



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tails, Trails & Triumphs to Highlight the Impact of Facility Dogs at Children's Hospitals and Beyond

Grand Rapids, Michigan — For a child facing a difficult diagnosis, a hospital can be an overwhelming place. For the doctors, nurses and care teams working to help those children heal, the emotional weight can be just as significant. Sometimes, a dog can change their experience.

On Wednesday, September 16, Paws With A Cause (PAWS) will host Tails, Trails & Triumphs, an evening celebrating the people, partnerships, and working dogs that can change moments of hardship. The event will support PAWS' Facility Dog Program, part of the organization's Animal Assisted Services department, which partners custom-trained dogs with professionals in settings such as hospitals, schools, counseling centers, and other community settings.

Unlike assistance dogs, which are trained to support one individual, facility dogs are trained to support many people within a community. A single PAWS facility dog may comfort a child undergoing treatment, help a family through an uncertain moment, provide encouragement during rehabilitation and give members of a care team a much-needed opportunity to pause and reconnect.

"Facility dogs show us that the impact of a working dog reaches far beyond a single person and are much more than a source of comfort. They are skilled working dogs that become valued members of a care team," said Michele Suchovsky, CEO of Paws With A Cause. "They help patients and families navigate complex medical experiences, support participation in treatment and rehabilitation, and create a sense of calm and normalcy during difficult moments. Through their partnership with healthcare professionals, facility dogs can positively influence the patient experience while helping care teams deliver more compassionate and effective care."

Tails, Trails & Triumphs will bring this impact to life by highlighting the story of INDI, a PAWS facility dog working at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital, offering guests an opportunity to see firsthand how a working dog can become an important part of a care team and positively influence the lives of hundreds — and potentially thousands — of people throughout its career.

The evening will also recognize Dave and Sandy Smith with The Heart of PAWS Award, honoring their longstanding commitment to PAWS and its mission to transform lives and strengthen communities through partnerships with custom-trained working dogs.

Tails, Trails & Triumphs will take place from 6–9 p.m. at Indian Trails Camp (O-1859 Lake Michigan Dr. NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49534). Individual tickets are \$75, with discounted tickets of \$50 available for

young professionals. All tickets include dinner and drinks. Sponsorship opportunities are available starting at \$500.

More information and tickets are available at: www.pawswithacause.org/tails-trails-and-triumphs

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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 Animal Assisted Services International. To learn how you can get involved, please visit: pawswithacause.org