

## How a Mars Petcare Event Helped 285 Pets Find Homes and Sparked National Dialogue about Pet Adoption



62% of pet parents say having pets with them is important to their mental health in the post-pandemic world.\* Yet despite this and many other benefits pets bring to our lives, pet homelessness remains tragically high. About 6.5 million pets enter shelters nationwide each year, and only half of them find homes. Plus, following the adoption boom of the pandemic, pet adoptions appeared to be slowing in second half of 2021.

As a company whose purpose is A BETTER WORLD FOR PETS, those are facts we are eager to change. That's why Mars Petcare wanted to turn our 13<sup>th</sup> annual adoption program into a multi-day, multi-city event with a drumbeat of activities and engagements to increase awareness in our community and nationally about ending pet homelessness, and help dogs and cats find homes.

Our goal was three-fold:

- Bring out adopters in our event cities to help pets find loving homes, while driving dialogue about pet adoption.
- Achieve national coverage reaching an even bigger audience than our previous best-ever adoption weekend audience of 188 million impressions in 2020.
- Connect the dots to our brands and to our purpose-driven programs for pet-related philanthropy, volunteerism and best practice sharing with cities.

### Strategy and tactics

Our approach for 2021 included four key elements. First, we would host a weekend of adoption events at multiple shelters around our North America headquarters hometown to

spread awareness about pet homelessness and engage residents in our community who were looking to adopt. We would cover all pet adoption fees during the adoption weekend event and support our shelter partners with volunteerism and event marketing.

Second: For the second year in a row, we would make it a multi-city program. Tied to the game between the Tennessee Titans and the Kansas City Chiefs, we would host events at two Kansas City shelters, too. Mars Petcare's U.S. headquarters is in Nashville's backyard and one of our key pet food manufacturing facilities is in Kansas City. This meant our multi-city adoption weekend could have a meaningful impact in two of our hometown communities.

Third: Along with event publicity to engage our local communities, we wanted to partner with the Titans to reach a sizeable national audience, too. Beyond traditional event PR including media pitches and social posts featuring quarterback Ryan Tannehill, we provided Titans players with t-shirts with giant portraits of adoptable dogs, which they could wear during media interviews leading up to game day.

Fourth: Every great event needs swag! To build awareness of our Mars Petcare ecosystem and showcase how we all work together to live our purpose and end pet homelessness, we created free "starter kits" for adopting families at the events. These included pet food from PEDIGREE®, CESAR® and IAMSTM™, TEMPTATIONS™ cat treats, as well as coupons and swag from BANFIELD® Pet Hospital, Camp Bow Wow®, IAMSTM™ NOSEiD, VCA Animal Hospitals, WISDOM PANEL™, PEDIGREE Foundation and the BETTER CITIES FOR PETS™ Program.

## Execution



We collaborated with three shelters in Nashville and two in Kansas City to coordinate the weekend of pet adoption events. Media materials and promotional social copy were provided to the shelters for use leading up to the events. We also advertised them on our own social media channels.

To drive community and media interest, we leveraged a partnership with Tennessee Titans quarterback Ryan Tannehill. We organized a photoshoot with Tannehill featuring adoptable

pets and the adorable photos were seeded to media to get the word out about our adoption event and increase awareness about ending pet homelessness.

The adoptable dog t-shirts for the Titans players were a huge hit, with superstar running back Derrick Henry and others wearing the shirts and speaking about the importance of pet adoption to the media the week leading up to adoption weekend. The dog t-shirts sparked a national conversation around finding shelter pets loving homes and even led to national broadcast coverage on CBS This Morning.

We also arranged with one of our shelter partners to have an adoptable puppy greet players as they arrived at the stadium on game day, resulting in adorable social posts that resonated with the local community, team fans and sports media, and helped increase awareness of the adoption event.

## Results



Adoption weekend was a great success, bringing together our community in support of pet adoption and reaching our largest-ever national audience with our message of ending pet homelessness. Our results included:

- 285 homeless pets from our Nashville and Kansas City communities were adopted from the five participating shelter events over the course of three days, with all fees covered by Mars Petcare.
- We saw more than 551 million impressions from media placements across publications like Sports Illustrated, Yahoo! Sports, Forbes, ESPN, CBS This Morning and The New York Post – not only bringing out local adopters but also driving awareness that we hope will help in our continuing ambition to end pet homelessness.