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NEWSLINE

White Paper Documents Health Benefits of Pets

Pawsitive Interaction, a coalition formed to promote the human-animal bond, has released a 12-page document detailing the benefits of pet ownership.

"A Scientific Look at the Human-Animal Bond" is based on research findings presented at the Think Pawsitive educa-

tional summit, held in Atlanta in May 2002.

"I consider getting a pet to be one of the easiest and most rewarding ways of living a longer, healthier life," said participant Dr. Edward Creagan, a Mayo Clinic oncologist who prescribes pets to one-third of his cancer patients.

"Many times, pets give attention to a person who otherwise might not receive as much," said Dr. Alan Beck, director of the Center for the Human-Animal Bond, School of Veterinary Medicine at Purdue University, who addressed health effects of animal companionship. "They stimulate

exercise, encourage laughter and facilitate social contact. These benefits add up to an improved sense of well being."

Previously Beck was involved in studies demonstrating that pets lower blood pressure and prolong survival rates of people with heart disease.

Participants include psychia-

trist Dr. Sandra Barker and veterinarian Dr. Marty Becker.

The coalition, including Merial Ltd., Zoo Atlanta, Happy Tails Pet Therapy, Pets Are Loving Support, and the Atlanta Humane Society, has posted the document on its Web site (www.pawsitiveinteraction.org)