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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Friends of the Shelter Awarded Build-A-Bear Workshop Bear Hugs Foundation Grant

COLUMBUS, OH – *Friends of the Shelter*, an all-volunteer, 501c3 non-profit group, has been awarded a \$5,000 grant from Build-A-Bear Workshop Bear Hugs Foundation to fund services of the Off-Site Infirmary Care Program (OSICP) of the Franklin County Dog Shelter (FCDS).

This and other innovative medical programs of the FCDS that directly aid shelter dogs are not funded by local tax dollars, but instead remain financially dependent on *Friends of the Shelter* and the generous support of individuals and businesses such as Build-A-Bear Workshop Bear Hugs Foundation. This critical funding enables *Friends of the Shelter* and the FCDS to help the innocent, homeless dogs of Central Ohio.

The OSICP for which this grant was awarded provides medical/surgical services to shelter dogs that cannot be treated at the Shelter's infirmary because of lack of capacity or capability.

“The Franklin County Dog Shelter is setting a standard of compassionate care with innovative programs such as the OSICP, that demonstrate homeless animals in Central Ohio are valued and not considered disposable,” said *Friends of the Shelter* Director Ellen Mrochek. “Visitors, potential adoptive individuals and families, and our donors and supporters are enormously supportive of this program as it aims to reduce euthanasia rates for these innocent and adoptable homeless dogs.”

The FCDS serves 14,000 dogs annually. Before the OSICP program was implemented, the constant state of an “at-capacity” infirmary space required the Shelter staff to make the most difficult decision between which dogs would receive the medical care required, and which would be euthanized. This program allows the Shelter and its OSICP partner, Creature Comforts Veterinary Care Center in Lancaster, Ohio, to not only provide the necessary medical care, but to ultimately find all of these highly adoptable dogs permanent, loving homes.

In 2005, the first year of the program, approximately 250 dogs’ lives were saved as a result of the OSICP. Over 350 dogs received OSICP services in 2006.

Shelter staff and volunteers take great pride in the OSICP, which is considered to be the “heart and soul” of *Friends of the Shelter*, as it directly demonstrates lives that are successfully rehabilitated and adopted into loving homes. This program is essential in changing the negative image of “the pound” that previously made potential adopters, volunteers and donors shudder and stay away, into the positive image of a caring shelter where it is comfortable to adopt a pet, rewarding to volunteers and worthy of donations.



5852 Heritage Lakes Drive • Hilliard, Ohio 43026
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About the Build-A Bear Workshop Bear Hugs Foundation

A portion of the proceeds from the sale of each Bearemy Kennel Pals plush animal line is donated through the Build-A-Bear Workshop Bear Hugs Foundation to domestic pet programs including local animal shelters, stray pet rescues, rehabilitation organizations, and pet education programs throughout the United States and Canada. These grants allow the Build-A-Bear Workshop Bear Hugs Foundation to advance its mission of making life more bearable for children, families and pets who are in need of a helping paw.

About the Franklin County Dog Shelter & Friends of the Shelter

The mission of the Franklin County Dog Shelter is to provide compassionate care for impounded animals and responsible enforcement of canine laws, thereby creating a safer and more desirable community for the citizens of Franklin County. The shelter is sustained strictly by adoption and redemption fees, and the generosity of animal-friendly individuals and businesses.

Friends of the Shelter is a 501c3 non-profit group established to coordinate the fundraising activities that directly benefit the dogs of the Franklin County Dog Shelter. Money raised by *Friends of the Shelter* is allocated to fund diagnostic services, medical/surgical care, behavioral services and training, dental, grooming, and enrichment activities that directly benefit the dogs of the Franklin County Dog Shelter. In addition, *Friends of the Shelter* funds an innovative, low-cost community outreach spay and neuter program, called *The Fix*. For more information on *The Fix*, call (614) 462-5581.

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