IMPACT REPORT 2023

human animal bond research institute
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ABOUT HABRI
HABRI is a not-for-profit organization that funds innovative scientific research to document the health benefits of companion animals; educates the public about human-animal bond research; and advocates for the beneficial role of companion animals in society.

OUR VISION:
The human-animal bond is universally embraced as an essential element of human wellness.

OUR MISSION:
Advance, through science, education and advocacy, the vital role of the human-animal bond in the health and well-being of people, pets, cultures and communities.
Dear Colleagues,

As a co-founder of the Human Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI), I am excited to write about the incredible progress that our organization has made in research and education. Not only can we look back with pride on HABRI’s accomplishments, but we can look forward to a future in which HABRI has an increasingly positive impact for people, pets and the professionals who care for their health.

In this report you will read about the scientific research that HABRI has been able to fund. While it is intuitive that pets and people are good for each other, we founded HABRI on the concept that the positive effects of the human-animal bond could be measured. This research is ongoing, but the work of the research community, turbocharged by HABRI, has clearly shown this to be the case. At every stage of our lives, there is scientific evidence supporting the positive human health impact of pets. In fact, the research is so persuasive that we can now begin to think of the benefits of pets not just at the level of individual or family health, but also as a necessary component of community and public health.

Our pets have also benefited immensely from the work of HABRI. We have developed groundbreaking data to document that stronger bonds lead to better preventive and therapeutic veterinary care for our animals. We have also shown that greater knowledge and communication of human-animal bond science, particularly among pet owners and veterinarians, is an important key to unlocking stronger bonds and better health on both ends of the leash.

Armed with this powerful knowledge, where does HABRI go from here? Even as we continue to fund vital research, HABRI and its partners are in a unique position to drive societal change.

We are guided by the following principles:

- The human health benefits of the human-animal bond are indisputably vital to the mental and physical health of individuals, families, communities and cultures;
- Based on universal health benefits pets provide, the ability to acquire and keep a healthy pet should be considered an equitable right for all;
- Pet health and welfare is integral to the mutually beneficial human-animal bond and must be supported through expanded access to pet care for all, regardless of cultural differences or socioeconomic status.

HABRI and its partners are in the best position to advance these principles through research-based advocacy. Policy – the rules, regulations and societal structures that relate to pet acquisition and care – has not adapted at the same exponential pace as the strength of the human-animal bond. Our work as we go forward will be to accelerate policy changes to create a more pet-inclusive society that fulfills these guiding principles.

It is important to acknowledge HABRI’s partners without whom none of this work would be possible. Many industry initiatives have come and gone, but HABRI has continued to grow and thrive because so many industry partners have made a long-term commitment to HABRI’s success. Every one of these companies and organizations, and the amazing professionals who give them life, have come to the table in support of the HABRI vision and mission. To all of you, I offer my personal thanks, and urge you to continue your involvement. Pets are so clearly a force for good in our world, and so too are the people who help keep them happy and healthy every day.

Looking back on a long and fulfilling career as a veterinarian, I am proud to have been present at the creation of HABRI. Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of something so meaningful! Thank you for supporting HABRI and safeguarding and strengthening the human-animal bond!

Sincerely,
J. Michael McFarland, DVM
Chair, HABRI Board of Trustees

Looking to HABRI’s Future: Letter from the Chair

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PetSmart Charities

GENE O’NEILL
CEO
North American Veterinary Community

HEIDI SIROTA
Chief Pet Officer
Nationwide

4 2023 IMPACT REPORT
Play a leading role in the advancement of human-animal interaction science, focusing on research with real-world impact. HABRI has become one of the leading private funders of human-animal interaction research, supporting research all over the world.

- Research proposals from 30+ countries and 200+ institutions worldwide.
- Largest library of human-animal interaction science.
- Actionable research leading to better health for: veterans, older people, children with autism, and families.

Drive policy changes that support the human-animal bond and strengthen the role of companion animals in society.

HABRI engages in research-based advocacy, working to remove barriers so that everyone can benefit from the human-animal bond.

- HABRI and its partners have developed persuasive data, tools and resources to advocate for solutions that create more pet-inclusive housing, keeping pets and people together.
- HABRI is demonstrating the link between the human-animal bond and public health, advocating for policies that support health and wellness for people and pets.
- Pet ownership saves the U.S. health care system $22.7 billion every year.
- Pet Week brings the power of pets to Capitol Hill, delivering the message to our elected representatives that pets are important for human health and quality of life.

Partner with a broad alliance of companies and organizations to advance the human-animal bond as a vital component of personal wellness and public health.

HABRI not only brings together a wide-ranging group of pet care leaders, it is also developing new partnerships to advance the human-animal bond in society.

- The HABRI Spring Policy Forum brings together researchers, human health practitioners, the pet care community, and public policy experts, to serve as a springboard for collaborations in research, practice, and policy on the important role of companion animals for better mental health.
- The Human Animal Bond Innovation Awards recognize companies and organizations outside the pet space with innovative programs and initiatives designed to advance the human-animal bond and create a more pet-friendly society.

