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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The Animal Welfare Association (AWA) Joins Pets for Patriots Pet Adoption Program for Veterans

Partners with nationwide charity to give shelter dogs and cats a second chance at life with veterans and service members

Voorhees, NJ, June 26, 2012—The Animal Welfare Association (AWA) has partnered with Pets for Patriots, Inc., a not-for-profit that connects last-chance shelter pets with our country's loyal service men and women, to increase the adoption of adult and other at-risk homeless pets by veteran and service members of the United States military.

In spite of the demonstrated emotional and physical benefits of companion pets, more dogs and cats are killed each year than the populations of Alaska, Delaware, Montana, North Dakota and Vermont combined. Working with Pets for Patriots, AWA gives local veterans, service members and their families the gift of unconditional friendship and love while providing millions of dogs and cats a second chance at life.

“For every day a pet is in our shelter, it costs us \$15.82; more if they need extra medical care,” says Maya Richmond, Executive Director , “Working with Pets for Patriots, we hope to motivate our local veterans and service members to give these animals a loving home. This will help us place more hard-to-adopt pets with good people who need or want a companion pet, and save these innocent animals from becoming permanent shelter residents.”

Individuals are welcome from all United States armed forces and at any stage of their careers. Eligible pets must meet one of three criteria: dog or cat two years or older, dog over 40 pounds regardless of age, or a special needs dog or cat.

Joining Pets for Patriots is entirely free to veterans, though they are responsible for AWA's adoption fee. To reduce the chance that these pets are surrendered, the charity sends a \$150 gift card upon proof of eligible adoption to help with food and other essentials, and provides access to local veterinary partners who agree to offer ongoing discounted care.

"Our goal is to help our adoption partners re-home harder-to-place pets that still have years of love and life to give," says Beth Zimmerman, founder and executive director of Pets for Patriots, "while at the same time making it more affordable for military personnel to bring a pet into their lives. We're delighted to work with AWA to give these last-chance pets a second chance at life and, in so doing, to enhance the lives of veterans in the community. Everybody wins."

AWA quickly saw the potential to find hard-to-adopt dogs and cats permanent homes with service members. "We are able to place about 1,800 pets each year," says Richmond "Through our partnership with Pets for Patriots, we hope to provide forever homes to even more loving animals with the many service members and veterans in our area."

Individuals must first apply through Pets for Patriots and provide proof of their military service or honorable discharge. Approval typically takes one to two business days, after which they can visit [your shelter name] for assistance in choosing their new best friend.

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The **Animal Welfare Association**, a private, non-profit, 501(c)3 animal welfare organization, serves the people and animals of southern New Jersey. Through a variety of programs including adoptions, veterinary services, pet therapy, and humane education, AWA is dedicated to eliminating animal suffering, promoting the importance of the human-animal bond, and improving the role of animals in the well-being of people.

About Pets for Patriots

Pets for Patriots, Inc., is a registered 501(c)(3) charity that helps military members honorably adopt adult and at-risk shelter pets. Its mission is to consistently give the gifts of fidelity, joy and companionship to both pet and person. Pets for Patriots is one of the only organizations in the country dedicated to both adult pets and military members. The charity is a proud member of the Army AW2 Wounded Warrior Program national community support network, a national partner of the Real Warriors Campaign and is listed by the National Resource Directory for ill and wounded veterans. Visit www.petsforpatriots.org for more information.