

What's Up *Area Events & Activities*



Healing With HUGS

Pets Lend a Helping Paw

Pets can be great playmates and lots of fun, but now more than ever, they are truly a beloved member of the family, bringing joy and unconditional companionship to our lives. And just as moms and dads provide the love, support and endless hugs we need to get through any situation, so can our pets. Surprised? Well don't be. Our furry friends may possess the power to help heal with pet hugs.

Across the country, thousands of special therapy pets bring smiles each and every day to those in need by simply offering them a pet hug. Research shows that human interaction with pets can provide life-enhancing physical and emotional benefits. In fact, bringing pets into a nursing home or hospital can help boost people's moods, enhance social interaction and help lower blood pressure.

In an effort to promote the important role pets play in people's lives, the Animal Rescue Foundation (ARF) recently established the Pet Hug Fund, which provides support to animal therapy teams nationwide. "It is remarkable to see firsthand the healing power animals possess," says Bianca La Russa of Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation's Pet Hug Fund. "We are focused on creating national programs like the ARF Pet Hug Fund to further the pet therapy mission and help support local efforts."



Powerful Pet Tails



Many of the ARF Pet Hug Fund therapy pets experienced their own fair share of hardships before getting the opportunity to touch thousands of lives with pet hugs. Several were rescued from shelters, and due to their experiences, they now give back to others in need through the simple gesture of a warm embrace.

For example, Ducati is a gentle and curious cat, who counts children and seniors among his biggest fans. He was surrendered to the county shelter without his mother when he was only two weeks old and at the time, the local rescue group did not have space to care for him. Luckily, an ARF employee visited the shelter one day and knew she had to adopt this tiny kitten, so she could give him the love and care he desperately needed. Now Ducati is an official member of the ARF therapy team and positively impacts hundreds of children at the numerous schools he visits each year.

Another real-life rescue pet, Beemer, was a tattered Schnauzer mix adopted from a public shelter with one hour left to live. After receiving some TLC and proper training, Beemer started doing therapy work and for more than eight years now, he has provided tens of thousands of pet hugs to at-risk kids and assisted living residents.

To learn more about pet therapy or to find out how you can help further the mission of spreading pet hugs around the country, visit purinapetlover.com.



Beemer is modeled after the real-life Schnauzer mix providing pet hugs to those in need.

Benefits of Pet Hugs

Pet therapy can help people dealing with a range of life issues. Whether it's an abused child, a patient overcoming surgery or an elderly individual looking for companionship, pets have tremendous healing powers that, in some cases, cannot be matched by human interaction.

In a UCLA study, researchers examined how patients responded to visits from a human and dog volunteer team, a human volunteer only or no visit at all. The patients receiving visits from the dog team showed the most positive signs of improvement as they had decreased anxiety scores and stress levels. The study concluded that even short-term exposure to dogs has physical and mental benefits on patients who want to participate.

The UCLA research is one of many documented studies illustrating the power of pet hugs. Here are some other examples of the benefits of pet therapy:

- Pets decrease feeling of loneliness and isolation.
- In a study of friendship bonds between elderly people and their animals, 78 percent of men and 67 percent of females said that their dogs were their only friends.
- In a study of children experiencing divorce, 85 percent described their dogs as a companion to whom they could tell their problems, anger and rage.

How You Can Help Spread Pet Hugs

In three years, ARF Therapy Animal teams have made 1,000 visits and touched the lives of 100,000 people in need. Through the establishment of the ARF Pet Hug Fund, additional therapy teams will receive resources they need to help reach out to thousands of others across the country.

In order to support the ARF Pet Hug Fund and its numerous pet therapy teams nationwide, pet lovers are encouraged to visit www.purinapetlover.com to download a mail-in certificate for a Purina Beary Limited™ edition Build-A-Bear Workshop® mini-therapy dog or cat. For every exclusive 8-1/2-inch mini-pet ordered through June 30, 2007, Purina will donate \$1 to the ARF Pet Hug Fund to support its mission of providing pet hugs to people across the country. Purina will donate a minimum of

\$75,000 to the ARF Pet Hug Fund as part of this and a related promotion.

"The ARF Pet Hug Fund's partnership with Purina and Build-A-Bear Workshop is a fun way to honor the exceptional therapy pets, while educating people about the importance of pet hugs," says La Russa.



Ducati is modeled after the real-life rescue cat Ducati, who has helped hundreds of children with the ARF therapy team.

What's going on...

Saturday, June 2

Roberts Good Neighbor Days activities all weekend; 8:30 a.m., 5K & 10K Road Race sponsored by St. Croix Valley YMCA, 386-1616; Grand Parade, 1 p.m.

Refuge Farms Open House, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., 3035 Highway 29, ¼ mile east of Hwy 128, Spring Valley, free. www.refugefarms.org

Tire and appliance collection, 8 a.m.-noon, Krattley Lane for City of Hudson, 277 Townsvalley Rd, for Town of Troy, fee for disposal. 715-386-4675.

Roberts Animal walk, 10 a.m., Roberts Elementary School playground, as part of Roberts' Good Neighbor Days, event supports PAWS, (Protective Animal Welfare Society of western Wisconsin). Contributions help fund all volunteer non-profit companion animal rescue organization dedicated to rescuing, fostering and finding new homes for abandoned dogs and cats in St. Croix County area. www.pawswi.com, 715-496-2730.

