



Pet Partners Pet of the Year Talking Points

What is Pet Partners Pet of the Year?

- Pet Partners Pet of the Year is a six-week fundraising competition taking place from March 2 – April 13, 2026.
- The goal of the 2026 Pet of the Year is to raise more than \$80,000 to support the Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program.
- The Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program connects trained therapy animal teams with people and communities in need nationwide.

Who can participate?

- There is no fee to participate.
- Any kind of pet can be nominated, whether your pet is living, retired from volunteering, or remembered after crossing the rainbow bridge.
- Pet's do not need to be registered therapy animals to participate. If a pet is an active therapy animal, they should be registered with Pet Partners.
- You may nominate your own pet or someone else's pet.

How fundraising works

- Each pet candidate has a fundraising page where friends, family, coworkers, and community members can donate.
- Supporters can also register as part of your pet candidate's fundraising team to help spread the word and raise funds together.
- As fundraising milestones are reached, pet parents and supporters may earn incentive prizes.
- The pet who raises the most funds during the campaign will be recognized as the 2026 Pet Partners Pet of the Year.

Why it matters

- Last year's Pet of the Year, a Golden Retriever, raised more than \$14,000 to support therapy animal visits.
- Every dollar raised helps expand access to safe, effective therapy animal visits for people who need comfort and support.

You can nominate a pet and get more information at [**petpartners.org/petoftheyear**](https://petpartners.org/petoftheyear).

General Pet Partners Talking Points

- Pet Partners' mission is to improve human health and well-being through the human-animal bond.
- Through this bond, therapy animal visits support improves physical, social, and emotional well-being for people we serve, and benefits the animals as well.
- Pet Partners volunteer teams make millions of visits each year across all 50 U.S. states, Canada, and more than a dozen other countries.
- While most Pet Partners therapy animals are dogs, we also register cats, horses, donkeys, rabbits, guinea pigs, domestic rats, birds, miniature pigs, and llamas and alpacas.
- Pet Partners teams visit hospitals, senior living communities, schools and libraries, court systems, veterans' facilities, airports, and many more places where people in need can benefit from animal companionship.
- To learn more about giving back to your community and sharing the unconditional love of your pet, go to petpartners.org/volunteer.

Interview & Media Tips

- Know your key talking points and keep your responses short and simple. It's okay to pause rather than fill the silence.
- Stay calm and speak at a comfortable pace. Avoid nervous laughter or filler words such as "um".
- Practice ahead of time. Ask a friend pretend to interview you and record it to hear how you sound.
- Be enthusiastic and authentic! Your passion for your pet and to the Pet Partners mission is what resonates most.
- Focus your conversation on Pet Partners' national mission and program-level impact. If you mention local visits or activities, be sure to clearly explain that those are part of your local involvement.
- For safety and animal well-being, Pet Partners visits, including media appearances, **may not exceed two hours per day total**.
- Costumes are not permitted during visits or media events, except for simple seasonal accessories such as scarves. This supports safety, professionalism, and ease of interaction.
- Official Pet Partners gear such as a vest, bandanna, or leash is encouraged, especially for on-camera interviews!