dogs-in-training will move through hotel and dining spaces while JW Marriott hospitality staff receive practical guidance on assistance dog etiquette, ADA access laws, and best practices for handling real-life access situations. The goal is to replace uncertainty and misinformation with confidence, clarity, and compliance.

Through the PAWS for Access campaign, businesses and organizations can request free access trainings, download a business ADA access toolkit, and receive a PAWS for Access window cling to display, signaling their commitment to being an inclusive, accessible space for individuals who rely on assistance dogs. Businesses and professionals interested in learning more can also attend PAWS' upcoming *Dogs & Donuts* event on Monday, March 23. Hosted at PAWS National Headquarters, this session is designed for Human Resources professionals, business owners, restaurant managers, and other community members who want to better understand ADA access laws and assistance dog etiquette.

Media Opportunity

Date/Time: Friday, March 20

Location: JW Marriott Grand Rapids (235 Louis St NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503)

Visuals & Interviews:

- Assistance dogs in-training navigating hotel and restaurant spaces
- Interviews with PAWS representatives on ADA access laws, common misconceptions, and the real impact of access denials
- Discussion of PAWS' free training resources and access support available to businesses and organizations, and how to request these
- Compelling photo and video opportunities inside a high-traffic hotel environment

Access denials can discourage individuals with disabilities from fully participating in their communities. By training staff in the exact environments where denials most often occur, PAWS is helping businesses ensure assistance dog teams are met with understanding, respect, and lawful access throughout West Michigan and beyond.

To RSVP for this opportunity, please contact Sidney Baxter, Marketing & Communications Manager at PAWS, at: sbaxter@pawswithacause.org or call (616) 877-7297 ext. 215

Businesses interested in requesting a free PAWS for Access training, ADA toolkit, or window cling can learn more at: pawswithacause.org/assistance-dogs-101

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About Paws With A Cause: Since 1979, Paws With A Cause (PAWS) has been transforming lives and strengthening communities through partnerships with custom-trained working dogs. PAWS assistance and facility dogs have helped thousands of people thrive, providing opportunities to live with independence, confidence, and companionship. Serving over 20 states across the country, PAWS is accredited by Assistance Dogs International and a member of Animal Assisted Services International. To learn how you can get involved, please visit: pawswithacause.org