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1 FUR 1 Foundation and First Responder Therapy Dogs Unite to Strengthen First Responder Wellness Through Research and Innovation

Women-led nonprofit organizations unite to strengthen sustainable, measurable, and stigma-free wellness programs serving first responders nationwide.

Chicago, IL — 1 FUR 1 Foundation today announced a strategic partnership with First Responder Therapy Dogs (FRTD), a national nonprofit organization dedicated to providing comfort, support, and emotional wellness resources to first responders through certified therapy dog teams.

Through this partnership, 1 FUR 1 Foundation will provide technology, research support, impact measurement tools, and organizational development resources to help FRTD enhance program effectiveness, better understand outcomes, and support sustainable national growth.

Founded in 2021, First Responder Therapy Dogs has grown into a nationwide network of more than 650 certified therapy dog teams serving first responders across 48 states. FRTD volunteers provide free visits to law enforcement agencies, fire departments, EMS personnel, dispatch centers, hospitals, and other emergency response organizations, offering moments of comfort, connection, and stress relief to those who serve their communities every day.

The partnership represents a shared commitment to advancing the science and practice of animal-assisted services while ensuring both human and canine well-being remain at the center of service delivery.

"At 1 FUR 1 Foundation, we believe meaningful impact begins with meaningful measurement," said Michelle Djonova, Founder and President of 1 FUR 1 Foundation. "First Responder Therapy Dogs has built an extraordinary national network dedicated to supporting first responders. We are honored to help strengthen that work through research, technology, and impact evaluation that can accelerate growth, improve outcomes, and help demonstrate the value of therapy dog programs nationwide."

Through the collaboration, the organizations will work together to develop enhanced impact reporting, expand data collection capabilities, support program evaluation

initiatives, and explore opportunities for future research that can contribute to the growing body of evidence supporting animal-assisted services.

"Our mission is to care for those who dedicate their lives to caring for others," said Heidi Carman, Founder and Executive Director of First Responder Therapy Dogs. "By partnering with 1 FUR 1 Foundation, we're combining compassion with data-driven insight to strengthen our programs, demonstrate measurable impact, and expand support for first responders nationwide."

The partnership also reflects a shared dedication to supporting the volunteers and therapy dog teams who make these services possible. By better understanding program outcomes and operational needs, both organizations aim to create sustainable systems that strengthen the health, well-being, and long-term success of therapy dog teams and the communities they serve.

As demand for mental health and wellness resources continues to increase among first responders, the organizations believe the partnership will help advance best practices, improve service delivery, and create a stronger foundation for future growth and innovation.

About 1 FUR 1 Foundation

1 FUR 1 Foundation is a volunteer-run nonprofit organization advancing the field of animal-assisted services through research, technology, impact measurement, and strategic partnerships. The Foundation has now created a national 1 FUR1 impact network working alongside five therapy animal nonprofit organizations across hundreds of facilities to expand access to high-quality animal-assisted programs while generating measurable outcomes that strengthen the future of the human-animal bond.

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