



For Immediate Release

NYC's Animal Medical Center Honors AMC Healthcare Heroes at Virtual Top Dog Gala Gala Also Honors Dogtor Loki, a Therapy Dog at the University of Maryland Medical Center and Hunter, a Therapy Dog with Paws for a Cause

Event Raises \$1.4 Million

(December 10, 2020) The Animal Medical Center (AMC) honored AMC Healthcare Heroes at this year's virtual Top Dog Gala for their incredible sacrifices to deliver world-class veterinary care throughout the pandemic. The December 8th virtual event also honored two remarkable working dogs: Dogtor Loki, a Therapy Dog at the University of Maryland Medical Center, and Hunter, a Therapy Dog with Hudson Valley Paws for a Cause. The virtual event raised \$1.4 million and the digital program featured a moving tribute to the healthcare heroes, interviews with AMC leadership and the honorees, as well as animated animals with voiceovers by Broadway legend Bernadette Peters, acclaimed actress Candice Bergen, and the star of *Hamilton*, Miguel Cervantes.

The benefit was co-chaired by Nancy Kissinger, Elaine Langone, Marianne Mebane, Elizabeth Monaco McCarthy, and Annette de la Renta. Inimitable designer and event producer David Monn was responsible for the creative concept and flawless execution of this unique virtual gala.

Guests tuned in from around the world to view the event, including William and Donna Acquavella, Dr. Henry and Nancy Kissinger, Kenneth and Elaine Langone, Katharine Rayner, Annette de la Renta, and Lisa and David Schiff.

"It is with heartfelt pride that we honor our AMC Healthcare Heroes, who have been on the frontlines since the beginning of the pandemic. These individuals have dedicated their lives to helping animals, and COVID-19 didn't change that. In the darkest of days, when the world stopped, they were here," said Kathryn Coyne, President and Chief Executive Officer of AMC. "AMC is also proud to honor Dogtor Loki, a Therapy Dog at the University of Maryland Medical Center, and Hunter, a Therapy Dog with Hudson Valley Paws for a Cause."

"For 110 years, AMC has been making a difference in the lives of animals and the people who love them," said Robert Liberman, Chairman, AMC's Board of Trustees. "AMC's commitment to the health and well-being of pets and their families has remained unchanged throughout this ever-challenging year."

"I'm so proud to be a part of the Animal Medical Center's 2020 Top Dog virtual gala. AMC has been here for the people and pets of NYC through the 1918 Flu Pandemic, World War II, 9/11, Hurricane Sandy, and now COVID-19, and has always provided the very best care of animals. I salute AMC's Healthcare Heroes for their extraordinary efforts to continue caring for pets throughout the pandemic," said Bernadette Peters, AMC Board Member and Broadway luminary who provided her talent to the virtual presentation.

The Animal Medical Center's 2020 Virtual Top Dog Gala can now be viewed online for the first time in the history of the event at: <http://www.amcny.org/event/2020-top-dog-gala/>

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Interested media can download event photos, videoclips, and more at AMC's 2020 Top Dog Virtual Gala Press Page at: <https://www.amcnv.org/amcs-top-dog-gala-2020-press-resources/>

About Animal Medical Center

The Animal Medical Center (AMC) is the world's largest non-profit animal hospital with 100+ veterinarians providing the highest quality medical care across more than 20 specialties and services, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Our mission to provide the best in care, research, and education has been the foundation of our work for over a century. As we mark our 110th anniversary, we are launching the Gift of Love campaign to ensure we are here for our pets for the next century, and beyond. Learn more at www.amcnv.org/giftoflove

About Dogtor Loki, a Therapy Dog at the University of Maryland Medical Center

Loki is a sweet, 3-year-old Rottweiler therapy dog. She was just ten weeks old when Caroline Benzel adopted her, the same week she was accepted into medical school at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. Caroline saw something special in Loki's personality -a patient, gentle puppy that picked up on tricks and social cues faster than almost any therapy dog she had previously worked with.

Caroline trained Loki for therapy work over the next 10 months, but little did she know what an impact that Rottie, now known as "Dogtor Loki," would have on the world. Dressed in her signature outfit – pink hospital scrubs and a custom-made white coat, Dogtor Loki brought joy and comfort to patients and staff throughout the University of Maryland Medical Center. When COVID-19 hit, Caroline decided to use FaceTime to conduct remote therapy dog visits. After noticing the physical effects that masks had on the faces of staff, Caroline started soliciting donations through Loki's social media accounts to create care packages, called *Hero Healing Kits*. The kits, which have Loki's face on them, included lotions, Chapstick, gum, and other goodies, along with a personalized message of appreciation from Dogtor Loki. Through the power of social media, Dogtor Loki's story received international coverage, and, within weeks, the Hero Healing Kits Initiative was launched in eight states, raising nearly \$100,000 nationally to support frontline workers and first responders.

Dogtor Loki was excited to be back in the hospital in late August to resume her therapy visits. "Loki brings joy to our patients, families, and staff," says Giora Netzer, MD, Professor of Medicine at the University of Maryland School of Medicine and Vice President of Patient Experience at the University of Maryland Medical Center. "More than simply lifting everyone's spirit, Loki elevates our culture of healing by reminding our team members of the wonder residing in each of us." Dogtor Loki is a testament to breeds that often receive a bad rap. She now acts as a breed ambassador, showing the world what it means to be a gentle giant daily. You can follow Dogtor Loki at: @dogtor.Loki.

About Hunter, Therapy Dog with Paws for a Cause

Hunter is an active 10-year-old-Standard Poodle and an officially registered therapy dog. Through Robert and Hunter's affiliation with Hudson Valley Paws for a Cause, they have been working with the United States Military Academy at West Point since 2013.

Robert Reeg, a retired New York City Firefighter and a 9/11 survivor, is a certified American Red Cross responder who brought Hunter home at eight weeks and quickly noticed that he had an intuition for

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copied with people with special needs following his brother's stroke. After formal training Hunter completed his therapy dog certification when he was three.

For their service at the United States Military Academy at West Point, Hunter and Robert were presented with the Black & Gold Award, the Garrison's Commander's Award, and the Presidential Volunteer Service Award with both Gold and Bronze distinction. Hunter also received a Service for Life certificate from the United States Army. Hunter also works at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Montrose, New York, where he has special credentials allowing them to visit and provide comfort to patients confined to the psychiatric ward. They also work at Camp Venture and St. Dominic's group home, providing therapy to children and adults with special needs. Hunter and Robert also work with Tails of Hope Foundation, participating in Military Working Dog programs, as needed.

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