Serve as the leading global information source and educator on the human-animal bond.

HABRI is the leading source of information on the human-animal bond, with research-based education and content.

- Human-Animal Bond Certified has become the one-and-only certification for animal health professionals looking to engage with their clients through the communication and the science of the human-animal bond.
- First-of-its-kind survey data commissioned by HABRI in partnership with Zoetis from ten countries shows a universal commitment to the human-animal bond.
- HABRI materials have been translated into five languages to bring the science of the bond to a growing international audience.
RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

- Service dogs are an effective complementary treatment for military veterans with post-traumatic stress, reducing stress, depression and social isolation.1
- The presence of classroom pets may provide some positive effects for children in third and fourth grade, such as improving social skills and competence for children and may also decrease select problem behaviors in the classroom.2
- Shelter cat adoption is associated with greater empathy and less separation anxiety for children with Autism, along with fewer problem behaviors including externalizing and hyperactivity.3
- Children in dog-owning households have lower peer problems and conduct problems, and higher pro-social behaviors than children from non-dog owning households. Dog ownership is associated with positive social-emotional development, particularly among families who walked or played with their dog more often.4
- Fostering a shelter cat can alleviate loneliness and improve mental health for older adults living independently alone. Removing perceived barriers to pet ownership can help older adults live healthier, happier lives and also spur the adoption of shelter cats into loving homes.5

HABRI has conducted survey research on timely topics related to pet ownership and the human-animal bond, including the largest-ever survey of international pet owners and veterinarians across 10 countries, and an important survey examining the experiences and perceptions of pet owners of color.

INTERNATIONAL SURVEY ON THE HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND
- The human-animal bond is valued and recognized among pet owners across all countries and cultures.
- 98% of pet owners across the globe have experienced at least 1 positive health impact from pet ownership.
- Highly bonded pet owners are significantly more likely to report that their pet benefits their health, and are significantly more likely to report they provide their pet with preventive and therapeutic veterinary care.

UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCES OF PET OWNERS OF COLOR
- The human-animal bond is universally strong among all ethnicities.
- Pets are a force for good: 75% of pet owners of color agree that pets help bring people together from different walks of life.
- A concerted effort to increase diversity in the pet care ecosystem and a sustained effort to create a more welcoming environment will boost access to care and help overcome challenges faced by pet owners of color.

PET-INCLUSIVE RENTAL HOUSING
- Pet-friendly rental housing continues to be a barrier for pet owners throughout the United States.
- 72% of residents saying that pet-friendly housing is hard to find and 59% say pet-friendly housing is too expensive.
- 92% of pet-friendly housing places some restrictions on the type, number, breed or weight of pets.
- If pet restrictions were lifted on their rental housing, 35% of non-pet owning residents say they would get a pet, and 33% of pet-owning residents say they would get an additional pet.

HABRI BENCHMARK SURVEY OF PET OWNERS
- 87% of pet owners report their mental health has improved as a result of pet ownership.
- 22% of pet owners have had a pet recommended for their health by a doctor or therapist.

One in five pet owners had a pet recommended by a doctor or therapist for better health.
KEY PROGRAMMING & EVENTS

HUMAN ANIMAL BOND INNOVATION AWARDS

- The Human Animal Bond Innovation Awards recognize individuals, companies and organizations doing innovative work designed to advance the human-animal bond and create a more pet-friendly society.
- Award winners are selected at the discretion of an expert committee of pet care community leaders.
- In 2023, HABRI received 49 nominations – nearly double that of the year prior.

NEW: SPRING POLICY FORUM 2024

In 2024, we are introducing a new flagship event – the HABRI Spring Policy Forum. Hosted in Washington D.C., the first Forum is focused on moving society toward more widespread awareness of the science behind the human-animal bond and the important role of companion animals for better mental health. The event will feature three core sections – research, practice, and policy – bringing experts together to share information and help guide future efforts.

PET NIGHT AND PET WEEK ON CAPITOL HILL

- Pet Night on Capitol Hill is an in-person reception held on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., giving Members of Congress and congressional staff an important opportunity to meet with pet care community leaders.
- In 2023, more than 200 Congressional offices participated in Pet Night on Capitol Hill.
- In conjunction, Pet Week offers a series of virtual content that shares information about the importance of pet ownership to human health and wellbeing. In 2023, Pet Week included informative sessions and opportunities for Members of Congress to interact with animal health experts.
## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

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<td><strong>TOTAL FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
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92% of funding is dedicated to Research and Education Programming

2022 Audited Financial Statements

## SUPPORTERS

As a non-profit organization, HABRI relies entirely on donations to support its work to advance the science of the human-animal bond. The strong and continued support of the following companies and organizations makes the work of HABRI possible.