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Atlanta Animal Shelter Chosen for Jackson Galaxy Foundation's *Cat Pawsitive* Program
Furkids is one of nine shelters selected from a national pool of applicants

(Atlanta, GA)— Atlanta animal organization Furkids today announced that it was selected by The Jackson Galaxy Foundation to participate in their *Cat Pawsitive* program, an initiative that will introduce positive-reinforcement training to shelter cats.

Developed by Jackson Galaxy and a team of animal behavior experts, *Cat Pawsitive* is a training program aimed at enriching day-to-day life for cats in shelters, building social skills, promoting the human-cat bond, and improving "adoptability" by reducing stress-related behaviors.

Matthew Levien, a feline behavior expert hand-picked by the Foundation, will lead the pilot program at Furkids beginning April 19. Throughout the three-month program, staff will participate in three webinars to learn the basics of feline clicker training, be mentored by Levien, and will have direct access to the training team for consultations along the way.

"We are very excited to have the opportunity to learn new training methods from Jackson Galaxy," says Samantha Shelton, President of Furkids. "We are confident we will gain insights and tools to help us achieve more adoptions of our shelter cats, keep them active and happy, and enrich their environment while they wait for forever homes. It is our goal to remove adoption roadblocks for our animals, and having this chance to work with the Jackson Galaxy trainers is game-changing for Furkids. What we learn will transform the lives of thousands of felines, and those who love and care for them, well into the future. We can't wait to get started!"

Cats who are exposed to reward-based training methods gain confidence and experience reduced stress through clicker training sessions; soon they are building connections with staff, volunteers and potential adopters. *Cat Pawsitive* can help a shy cat learn to feel comfortable coming up to the front of the cage to meet an adopter, a feisty cat learn to play nice, and an outgoing kitty learn to give an endearing "high five" to visitors to seal an adoption deal.

"We are thrilled to be working with Furkids to show the world what can be done to step up the game and improve outcomes for cats in shelters," says Jackson Galaxy, star of *My Cat from Hell* on Animal Planet and Founder of his namesake organization. "Our goal isn't just to keep cats behaviorally and physically active—we're also working to empower staff and volunteers to continue using these methods when the program concludes. This program will raise the public profile of cats, demonstrate their trainability and hopefully serve as a model for other feline positive reinforcement programs."

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ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Jackson Galaxy Foundation is a 501c3 non-profit organization that improves the lives of animals at risk by transforming the places they live and helping the people who care for them. JGF is led by the vision of Jackson Galaxy, who has developed an unwavering commitment to help animals at risk and the people who work tirelessly to get them homes through his years in animal welfare, as an animal advocate, his work as a behaviorist and host of his globally popular TV show, *My Cat from Hell*. The Jackson Galaxy Foundation focuses on programs that drive innovation; promotes improved shelter design and construction; and provides “Elevation through Education”—increased knowledge that inspires and empowers staff, volunteers, rescuers and adopters to continually raise the bar for animals at risk. More info about the Foundation’s programs and services is available at www.jacksongalaxyfoundation.org.

ABOUT FURKIDS

Furkids, headquartered in Atlanta, GA, is a 501c3 nonprofit charitable organization that operates the largest cage-free, no-kill shelter in the Southeast for rescued cats and Sadie’s Place, a no-kill shelter for dogs. Furkids also operates one of the only facilities in the Southeast dedicated to the care of FIV positive cats. The Furkids mission is to rescue homeless animals, provide them with the best medical care and nurturing environment while working to find them a forever home. Furkids heals the whole animal, physically and emotionally, restoring its health and its spirit. Furkids has rescued and altered more than 20,000 animals since its founding in 2002. Approximately 1,000 animals are in the Furkids program today, in the Furkids shelters, 13 PetSmart and Petco adoption centers, and more than 400 foster homes in the Atlanta area. Furkids is the only animal rescue organization in metro Atlanta that allows children of all ages to volunteer. Furkids volunteer programs are designed to restore the health and spirits of injured and homeless animals while providing healing opportunities for volunteers who are strengthened by the bond of love and care between humans and animals. For more information about our volunteer opportunities and programs, visit www.furkids.org.