Media Contact:
Amy Lacker
alacker@fwv-us.com
(919) 277-1151

Dognition Forms Partnership with Petfinder to Find More Loving Homes for Shelter and Rescue Dogs

*Program to donate 1,000 cognitive assessment toolkits
every month to pet adoption centers nationwide*

Durham, N.C. (April 3, 2013) – [Dognition](), the science-based service designed to enhance and enrich the relationship between dogs and their owners, is launching a shelter program in partnership with [Petfinder]() and the [Petfinder Foundation](). The organizations seek to help place more dogs in permanent, loving homes by shining a light on what makes each dog special. A leader in the pet adoption space, Petfinder works with nearly 14,000 rescues and shelters throughout North America, with many of these groups receive funding, training, education and grants through the Petfinder Foundation.

The Dognition Shelter Program will provide shelters, rescue groups and prospective owners with Dognition's proprietary cognitive assessment toolkits – containing interactive, science-based games and a questionnaire – designed to reveal each dog's unique way of thinking. The results are used to generate a Dognition Profile Report, an easy-to-read assessment of the individual dog's personality and cognitive style. This spotlight on what makes each dog remarkable will help prospective owners get to know and appreciate their would-be canine companions.

The cognitive abilities of dogs have historically been underestimated. However, with recent leaps forward in cognitive science, scientists now recognize dogs as a unique and extraordinary species. The methodologies of the Dognition Assessment Toolkit (available to the public at Dognition.com) are based on breakthroughs published in peer-reviewed scientific literature over the last 15 years, including the findings of Dognition co-founder and chief scientific officer, Dr. Brian Hare, the Dognition Scientific Advisory Board and other canine cognition experts from elite research institutions around the world.

"Dogs are truly amazing creatures and each one has a particular approach to navigating the world," said Dr. Hare. "For instance some rely on memory, others are outstanding at communication. Dognition identifies the strategies that each dog uses, without labeling any as better or worse. By highlighting the special characteristics of an individual dog, the relationship with the new owner can get off to a healthier and happier start, improving the odds for a successful adoption."

Shelter and rescue organizations can apply for a program grant through the Petfinder Foundation, which will administer the grants. Participants from each organization will receive a thorough introduction to Dognition and the Dognition Assessment Toolkit, including ongoing support.

"This is a natural partnership with Dognition that will have a long-term positive impact in the adoption environments where the toolkits are used," said Betsy Banks Saul, co-founder of Petfinder. Saul also serves as a member of the Dognition Expert Panel alongside an industry-leading group that includes canine behaviorists, veterinarians and trainers. Petfinder and the Petfinder Foundation are among the nation's leading advocacy groups dedicated to improving pet adoption programs and eliminating the euthanasia of adoptable pets.

"Each year about four million animals are euthanized in shelters, partly due to the many challenges that dogs face in the adoption process," said Hope Hancock, Executive Director of the SCPA of Wake County, based in Raleigh, North Carolina. "So often dogs are stereotyped because of breed or physical traits – we believe that Dognition will help reveal each dog's true personality, helping to overcome biases that are all too common."

In addition to assessing dogs while they're in shelters or rescue facilities, the program will experiment with providing each adopted dog with a complimentary Dognition Assessment Toolkit, so new owners can play the science-based games at home and discover their dog's unique qualities together.

The initial phase of the Dognition Shelter Program will run approximately three months, involving five rescue groups and five shelter organizations that vary in size, staffing and geographic location. Dognition jump-started the program by donating one Toolkit for each one purchased at Dognition.com in March. The long-term goal for Dognition is to donate 1,000 toolkits every month to the Dognition Shelter Program, making a meaningful contribution toward pairing dogs with thoughtful, caring owners and supporting their life-long relationships.

About Dognition
Dognition is the champion for enriching the relationships between dogs and their owners through cognitive science. Dedicated to all dogs, the service is for curious owners who treasure a deeper relationship with their dogs and are excited about gaining unique insights into what makes dogs tick. By tailoring fun, science-based games to subscribers and offering everyday "citizen scientists" a chance to contribute to research that furthers the study of dog cognition. Dognition helps owners discover what is extraordinary about their dogs while contributing to the greater good of all dogs.

About Dr. Brian Hare
Dr. Brian Hare, chief scientific officer of Dognition and the director of the Duke Canine Cognition Center, is associate professor in evolutionary anthropology at the Center for Cognitive Neuroscience at Duke University and one of the top canine cognition experts in the world. Dr. Hare is a member of the Center for Cognitive Neuroscience, a division of the Duke Institute for Brain Sciences. He received his Ph.D. from Harvard University.

About the Petfinder Foundation
The Petfinder.com Foundation, a nonprofit 501(c)3 public charity, helps homeless pets by saving lives through adoptions, helping shelters prepare for and recover from disaster and working to make sure animal welfare organizations across the country are more sustainable. Its mission is to ensure no adoptable pet is euthanized for lack of a home. Since 2003 the foundation has provided over $20 million in grants to animal welfare organizations and Petfinder.com member shelters and rescue groups. For more information, please visit petfinderfoundation.com.

About Petfinder
Petfinder is the largest online, searchable database of animals that need permanent homes. With more than 375,000 adoptable pets from approximately 14,000 animal shelters and rescue groups throughout the U.S., Canada and Mexico, Petfinder has facilitated more than 20 million adoptions since it was launched in 1996. In addition to being an adoption database, Petfinder also is an all-inclusive resource guide for how to select the right family pet and build a successful, life-long relationship. Thanks to its sponsors, Petfinder is free to both visitors and to its animal placement organization members. Sponsors include BISSELL Homecare, Inc., a manufacturer of home cleaning and floor care products, The Animal Rescue Site, PetFirst Healthcare, the exclusive pet insurance provider for Petfinder, and HomeAgain, a microchip and pet recovery service.

More from Petfinder
Online: petfinder.com
Mobile Website & Apps: petfinder.com/mobile
Facebook: facebook.com/petfinder
Twitter: @Petfinder
Pinterest: pinterest.com/petfinder

# # #