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September 27 – For Immediate Release

This Event is for the Dogs
Run and Fun Walk to Raise Awareness of Pets on Mental Health

Rochester, Minn. – Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center and Paws and Claws Humane Society are collaborating to host the 3rd Annual *New Leash on Life*, a 5K run and 3K fun walk to help raise awareness of mental illness and the positive role that pets can play. The fundraising event is being held Saturday, September 27, 2012, at Silver Lake Park.

“The *New Leash on Life* event is focused on educating people about mental illness and the benefits that pets have on people’s mental health,” said Dave Cook, chief executive officer for Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center. “Studies show the positive impact that dogs, cats and other animals have on fighting depression and coping with stress by reducing loneliness.”

Cook added that benefits are not restricted to mental health. Research demonstrates that pet owners have fewer headaches, lower blood pressure and are at a reduced risk for heart disease.

Event features include:

- 5K dog run and 3K dog walk
- “Bow-wow Blast” activities for dogs
- Awards for top pledge collectors
- T-shirts for all participants
- Sponsor booths with give-aways
- Music and entertainment

“Having a pet is beneficial for adults and children alike,” said Carla Sheepstra, board chair for Paws and Claws Humane Society. “By working together with Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center, we’re able to draw attention to pet’s benefits such as improved self-esteem in children and reduced doctor visits by elderly patients. Dogs, cats and other animals have a significant impact – mental, physical or both – on their owner’s lives.”

Registration is \$25 and can be completed online at <http://www.zumbromhc.org/news/leash.html>. People also can register at the event beginning at 8:30 a.m., with activities starting at 9:30 a.m.

About Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center

Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center enhances the quality of life for residents in southeastern Minnesota by serving as a community resource for the understanding and treatment of behavioral health and substance use disorders. The organization collaborates with government agencies, schools, non-profit groups and others to provide programs dedicated to improving the mental health of adults, adolescents and children. Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center is a private, non-profit organization serving Olmsted and Fillmore counties. For more information, visit our Web site at www.zumbromhc.org or call 507-289-2089.