



People and Animals Living Safely

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Urban Resource Institute and Purina Unveil the Purina Play Haven, NYC's First-Ever Dog Park in a Domestic Violence Shelter

Ribbon-cutting celebration marks the official expansion of URIPALS—URI's initiative to shelter people and pets together

NEW YORK, New York – March 18, 2014 – [Urban Resource Institute](#) (URI) and Nestlé Purina PetCare (Purina) today hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate New York City's first-ever dog park in a domestic violence shelter, called the Purina Play Haven and Dog Park. The event marks the official expansion of URIPALS—People and Animals Living Safely—which launched in June 2013 as a pilot program to enable domestic violence survivors to enter shelter with their cats and other small animals. With the opening of the Purina Play Haven and Dog Park, URI will now be able to open its doors to families with dogs.

Sponsored by Purina, which contributed funds for the design and construction of the dog park, the Purina Play Haven and Dog Park will give families at URI's largest emergency shelter in New York City a safe and calming retreat in which to heal together. The unique dog park features a ramp, tunnel, bridge and platform for dogs to play and exercise, as well as overhead trellises to ensure the privacy and security of shelter residents.

"At Purina we share the belief that when pets and people are together, life is truly better," said Lindsey Hogan, brand manager for the Purina brand. "We're very proud to support the Urban Resource Institute and its PALS program, which is helping to keep families and pets together during difficult times."

URI and Purina's collaboration in support of URIPALS brings together one of New York City's largest domestic violence service providers and a leader in the pet care industry around the closely linked issues of animal abuse and domestic violence. United by the belief that people and pets are better together, URI and Purina are helping reduce barriers to safety for families with pets in domestic violence situations, and hope to continue raising awareness about the impact of abuse on the whole family—including pets.



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Urban Resource Institute

“Since launching URIPALS, we’ve seen how transformative it is for families in domestic violence situations to go through the healing process together with their pets,” said Nathaniel Fields, President of URI. “As we open our doors to families with dogs and celebrate this critical milestone for URIPALS, we hope to continue the momentum and inspire other organizations in major cities nationwide that this initiative is possible. We are grateful to Purina for helping URI make this dog park a reality, and for their shared commitment to keeping people and pets together, especially in times of crisis.”

Studies show that as many as 48% of domestic violence victims stay in abusive situations out of fear of what would happen if they left their pets behind, and more than 70% of pet owners who enter shelter report that the abuser has threatened, injured, or killed family pets¹. Among New York City’s 50 domestic violence shelters, URI is the only one that accommodates pets, filling a critical gap by addressing the unique challenges families with pets face.

“When my children and I found out that we could bring our dog, Sparky, with us into shelter, we were overjoyed,” said one domestic violence survivor currently in URI’s shelter. “Sparky had always been there with us to comfort and even protect us from the abuse, and having him there with us as we work to put our lives back together makes our recovery process so much better. I’m so grateful to Purina and URI for helping me and other families with pets stay together.”

The event also convened elected officials and experts and leaders in the domestic violence and animal welfare communities to discuss the importance of this critical initiative.

“I applaud URI, Purina, and GEPPAUL ARCHITECTS for their unique and innovative collaboration to create the City’s first-ever dog park in a domestic violence shelter and for appreciating that a pet is more than just an animal in your home,” said Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence Commissioner Rose Pierre-Louis. “So many survivors face the unimaginable choice of having to leave a beloved pet behind in order to flee an abusive relationship. With this new program, the entire family can find safety and security together in a supportive domestic violence shelter.”

“We have been supportive of the URIPALS program and are pleased about the addition of the new dog park to the URIPALS domestic violence shelter, which we anticipate will further reduce the barriers domestic violence survivors might face to seeking safety and services,” said HRA’s Office of Emergency and Intervention Services Executive Deputy Commissioner Cecile Noel. “As providers of emergency shelter and other vital services to victims of abuse and their children we know quite well that those who fear for their own safety are often worried about leaving their pet family member to escape abuse, unless there’s an opportunity to preserve the pet’s welfare. With initiatives like this we are establishing effective models for domestic violence and animal protection programs not only in New York City but across the state and nation.”

The Purina Play Haven and Dog Park was designed by Gerard P. Paul, Principal, GEPPAUL ARCHITECTS. “We’re pleased to have worked with URI and Purina in the creation of a space that supports this important initiative,” said Paul. “We saw the potential to give new meaning to this former alleyway, and it is gratifying to have transformed it into a space that will tremendously benefit the community. We wanted to do everything we could to make sure that the pets and people in URI’s shelter have a safe and truly enjoyable outdoor area to spend quality time together.”

As part of its sponsorship of URIPALS, in October 2013 Purina also donated much-needed welcome kits tailored to cats —with food, toys, crates and other pet supplies—and educational materials designed to guide families entering URI’s largest domestic violence shelter in best practices for caring for their pets.

To learn more about URIPALS and for tips on keeping the entire family safe in domestic violence situations, please visit www.urinyc.org.

About Urban Resource Institute

Urban Resource Institute (URI) provides comprehensive, holistic, and supportive social services programs that help individuals and families in the New York metropolitan area overcome obstacles and better their lives. With a rich 32-year legacy, deep community relationships, and a flexible, innovative approach to program development and service delivery, URI is uniquely equipped to provide solutions to the challenges affecting victims of domestic violence, the developmentally disabled, and people struggling with addiction and substance abuse. In June 2013, URI launched New York City’s first initiative to allow victims of domestic violence to enter shelter with their pets called URIPALS—People and Animals Living Safely. For more information, please visit www.urinyc.org.

About Nestlé Purina

Nestlé Purina PetCare Company is a global leader in the pet care industry and promotes responsible pet care, humane education, community involvement and the positive bond between people and their pets. The North American headquarters for Nestlé Purina is located at Checkerboard Square in St. Louis, Missouri. Nestlé Purina is part of Swiss-based Nestlé, the world's leading nutrition, health and wellness company.

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ⁱ <http://www.aspc.org/fight-cruelty/report-animal-cruelty/domestic-violence-and-animal-cruelty>