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## **BALBOA BARKS Festival Raises \$32,000 for Canine Companions for Independence**

OCEANSIDE, CA BALBOA BARKS: A Day Of Peace, Love & Canine Companions, held on April 9 in Balboa Park, raised more than \$32,000 for Canine Companions for Independence. *Canine Companions for Independence is a nonprofit organization that enhances the lives of people with disabilities by providing highly trained assistance dogs and ongoing support to ensure quality partnerships.* BALBOA BARKS was the seventh annual dog and people festival held by Canine Companions. A celebration of the human-canine bond, the event featured disc dogs, flyball, assistance dog demonstrations, a K9 agility playground, contests, shopping and more. Over 1,500 San Diegans attended, along with hundreds of dogs of every size and breed.

BALBOA BARKS 2011 featured a record number of sponsors, 80 vendor booths and a fundraising dog walk, all of which contributed to the event's success. However, the festival had its share of hiccups - inclement weather for the week prior that cleared up only hours before the festival began and limited parking because of another Balboa Park event. "Unfortunately, outdoor events never go off without a hitch, but we're thrilled that the sun actually wound up shining on this fundraiser for Canine Companions," explains Cheryl Crawford, BALBOA BARKS event chairperson. Beyond raising funds for the nonprofit, BALBOA BARKS is also valued as an outreach tool. "Although Canine Companions has had a San Diego County campus since 1986, many locals have never heard of us," Crawford continues. "BALBOA BARKS appeals to a wide range of people and it's a great way for Canine Companions to connect with dog lovers throughout the county."

The event could not happen without the support of generous sponsors. Disney VoluntEARS was the BALBOA BARKS 2011 Title Sponsor. Other sponsors included 105.7 The Walrus, 102.1 KPRI, Holiday Pet Hotel, PETCO Foundation, San Diego County Credit Union, American Red Cross – San Diego/Imperial Counties, San Diego Pet Supply, Banfield Pet Hospital, The Frame Station, Smooth Jazz 98.1, La Jolla Beach & Tennis Club, The Marine Room, The Shores Restaurant, The Honest Kitchen, Day-McKellar Preparatory School, Puptown Doggy Daycare, Right Janitorial, Foxy Treats, Walk N Roll Doggie, Bow Wow Beauty Shoppe, Ruff Haus Design, Clif Bar and Zuke's.

Fundraisers in the Peace, Love & Canine Companions dog walk that kicked off the festival were also critical to the event's success. Tessa Rucker of Encinitas was the BALBOA BARKS 2011 top fundraiser with over \$3,000 raised for Canine Companions. Her prize included a two-night stay at La Jolla Beach & Tennis Club, two nights lodging for her dog at Camp Bow Wow El Cajon and dinner for two at The Marine Room. Lyn Berry of Vista was the second place fundraiser – she raised more than \$1,000 for Canine Companions. Canine Companions also relied on dozens of hard-working volunteers to plan and staff the event. "Once again, the San Diego community showed its support of Canine Companions through this fun, family festival," Crawford said. "We are grateful to each and every two- and four-legged participant."

### **About Canine Companions for Independence:**

Canine Companions for Independence provides highly trained assistance dogs to children and adults with disabilities. Established in 1975, Canine Companions has five regional training centers across the country, including a facility in Oceanside. A Los Angeles Office was opened in 2010. Canine Companions is recognized worldwide for the excellence of its dogs, and the quality and longevity of the matches it makes between dogs and people. There is no charge for the dog, training and ongoing follow-up services.

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