



## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

### **THERAPEUTIC PAWS OF CANADA IS SUPPORTING STUDENTS FACING EXAM TIME STRESS AND READING DIFFICULTIES THROUGH PET THERAPY PROGRAMS**

*\$10,000 Grant from PetSmart Charities™ of Canada Will Help the Organization Provide 1,000 Animal-Assisted Therapy Visits for Students at Colleges, Universities and Schools Across the Nation*

**Nov. XX, 2017— HAWKESBURY, ON** – As exam season approaches, millions of post-secondary students across Canada will be hunkering down in their bedrooms, at kitchen tables, in libraries and coffee shops in the hopes of committing a semester’s worth of learning to memory and acing their exams.

The stress and anxiety levels among students are heightened at this time of year, and that’s why [Therapeutic Paws of Canada](#) has been committed to providing **PAWS Room** therapy dog visits to post-secondary school students. With a new \$10,000 grant from [PetSmart Charities of Canada](#), Therapeutic Paws of Canada plans to provide at least 1,000 animal-assisted group therapy sessions to students during exam time at colleges and universities across Canada.

“There’s a lot of data out there about the impact of exam stress and the intense levels of anxiety affecting Canada’s youth. Over the past few years, we’ve seen a 30 percent increase in requests for campus visits from our therapy dog teams,” says Dian McTaggart, Director at Large for Therapeutic Paws of Canada. “With this grant from PetSmart Charities of Canada, we’re excited to be bringing **PAWS Room** visits to 15 colleges and universities across three provinces during the 2017/18 academic year.”

Therapeutic Paws of Canada also plans to use part of the grant to expand their *Paws to Read*® program which matches child-certified therapy dogs and their handlers with children who are having trouble learning to read aloud. Children are encouraged to choose a book they think the dog would like to hear, and then read aloud to their attentive, non-judgmental canine companion. The program has been linked to marked improvements in children’s reading skills as well as to greater self-confidence in *Paws to Read*® participants.

“Pets have a natural ability to slow our heart rate and generally make us feel happier and less stressed,” says Dani Mailing, Regional Relationship Manager for PetSmart Charities of Canada. “The **PAWS Room** and *Paws to Read*® programs offered by Therapeutic Paws of Canada are supporting the healthy learning and development of children and teens who will become the future leaders of this country. PetSmart Charities of Canada is proud to be a part of bringing those programs to even more Canadian youth through our grant.”

**About Therapeutic Paws of Canada:**

[Therapeutic Paws of Canada](http://www.tpoc.ca) is a completely volunteer based organization providing therapy dog and cat visitation services to schools, hospitals, seniors' centres and other facilities across Canada. Animal-assisted therapy visits are provided free of charge thanks to Therapeutic Paws of Canada's network of dedicated volunteers and their evaluated/certified companion animals. To find out more visit [www.tpoc.ca](http://www.tpoc.ca)

**About PetSmart Charities™ of Canada:**

[PetSmart Charities of Canada](http://www.petsmartcharities.ca) is a registered Canadian charity with a mission to find lifelong, loving homes for all pets by supporting programs and thought leadership that bring people and pets together. In addition to finding homes for more than 25,000 shelter pets each year through its in-store adoption program in all PetSmart stores, PetSmart Charities of Canada provides funding to registered charities aligned with its mission through four key areas of grant support: Preventing Pet Homelessness; Helping Shelter Pets Thrive; Supporting the Bond Between People and Pets; and Emergency Relief and Disaster Support. Each year, millions of generous PetSmart shoppers help pets in need by donating to PetSmart Charities of Canada using the pin pads at checkout registers inside PetSmart stores. In turn, PetSmart Charities efficiently uses 89 cents of every dollar donated and has become a leading funder of animal welfare in Canada, donating nearly \$12 million to date. PetSmart Charities of Canada is a member of Imagine Canada, and a registered Canadian charity independent from PetSmart, Inc. To learn more, visit [www.petsmartcharities.ca](http://www.petsmartcharities.ca)

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