Cornell University
College of Veterinary Medicine

Alumnus Dr. Jody Sandler receives top honors from American Veterinary Medical Association

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BluePath Founder Jody Sandler is named Bustad Veterinarian of the Year

Hopewell Junction, NY (January 24, 2017) - The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has named Dr. Jody Sandler as recipient of its 2016 Bustad Companion Animal Veterinarian of the Year Award. Sandler was recognized for his outstanding work in preserving and protecting human-animal relationships. He accepted the honor on January 14th at the 2017 AVMA Veterinary Leadership Conference in Chicago.

Throughout his life, Sandler has been a champion of the human animal bond and its amazing healing properties. He was the director of veterinary services at a guide dog organization for 25 years, responsible for the health and well being of thousands of dogs who would ultimately improve the lives of people with vision loss. In that role, Sandler was also part of a team that established an innovative program in which service dogs were placed with children with autism, offering safety and freedom for families.

Sandler founded BluePath Service Dogs in 2016 to focus solely on the provision of autism service dogs, recognizing the great need. Currently, more than 3.5 million Americans live with an autism spectrum disorder and it is the fastest growing developmental disability in the United States.

"I am so honored to receive this important award from the AVMA," said Sandler. "I have seen the transformative power of the bond we share with our pets, and I am particularly in awe of the incredible connection that a service dog can have with a child on the autism spectrum. These special relationships provide hope and the opportunity for the whole family to thrive."

Sandler received his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Cornell University in 1988. He has lectured at Cornell University, Virginia Maryland Veterinary College, and local veterinary medical association chapters, in addition to co-authoring papers with researchers from Cornell and the San Diego Zoo. In 2013, Jody's veterinary department was awarded the Virginia Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine's Booker Willoughby Service Award. Sandler lives in Hopewell Junction with his family and numerous pets.

BluePath is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded in 2016 to provide autism service dogs, offering safety, companionship and opportunities for independence. The organization transforms lives by providing families with expanded opportunities to unlock life's potential. BluePath relies on the generosity of donors and volunteers to fulfill its mission. More info at www.bluepathservicedogs.org and www.facebook.org/bluepathservicedogs.

The **American Veterinary Medical Association** (AVMA), founded in 1863, is one of the oldest and largest veterinary medical organizations in the world, with more than 89,000 member veterinarians worldwide engaged in a wide variety of professional activities and dedicated to the art and science of veterinary medicine. More info at avma.org.

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