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## A Message From The Executive Director

Dear Colleagues,

With Election Day finally behind us, we all deserve some time to de-stress, decompress and unwind. This week, HABRI teamed up with the [Pet Leadership Council](#), [Pet Partners](#) and the [Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council](#) to [host a pet therapy session on Capitol Hill](#) for congressional staffers to help take their minds off this tumultuous election season. The Pet Partners certified therapy teams were well-received with smiles and laughter, a true testament to the healing power of the human-animal bond. In fact, scientific research demonstrates the many mental health benefits pets can provide. From [relieving stress to alleviating anxiety to lowering blood pressure](#), pets can provide an effective and positive support system. No matter your political opinions, your pets are the loyal, non-judgmental companions to help keep you happy and healthy all year long.

I hope you enjoy this week's articles!

Sincerely,

*Steven Feldman*

## Horse Therapy Programs Show Promising Results

In recognition of Global One Health Day on November 3, 2016, Darlene Chalmers of the University of Regina (U of R) and Colleen Dell of the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) have released research results showing that people who participated in mental health and addictions treatment programs involving interactions with horses reported therapeutic benefits in their healing. In the 2014 pilot study, 60 clients provided feedback on 287 encounters (sessions with horses) in programs at four addiction and mental health treatment sites in Saskatchewan. One of the programs involved learning self-development skills through interactions with horses. Two focused on therapeutic horsemanship (riding and care of horses) for children and youth in residential care. And the fourth involved a collaborative approach to psychotherapy between a licensed therapist and a horse professional to address client treatment goals. Chalmers notes that a strong bond can develop between horses and humans, engendering mutual respect and trust and paving the way for improved relationships with other people. Read [more](#).

## Homeless woman's dog is 'my everything'; she welcomes free veterinary care

On a crisp morning in West Sacramento, in a parking lot next to a boat ramp where fishermen unpacked their tackle boxes, Elizabeth Degen sat on the sidewalk and cradled a bundle of white fluff swaddled in a pink sweater. "She's my everything," said Degen, who arrived with her tiny poodle, Mamas, and a cart stuffed with damp blankets, clothes and other belongings. "She gives me something to get up for in the morning." As many as 25 percent of people who live outdoors have pets, studies suggest, and cost and transportation obstacles make it difficult for them to obtain regular veterinary care. The Elica team tries to help with that care - and keep people and their pets together. In some instances, homeless people choose to live outside rather than bunk in shelters or apartments that ban pets. Elica's team is working to designate some of these pets as "emotional support animals," which would make them eligible to accompany their owners into housing. Read [more](#).

## Veteran and surfing dog form life-changing bond: 'She gave me freedom'

When U.S. Army veteran and retired Staff Sgt. Randall Dexter came to San Diego in 2012, his only job was to get healthy. After two tours in Iraq as a combat medic, he lived in a warrior transition unit at the Naval Medical Center; he was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder,

along with sustaining a traumatic brain injury. Approximately a year later, through the hospital's recreation therapy department, he heard about Paws'itive Teams, a forward-thinking nonprofit that trains service and therapy dogs in San Diego County to work with people like Dexter. After applying to the Paws'itive Teams program, he was assigned a therapy dog for six weeks to determine if a permanent commitment with another dog made sense. Dexter also learned a lot about trust, he said, because for his initial outing, he wasn't paired with just any therapy dog. His canine partner was Ricochet, a renowned registered and certified therapy dog who's worked with more than 50 veterans so far. Further along in their relationship, Dexter learned to surf with Ricochet. "She gave me freedom and gave me my life back," he said. Read [more](#).

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## From HABRI Central...

Featured this week from the HABRI Central library is a resource on [the effectiveness of human-animal interaction on improving affect of adolescents in substance abuse disorder](#)

[treatment](#). HABRI Central has thousands of resources for researchers, practitioners, journalists, and anyone who wants to learn more about the science of the human-animal bond. Find what you are looking for today at [www.habricentral.org](http://www.habricentral.org).

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