



## **Get Up and Get Out, January is National Walk Your Pet Month**

### **Operation Kindness Shares the Benefits of Walking Your Furry Friends**

DALLAS, TX (Jan. 6, 2020) – The New Year is a common time for individuals to reflect and set goals for the year ahead. The most common New Year's resolutions made for 2020 center around improving personal health, but [Operation Kindness](#), the leading no-kill shelter in North Texas, wants to remind pet owners to not overlook the importance of improving the health of their four-legged friends in this new year. The nonprofit is encouraging all pet owners to start 2020 off on the right foot by participating in National Walk Your Pet Month all throughout January.

"Many think that walking your pet is an activity intended just for dogs, but it actually is beneficial for any furry friend," said Natalie Buxton, Director of Marketing for Operation Kindness, "As long your pet can be leashed and has proper identification, any animal can and should be taken on walks daily – it's not only good for their physical health, but also their mental health."

Founded in 1976, Operation Kindness is a pioneer in North Texas for aiding to animals in need of medical care, companionship and eventually a loving, responsible forever home. As a haven for homeless dogs and cats, the nonprofit provides extraordinary care to nearly 300 animals daily. The animal wellness experts at Operation Kindness regularly provide outdoor activities and exercise opportunities for the dogs and cats at the shelter as its proven that daily walks with pets improves physical and mental health, as well as helping with socialization and creating a lasting bond.

"We recommend pets receive a minimum of 30 minutes of activity each day as a standard," said Dr. Tobaben, Medical Director at Operation Kindness. "Based on age and energy level, that figure may need to be adjusted, but what doesn't change is the fact that pets should be taken out to exercise daily."

Most animals were bred with a specific purpose in mind, for example, sporting, working, herding, hunting for vermin and so forth. This means that whether a pet is purebred or mixed, they have a natural desire to pursue activities that will stimulate them. Regular walks provide multiple benefits for animals including improving physical and mental health, creating a bond and assisting with socialization.

Physical Health Benefits – According to the [Association for Pet Obesity Prevention](#), 59.5% of cats and 55.8% of dogs are classified as obese or overweight in the U.S. Walking is good for pets' hearts, muscles, joints, and their mental health just like humans. Daily walks will help burn energy and prevent destructive behaviors at home, better sleep patterns, regulate their digestive systems and fight obesity in animals.

Mental Health Benefits – A recent study by the veterinarians at [VCA Hospitals](#) shows that watching wildlife, having a change of scenery, exploring new paths and places, seeing other people and other pets are all great mental stimulators for animals. In addition to the natural stimulus walks provide, owners can make walks interactive by changing the directions or scenery or practicing tricks their pet is working on or knows. This will help keep pets' minds busy, working and focused their owners.

Bonding – Creating a bond with a pet is a mutual give and take of time, energy and emotion. Regular outdoor walks are the perfect way to spend quality time with a pet, giving them the love and attention

they crave. Additionally, regular shared bonding activities are shown to decrease attention-seeking behaviors in dogs such as barking or whining.

Socialization – Socialization is essential for animals to be well-adjusted and well-behaved in new environments and situations. As pets become more social, their fear and anxiety decrease as they gain confidence. The team at Operation Kindness work on interaction, socialization training and personal care by going on regular walks with the animals in their care.

Operation Kindness staff and volunteers believe in going above and beyond, giving care and kindness animals deserve which includes the exercise needed to sustain a happy and healthy life. The nonprofit provides an opportunity for interested individuals to volunteer at the shelter to provide personalized and loving care to homeless cats and dogs until they find their forever home. For information on volunteer opportunities at Operation Kindness, visit <https://www.operationkindness.org/volunteer>.

To learn more about how homeless pets find hope at Operation Kindness, visit <https://www.operationkindness.org/adoptionprocess>. To find pet-friendly trails, restaurants, and parks around Dallas-Fort Worth, visit <https://visitdfw.com/dog-friendly-dfw/>.

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### **About Operation Kindness**

Founded in 1976, Operation Kindness is a pioneer in North Texas for providing assistance to animals in need of medical care, companionship, and most of all, a home. Operation Kindness provides extensive veterinary care, a pet food pantry, a surrender prevention program, education to pet parents and volunteer opportunities. More than a shelter, Operation Kindness is a safe haven for sick, abused and abandoned dogs and cats. The organization assists more than 5,000 dogs and cats each year, caring for an average of 400 animals per day. Learn more about Operation Kindness at [www.operationkindness.org](http://www.operationkindness.org) or on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#).

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