Pet Care Trust Receives Funds through Pet Industry Support

Through the generous support of Pet Industry businesses, organizations, and leaders, the Pet Care Trust raised nearly $285,000 in funding for the Pets in the Classroom grant program.

ABINGDON, MD, September 21, 2020 - Thanks to the generous support of businesses, organizations, and leaders in the pet industry, the Pet Care Trust raised nearly $285,000 in additional funding for the Pets in the Classroom grant program. The extra funds received equates to an additional 2,850 grants that the program can provide to teachers wanting to introduce a classroom pet and the benefits they provide to their students.

The Pet Care Trust, a non-profit organization that promotes the public understanding of the joys and benefits of pets through education, support, and interaction, established the Pets in the Classroom grant program in 2011 with the knowledge that, while they are a valuable teaching tool, many teachers have very limited resources for the support of classroom animals. With the assistance of numerous companies and organizations within the pet industry, this educational grants program provides funding for a small animal or pet supplies to Pre-Kindergarten through 9th grade teachers in both private and public schools who desire to introduce a pet into the classroom or who already have a pet in the classroom.

The funds raised will help: expand the number of classrooms with pets; provide teacher development tools for all students (especially Title 1 schools with low attendance rates and unstable homes and for special needs students suffering from social anxiety and low self-esteem); expand the program to include partnerships with Public Aquariums and develop classroom initiatives to include dogs; and continue research efforts to show the benefits of pets on kids and development.

The Trust wishes to thank supporters for their generosity and acknowledge the following donors according to category:

**Crystal Apple:**
- Central Garden and Pet
- Zoo Med

**Golden Apple:**
- Kong
- Nestle Purina
- Pet Food Experts
- Petmate
- Southeast Pet
Both the American Pet Products Association (APPA) and the World Pet Association (WPA) matched $50,000 of every contribution made to the Pets in the Classroom Program by a member, giving the program another $100,000 in funds. “I am thrilled with the continued support of two of our founding organizations, APPA and WPA, through their generous matching contribution campaign that helped us gain funding from so many of their member companies,” stated Jackie King, Executive Director of the Pet Care Trust. “All of these contributions will help us achieve our goal of having every classroom experience the joy and reward of having a classroom pet.”

In addition to these and other corporate and individual donations, the Pet Care Trust board and staff donated $22,000, testifying to their belief in the powerful effect of the program.

Having a pet in the classroom benefits children in so many ways. Through a survey conducted this spring by the Pets in the Classroom grant program, teachers across the U.S. and Canada have shared valuable insight into the multitude of ways that students are benefiting from classroom pets. According to the survey, 97 percent of respondents said that having a pet in the classroom has been a positive experience with teachers seeing improvements in attendance, empathy/compassion, responsibility, testing/academic performance, self-esteem, and student engagement. Teachers also reported that pets help students improve their social skills and decrease anxiety. Additionally, 81 percent of teachers said that students understood how to care for their classroom pet and 85% of teachers’ students had expressed interest in owning their own pet as a result of having one in the classroom.

Through the 2019-20 school year, Pets in the Classroom issued over 171,000 grants to teachers, meaning over 6.8 million children have experienced the joys and benefits of pet care since the program’s inception.
With a goal of helping 10 million students experience the joy of a companion animal at school, the Pet Care Trust is hoping to help teachers impact future generations of pet owners through its grant program. To learn more or to donate, visit www.petsintheclassroom.org.