

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Newest Staff Member at M Health Fairview University of Minnesota Masonic Children’s Hospital Has Wet Nose, Four Legs and a Tail**

***NutriSource® Pet Foods funds hospital’s first ever facility dog to  
help children and families during their hospital experience***

**PERHAM, MN ( December 5, 2019) –** Today at M Health Fairview University of Minnesota Masonic Children’s Hospital in Minneapolis, young patients met the hospital's newest staff member who will to help them take medicine, relax during anxious moments, encourage them to walk after surgery and offer support and affection during medical procedures.

Rocket, presented by NutriSource® is a golden retriever and the first and only full-time facility dog to join the team at M Health Fairview University of Minnesota Masonic Children’s Hospital.

Rocket will help support children and families during hospitalizations and clinic visits. Rocket was formally introduced to the hospital during a short program on December 5th. The staff position was made possible by community support and a generous gift of \$250,000 from NutriSource® Pet Foods.

Rocket went through years of advanced, specialized training allowing him to be present during medical procedures – something other therapy dogs visiting the hospital are not able to do.



*F Chase Rasmussen, Vice President of Nutrisource, Tina (Nelson) Rasmussen of Nutrisource Pet Foods, Chris Lemme and Anna Dressel of M Health Fairview University of Minnesota Masonic Children's Hospital and Megan and Charlie Nelson of KLN Family Brands with Rocket*

“There is nothing more important than the health and well-being of our children. The bond between pets and kids is extra special,” said KLN Family Brands President Charlie Nelson. “In addition to our mission to provide nutritious and healthy food for our four-legged family members, we are proud to support the great work at M Health Fairview University of Minnesota Masonic Children’s Hospital by funding the Nutrisource® Facility Dog Program.”

"We want to extend a huge thank you to KLN Family Brands for their generosity and support to help launch the Nutrisource Facility Dog Program at M Health Fairview University of Minnesota Masonic Children’s Hospital," said Anna Dressel, Child Life Coordinator - Facility Dog Program at the hospital. "Rocket has only been at the hospital for a total of seven days yet he has already had a huge impact on patients, families and staff."

Based in Perham, MN, NutriSource® produces dry dog and cat food kibble along with semi-moist pet treats. The family owned and operated company was founded in 1964 by Darrell “Tuffy” Nelson and his son, current CEO Kenny Nelson. The company recently completed a \$35 million grinding, mixing and storage bin expansion as well as an \$18 million investment in a 4<sup>th</sup> extruder adding 50,000 additional annual tons of capacity. By the end of 2020, a new state of the art \$65 million dog and cat treat manufacturing facility will be up and running in Delano, Minnesota as their manufacturing footprint continues to grow.”

#### **About KLN Family Brands**

A third generation family owned company, KLN Family Brands is located in Perham, MN and is comprised of Tuffy’s Pet Foods, owners of NutriSource® and Kenny’s Candy & Confections. Tuffy’s has been proudly producing quality pet foods since 1964. In 1987 KLN branched out into the world of sweets and Kenny’s Candy & Confections was born. Kenny’s is the candy factory responsible for great brands like Wiley Wallaby® and Sweet Chaos®. For more information on KLN Family Brands please visit [www.klnfamilybrands.com](http://www.klnfamilybrands.com).

#### **About M Health Fairview, University of Minnesota Masonic Children’s Hospital**

M Health Fairview, University of Minnesota Masonic Children’s Hospital provides a broad range of more than 55 pediatric programs and specialties from surgery, imaging and neonatal and pediatric intensive care to cardiac and oncology services and blood and marrow and organ transplantation. Our clinical staff apply innovative approaches to creating medical breakthroughs based on their work with patients and on findings through research at the University of Minnesota. This has led to several firsts, including the first successful pediatric blood marrow transplant, infant heart transplant in Minnesota and cochlear ear implant surgery for a child. Visit <https://www.mhealth.org/childrens> to learn more.

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