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CALLING ALL PAWS TO PAWS ON PARADE

Paws on a Mission Annual Walk-A-Thon Fundraiser to Raise Funds for Pet Therapy Program

ASHEVILLE, N.C. (Feb. 28, 2012) – *Paws on a Mission* is calling all dogs, dog lovers, families and friends to the annual Paws on Parade Walk-A-Thon on Sat., April 28, 2012 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Dozens of dogs and their people will be raising funds for the *Paws on a Mission* Pet Therapy Program at Mission Health. After light refreshments, participants will high-tail it at their own pace around the Walk-A-Thon loop at beautiful Carrier Park in West Asheville.

Hosted by Mission Foundation, the benefit will add to the furry fun this year with a Derby Finery hat contest. Participants are invited to wear their prettiest, most creative or most outrageous hat in honor of Kentucky Derby week. Humans and dogs sporting the best hats will be awarded Win, Place or Show prizes.

A program of Mission Hospital's Integrative Healthcare Department, *Paws on a Mission* consists of more than 100 dedicated volunteers and their pets that touch lives throughout the Western North Carolina community with the healing power of pet therapy. *Paws on a Mission* therapy dogs spread smiles, comfort, hope and healing to hospital patients of all ages, children and youth in local schools and at community agencies. Mission is one of only a small number of hospitals to have pet therapy coordinators on staff who recruit, train and schedule pet therapy volunteers. As a result of having coordinators on staff, Mission has one of the largest programs in the southeast, and its services are in high demand. Paws on Parade raises funds to support the growing program and deploy more volunteers to meet the increased demand for the service.

A rain or shine event, Paws on Parade is open to the public, and all well-behaved dogs on leashes are welcome. For more information and to receive a fundraising packet, please contact Jade Frank at (828) 213-0131 or by email at jade.frank@msj.org.

About Mission Foundation

Mission Foundation, Inc. is 501(c)(3) "public charity" that is governed by a volunteer board of 32 trustees representing the local community. Since its founding in 1985, Mission Hospital's centennial year, the Foundation has solicited and received more than \$124 million in gifts and grants from all parts of Western North Carolina, the state and the Southeast as well as nationally. During its history the Foundation has conducted successful major capital campaigns that have helped create several "Centers of Excellence" at Mission Hospital in Asheville. The Foundation is the only Asheville-based non-profit to have attained nationwide accreditation by Charity Wise Alliance of the U.S. Better Business Bureau, meeting all 20 national standards.

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