



Contact Information:

Sean Rice
507-535-5750 (days)
507-279-0967 (evenings)
seanr@zumbromhc.org
www.zumbromhc.org

September 24, 2013 – For Immediate Release

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 *4th 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 28, 2013, at Silver Lake Park.

“The goal of our event is to raise awareness of the value of therapy and how comforting pets, and especially dogs, can be to individuals diagnosed with a mental illness,” said Dave Cook, chief executive officer for Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center. “Studies have shown the positive impact that pets 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

Donations and proceeds will be split between the two non-profit organizations and benefit thousands of people and animals in the Rochester community. The event also strives to bring about greater awareness to the benefits of pets, including companionship and increasing people's likelihood for exercise.

The walk will feature booths for sponsors, who will be offering free give-aways and offers for participants. Bring your dogs and enjoy a morning of fun while supporting a great cause! All breeds of dogs are welcome.

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.