Dale Davidsavor benefit 3 p.m., Gaslite-on the Trimbelle, Ellsworth, he has been diagnosed with Acute Myelogenous Leukemia.

Full Moon Bird Talk and Walk, 8-9:30 p.m., the Colosky's from Wild Birds Unlimited talk about Orioles and Goldfinches, enjoy moonlight hike in park, free, park admission rules apply. 715-386-9340, wrsnc@presenter.com

Hands-on pond class, 10 a.m., Skyline Gardens and Ponds Nursery, 148 County Road F, between Hudson and River Falls, free, class on building a pondless waterfall followed by a water garden koi pond question and answer session. 715-425-1468.

Parent-child fishing tourney, 7 a.m. sign up, 7:30 a.m. launch, Bass Lake, north end of lake, St. Croix Bass Anglers will hold 3 hour fishing contest, part of national "Take A Child Fishing Day." No fishing license is required. At the completion of the three hours, fish weighed/released, lunch and awards ceremony follow, \$10 per parent and child, some equipment provided but participants should bring their own fishing equipment, life jackets and any special bait. There will be extra boats available for teams that do not have their own. 715-377-1099, mmattis.ics@sbcglobal.net.

Jaycees fill sandboxes, 9 a.m., Hudson Area Jaycees conduct annual sandbox fill, To sign up to have sand delivered call 715-220-2109, tonyzerwas@allstate.com. Volunteers needed to help; food provided, proceeds go to St. Croix Valley Restorative Justice Program.

Cornerstone Church open house, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., 1024 4th St., Hudson, free food, games, tours. 715-523-0802.

RF Class of 1992 reunion, 6 p.m., Kilkarney Golf Course, \$35 per person, 715-426-1665.

Sunday, June 3

"Art Along the Willow", 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., 1034 County Rd. A, Willow River State Park, Hudson, park admission rules apply.

Roberts Good Neighbor Days activities all weekend

Antique Show and Tell, 1-4 p.m., New Richmond Heritage Center, New Richmond, one or two collectables per person appraised by a panel of dealers. 715-246-3276, nrpsinc@presenter.com.

What's coming up...

Horner retires from school district

As Jeff Horner heads into retirement, read his thoughts about how his role as school district psychologist has changed over the years and what he'll miss the most about his work with students. Horner was also union representative for the teachers.

Streambed improvements take shape near Hwy. 29

Get details in next week's Journal about the Department of Natural Resources-managed South Fork streambed improvements going on east of River Falls. The highly visible project can be seen while driving along Hwy. 29.

Wisconsin newspaper headline written about in book

Read more about a book written about weird, Wisconsin newspaper headlines that includes an old story about a strange pyramid-like formation near River Falls.

Area athletes head to WIAA championships

Sports coverage will include six local athletes -- Caitlin Brendum, Rita Rabb, Yanique Black, Sarah Schwalbach, Jared Brown and Logan Ekstrom -- competing in the WIAA State Track and Field Championships this weekend in La Crosse.

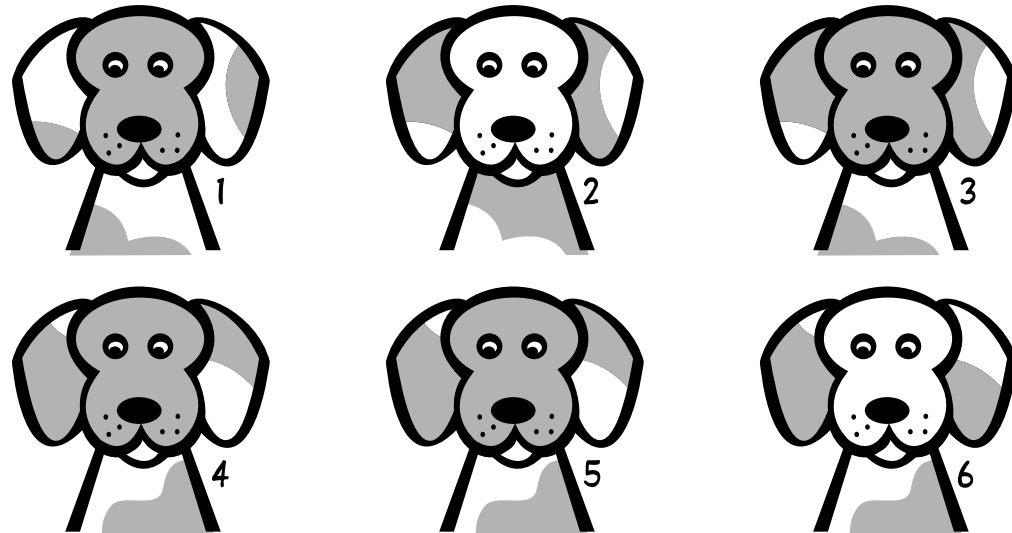
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What's fun...

FIND THE TWINS

WHICH TWO ARE EXACTLY ALIKE?



ANSWER: FOUR AND FIVE