



"Ensuring excellence and changing lives through equine-assisted activities and therapies"

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PATH Intl. Announces Purina as Title Sponsor of Conference in Washington

Denver – The Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.), formerly NARHA, is pleased to announce that Purina has been named the official title sponsor of the 2012 PATH Intl. Conference in Bellevue, WA, October 31-November 3.

Purina has been a good friend and sponsor of PATH Intl. for many years, and this year marks the third year in a row that Purina has honored PATH Intl. by becoming the title sponsor of its international conference, the leading event targeted at the growing field of equine-assisted activities and therapies (EAAT). In addition to providing financial support to PATH Intl., Purina is also giving travel scholarships to help award winners attend the conference and has funded many other creative programs in years past.

Based in Denver, PATH Intl. was formed in 1969 as the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association to promote equine-assisted activities and therapies for individuals with special needs. The needs of those served include but are not limited to developmental delay, muscular dystrophy, hearing, visual and speech impairments, spina-bifida, cerebral palsy, autism, Down syndrome, and emotional, behavioral and learning challenges. Many PATH Intl. centers offer special programs for at-risk youth as well as wounded service personnel and veterans. At more than 800 member centers, men, women and children find a sense of independence through involvement with equines in activities such as therapeutic riding, hippotherapy, equine-assisted psychotherapy, driving, interactive vaulting and competition. Of the 48,000 participants helped by PATH Intl., nearly 80 percent are under the age of 18. Today, PATH Intl. has more than 37,000 volunteers, 4,300 instructors, 6,000 therapy horses and thousands of contributors from all over the world. Information about PATH Intl. is available on its website at www.pathintl.org.

The team at Purina, the leader in equine nutrition for over 100 years, is proud to support PATH Intl. and the fantastic work done by the organization, its member centers and numerous volunteers every day. Purina and PATH Intl. share a strong sense of responsibility to the animals and people in PATH Intl. programs. That sense of responsibility is reflected in the uncommon quality and performance of Purina's feeds, which are backed by years of extensive equine research and feed development.

According to Kaye Marks, PATH Intl. Director of Marketing and Communications, the PATH Intl. Conference improves the EAAT field each year by bringing together the top certified instructors and accredited center leadership as well as therapists and other professionals for the kind of communication and continuing education that is absolutely necessary for the growth and expansion of the field. This year, the 2012 PATH Intl. Conference theme is "Innovate," which will showcase preeminent development in research and education and celebrate the very best people and equines in EAAT today.

“PATH Intl. is thrilled and very grateful for Purina’s title role in the conference, in the presentation of the Instructor of the Year Award and in the ongoing activities that support excellence in services to people with challenges throughout the year,” said Marks. “The financial support and increased awareness Purina brings to PATH Intl. is invaluable.

If you would like information on sponsoring PATH Intl.’s conference or wish to be an exhibitor, visit www.pathintl.org and click on “conferences international” or email Megan Ferry at mferry@pathintl.org.

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About PATH Intl.:

Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.), formerly NARHA, was formed in 1969 to promote equine-assisted activities and therapies for individuals with special needs. At more than 800 member centers, a total of 48,000 children and adults find a sense of independence through involvement with horses. These member centers range from small, one-person programs to large operations with several certified instructors and licensed therapists. In addition to therapeutic equitation, a center may offer any number of equine-assisted activities including hippotherapy, equine-facilitated mental health, driving, interactive vaulting, trail riding, competition, ground work or stable management. Through a wide variety of educational resources, the association helps individuals start and maintain successful equine-assisted activities and therapies for individuals with special needs. There are more than 37,000 volunteers, 4,300 instructors, 6,000 therapy horses and thousands of contributors from all over the world helping people at PATH Intl. centers.