

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Patients and Pets are a Healing Combination – Hamilton non-profit recognized with leadership and innovation award**

March 21, 2019 – Ottawa – Humane Canada is pleased to announce that Zachary's Paws for Healing, a Hamilton-area non-profit, will receive an award recognizing their work to provide support to people undergoing critical hospital treatments so that their animal companions are cared for and are part of their recovery.

"Zachary's Paws for Healing (ZPFH) was born out of a young man's desire to brighten hospital patients' lives through the presence of animals" says Barbara Cartwright, CEO of Humane Canada.

2014 was not an easy year for Donna Jenkins, founder of ZPFH. Her nephew Zachary passed away from Hodgkin's Lymphoma at the young age of 25. Zachary's dogs played a key role during his cancer treatment; they reduced his stress levels and brought him much joy and happiness. To honour her nephew's legacy after his passing, Donna started ZPFH in 2015 to help other members in the community who may refuse medical treatment for fear of leaving their pets unattended or behind.

Over 70 volunteers work seamlessly together, under Donna's leadership, to assist patients and pets with roles that range from fostering to hospital visits with pets. "We are humbled by this award. We are very grateful for the acceptance we've had in Hamilton-area hospitals, and privileged to have the opportunity to help the community".

Hospitals throughout Canada and around the world are looking up to ZPFH as a leader in this type of initiative. With help from McMaster University students, Donna developed a toolkit to assist interested organizations get a program of this kind up and running. The toolkit has been distributed to places as far as Germany.

ZPFH has recently stepped up to help an elderly lady who fell and broke her shoulder. Her two beloved dogs, Princess and Heidi, are now in a safe, loving foster home while she focuses on her healing and recovery. Thanks to partnerships with PetSmart Charities of Canada, the Hamilton/Burlington SPCA and Royal Canin, Princess and Heidi, among the many other pets ZPFH helps, will have access to veterinary care, top-of-the-line pet food and other expenses that may come up related to their care. Private donors have also made substantial contributions to their pet vet foster program. The organization is 100% volunteer-run.





"By providing people with the peace of mind of knowing their pets are in good hands while they focus on their healing and recovery, Donna is helping the community thrive as a whole", concludes Cartwright.

The award will be presented this weekend at the sixth annual National Animal Welfare Conference, hosted at the Bonaventure Hotel in Montréal. This event is the largest and best attended conference of its kind in Canada, bringing together over 375 individuals who work with, care for and advocate for animals.

#### **ABOUT HUMANE CANADA**

Humane Canada is the federation of SPCAs and humane societies, driving positive, progressive change to end animal cruelty, improve animal protection and promote the humane treatment of all animals. To learn more about Humane Canada, please visit [humanecanada.ca](http://humanecanada.ca)

#### **ABOUT THE ANIMAL WELFARE LEADERSHIP & INNOVATION AWARDS**

Humane Canada's Animal Welfare Leadership & Innovation Awards were launched in 2016 as a way to recognize and celebrate those who are making important contributions to animal welfare in Canada. Other Humane Canada award winners this year include: Dr. Charu Chandrasekera, the Donner Canadian Foundation, Furry Hobos N Hiway Heroes, Kevin Strooband, the Lincoln County Humane Society, and Dr. Ian Duncan.

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