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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Saint Francis Service Dogs Announces Open Registration for Barks ‘n Rec 2022!

It’s a do your own thing fundraiser.

Roanoke, VA – February 9, 2022, - Saint Francis Service Dogs has opened registration for their second annual Spring Fundraiser: Barks ‘n Rec.

Last year, nearly 500 people across 27 states participated in our first ever Barks ‘n Rec fundraiser. We are hoping this year will be even bigger and better with more people doing their own thing to benefit Saint Francis Service Dogs. We exceeded our goal last year and we know with your help, we can do the same this year!

Saint Francis Service Dogs has a goal of raising \$60,000 through this event for 2022, and we are almost halfway there!

During the week of April 18-24, Barks ‘n Rec is an opportunity for everyone to do their favorite activities with their pets by their side, all for a good cause. All proceeds from the event will help Saint Francis raise, train, and place service dogs with individuals with physical and developmental disabilities throughout the state of Virginia and surrounding areas.

Participants can register to participate online at www.saintfrancisdogs.org/barks-n-rec and pledge to do any activity they like (kayaking, cartwheeling, swimming, juggling, reading, etc.) during Barks ‘n Rec Week. They will also have the option of creating an individual fundraising page to share their activity and participation and receive support from friends and family. By sharing their involvement through social media (#barksnrec2022) and with the help of their community, individual participants can increase their impact and support Saint Francis’s critical mission.

The \$25.00 registration earns, not only, a fun-filled week but an event t-shirt and the chance to win one of the special event prizes.

Executive Director, Cabell Youell, says, “I am grateful to everyone who took the time and energy to support our first ever Barks ‘n Rec as we navigated such a challenging year in 2021. I am excited as we head into our second year of this incredible event of people doing the things they love most to help Saint Francis Service Dogs. We deeply appreciate your support. Everything you do helps us continue our mission.”

Rachelle Walker of WyndRose, Barks ‘n Rec lead sponsor, says, "Community is at the center of what we do here at WyndRose. From supporting small, family communities around the world to right here at home, we believe every contribution no matter the size has an impact. After being a first time sponsor of Barks ‘n Rec last year, we are very proud to continue supporting the message of Saint Francis Service Dogs and watch their important mission grow.”

Join in on the fun, as individuals all across the state and region get active with their pets, seizing the wonderful weather, their hula hoops, and canoes to touch lives through Saint Francis Service Dogs. We can't wait to see what you choose to do this year!

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Saint Francis Partner, Lucy, and her service dog, Beck, enjoy kayaking

About Saint Francis Service Dogs:

Saint Francis Service Dogs is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to assist children and adults with disabilities to become more independent and self-sufficient through partnership with a professionally trained service dog.

Since our inception in 1996, we have placed 164 service and facility dogs to assist people with a wide range of disabilities, including autism, cerebral palsy, joint and/or muscular diseases, multiple sclerosis, brain injury, paralysis, Parkinson's disease, rheumatoid arthritis, and many other conditions.

Our service dogs are trained in over 40 different skills, and can assist a person with physical task-work such as turning lights on and off, retrieving fallen items, carrying items and going for help when necessary.

In addition to the tangible services that service dogs provide, the animal-human bond generates a strong emotional attachment between human and dog. Through this bond, the person often develops a positive focus and a stimulus to be active. The result is increased motivation, higher self-esteem, and a greater sense of belonging, as well as more social interaction and a higher quality of life. A service dog can act as a bridge to the world around them, steering the focus to the person and away from the disability.

It takes two years and costs tens of thousands of dollars to train one Saint Francis Service Dog. We absorb this cost and do not charge our partners for their dogs. We rely on generous individuals, corporations, and foundations to fulfill our mission. Because of their support, we are able to engage, empower, and transform the lives of people with disabilities. With your help, we can change lives for a lifetime.