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Prince William SPCA Partners with A.E.R.O. to Improve Wildlife Care
Expands use of PAW Express Mobile Adoption Van to care for injured wildlife

February 3, 2024 - Woodbridge, Va. – The Prince William SPCA is pleased to announce a new partnership with Animal Education and Rescue Organization (A.E.R.O.). The two Prince William County-based non-profits will work together to add additional rescue, triage care, and transport for injured wildlife by using the PAW Express Mobile Adoption Van.

In its new capacity, the PAW Express will expand programming and be used year-round for wildlife operations. It is equipped with a generator and life-saving tools that will enable A.E.R.O. to triage and stabilize animals here in the county as well as transport the animals to wildlife centers throughout Virginia. This is the first-of-its-kind operation in our area and eliminates the need to transport injured animals immediately out of the county for care, saving time and lives. The van will be parked in the gravel parking lot adjacent to the Prince William County Animal Services Center at 14807 Bristow Rd, Manassas. A.E.R.O. volunteers are already using the van to transport and rescue wildlife. In the coming months, volunteers will staff the van certain times a week to accept animals directly from the public.

The PAW Express has been the cornerstone of Prince William SPCA's "Friends of the Shelter" Program since 2011. The custom 26' mobile adoption van was purchased with a \$154,565 grant and has the capacity to hold approximately 26 animals. The first adoption event was held in April 2012, and since then, it has provided potential adopters with a unique opportunity to meet pets outside of the shelter. Over the years, the van attended hundreds of community events, expanding the visibility of the animals and increasing adoptions. In addition to adoption events, the van also hosted pet wellness clinics, assisted law enforcement in processing hoarding cases, and transported hundreds of pounds of donated pet food to needy families. This new partnership with A.E.R.O. will expand the use, while continuing to be available for adoption events and emergency response.

"We are very excited about this new chapter in the PAW Express' story, which started more than a decade ago. The goal was to have a mobile van that could be a bridge between the old Prince

William County Animal Shelter and what we hoped would be a new shelter,” states Prince William SPCA President, Melissa Korzuch. She continues, “Over the years, we used the van to promote adoptions, while advocating for a new shelter. It has been a tremendously valuable tool for the animal community when resources were not available. We are thrilled that the original goal has finally been achieved now that the new Prince William County Animal Services facility has been built. This is the perfect time to shift its use to make sure it remains relevant and useful. Pivoting to a wildlife program addresses the huge challenge of wildlife habitat decreasing and human interactions increasing. Bringing the PAW Express together with A.E.R.O.’s wildlife expertise is a perfect match. We can’t wait to see the results of this new venture.”

"We are immensely grateful for the generous gift from Prince William SPCA. This mobile intake unit is a game-changer for our organization, allowing us to expand our reach and make a greater impact on the well-being of wildlife," said Olivia LoBalbo, President at A.E.R.O. The organization consists of 6 rehabilitators, 10 apprentices, and 15 care providers who are all licensed by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources for the care and rehabilitation of Virginia native wildlife.

Over the next year, the two organizations will work together to rebrand the van to include its new mission to include wildlife rescue, triage, and transport. The public is directed to the Prince William SPCA and A.E.R.O. websites and social media sites for updates and more details.

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About the Prince William SPCA

The Prince William SPCA is an all-volunteer non-profit organization established in 2004 to benefit the animals of the greater Prince William County, Virginia, area. The organization’s mission is to inspire a community that fosters kindness, respect, and compassion for all animals. We are dedicated to protecting animals from cruelty, neglect, and abandonment, and stopping the unnecessary overpopulation of companion animals. Donations are tax-deductible and may be mailed to: PWSPCA, PO Box 6631, Woodbridge, VA 22195. To learn more, visit www.pwspca.org.

About A.E.R.O.

Animal Education and Rescue Organization (A.E.R.O.) is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization dedicated to the rescue and rehabilitation of orphaned, injured and sick native Virginia wildlife in need of help in order to survive. Our Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (VDWR) licensed wildlife rehabilitators, apprentices, and care providers devote hundreds of hours to restore the wildlife in their care to good health so that they can be released back into the wild. To learn more, visit www.aeroanimalrescue.org/.