THE OKLAHOMA CITY THUNDER

MEDIA ALERT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Meet OKC Thunder Stars & Help Shelter Pets Find a Home

Exclusive Event to Benefit the ASPCA

WHAT:
Join the Oklahoma region of the ASPCA for a special **ticketed meet & greet** event featuring OKC Thunder stars **Jalen Williams, Chet Holmgren, and Jaylin Williams**. All ticket proceeds will directly support the shelter's mission to rescue and rehome animals in need. Fans will have the chance to meet their favorite players, interact with adoptable animals, and support a great cause.

WHEN:
April 19th, 2025, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

WHERE:
Oklahoma Humane Society (ASPCA Shelter)
7500 N Western Ave
Oklahoma City, OK 73116

WHO:

- Jalen Williams, Chet Holmgren, and Jaylin Williams of the Oklahoma City Thunder
- Thunder General Manager Sam Presti
- Oklahoma Humane Society staff and volunteers
- Thunder fans, pet lovers, and the local community

Phone: (405) 208-4800 Email: fans@okcthunder.com Address: 208 Thunder Drive Oklahoma City, OK 73102

WHY:

- This event blends sports and community impact: Thunder fans can meet their heroes while supporting animal welfare.

Every adoption made during the event enters the adopter into a **raffle for exciting prizes**, including:

  - OKC Thunder season tickets
  - Signed jerseys
  - And more!

- A perfect opportunity for human-interest stories, local engagement, and highlighting the bond between sports figures and community causes.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES:

- Interviews with OKC Thunder players and Humane Society representatives
- Visuals of fans meeting players and connecting with adoptable pets
- Footage of raffle announcements and animal adoptions

MEDIA CONTACT:

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For Immediate Release

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Thunder Rally's Fans to Animal Shelter

A Slam Dunk Shelter Event With OKC Thunder Players

[OKLAHOMA CITY, OK-03/19/25] The Oklahoma City Thunder is joining forces with the ASPCA for the first-ever Slam Dunk Shelter Event. This is a one-time opportunity for fans to meet Thunder players while giving back to a local animal shelter.

Thunder is teaming up with the ASPCA to improve Oklahoma City by impacting local shelter animals. As of December 2024, the OKC Animal Shelter reached 117% capacity. As a result, Thunder players are asking fans to join them at the Oklahoma Humane Society for a special adoption event. Fans will be able to meet Thunder players, Jalin Williams, Chet Holmgren, and more. All proceeds from the event benefit the ASPCA and the Oklahoma Humane Society.

This one-time event gives fans a unique experience to interact with their favorite players while providing an opportunity to adopt local shelter animals. Fans who decide to welcome a new furry friend to their family are immediately entered in a raffle to win prizes such as season tickets, signed jerseys, private tours, and more.

"The team could not be more excited to meet fans and give back to the ASPCA. Here at Thunder, we value giving back to our community," shares Sam Presti. "We can't wait to give these animals a second chance."

Tickets are limited and will be available online starting April 10th at https://www.nba.com/thunder/.

The Oklahoma City Thunder are an NBA team in the Western Conference, founded in 2008 after relocating from Seattle as the SuperSonics. They play their home games at Paycom Center in downtown Oklahoma City. Thunder is known for its passionate fan base and community involvement.

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Thunder GM Speech Transcript

[Speak clearly and consistently, TAKE YOUR TIME]
[Read BEFORE speaking]

[Sincere Tone]
Good Afternoon–My name is Sam Presti

I am the General Manager of the Oklahoma City Thunder.

Since my time here at Thunder, I have seen FIRST HAND how dedicated this team is to improving Oklahoma City. And you know— It makes me really proud to be a part of something so special, something that is much more than a basketball team.

Here at Thunder, we take PRIDE in giving back to our LOCAL community.

That is why we strive to improve our Oklahoma City family through various philanthropic efforts.
We value our COMMUNITY-FOCUSED initiatives, such as the:

Thunder Fellows Program

Rolling Thunder Book Bus

Thunder Day of Service

The Thunder Community Foundation

And many more…

It is our pleasure to aid in– rebuilding the community, fostering our youth, and building relationships.

HOWEVER, there is something we are missing…

It has come to our attention that our local animal shelters are at MAXIMUM capacity, and this is a serious problem within our community.

[Upbeat Tone]

THEREFORE, We are happy to announce our collaboration with

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals—

or better known as the A. S. P. C. A.

We ask that fans join us in GIVING BACK to the furry members of our community as well…

That is why Thunder is proud to host our FIRST-EVER Slam Dunk Shelter Event.
Come meet the players, and give a shelter pet their SHOT at a forever home.

Join us to meet the players, shake some paws, and win prizes

April 19th at The Oklahoma Humane Society

When?
Where?

April 19th at The Oklahoma Humane Society

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

[Wait for applause]
[Smile while exiting]

ASPCA CEO Speech Transcript

[Speak clearly and with passion, TAKE YOUR TIME]
[Read BEFORE speaking]

[Sincere Tone]
"Thank you all for being here today. We are incredibly grateful for this opportunity to partner with the Oklahoma City Thunder. Events like this shine a powerful light on the importance of animal welfare and the impact we can make when communities come together.

This isn't just about meeting your Thunder basketball heroes [HOLD] —it's about

Giving shelter animals the chance to find loving homes. And when local heroes like Jalen, Chet, and Jaylin show up, it sends a strong message: Compassion matters. That's why we're counting on YOU to take that passion and channel it into the lives of these animals. After all, they are

counting on you.

Thank you to the Thunder, the fans, and everyone supporting this cause.

Together, we're not only changing lives—we're saving them."

[Wait for applause]
[Smile and wave while exiting]

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Animal welfare in Oklahoma City is facing a tough time right now. Shelters are over capacity, animal cruelty cases are on the rise, and local organizations are working hard to respond. Between overpopulation and limited resources, both animals and the people who care for them need support.

Animal Adoption in OKC

- The Oklahoma City Animal Shelter takes in around 20,000 animals each year. As of March 2024, it was running at 139% capacity with over 400 dogs on site.
- To help reduce overcrowding, OKC Animal Welfare has waived all adoption fees for dogs until the shelter numbers go down.
- The city's current live release rate is 78.6%, which is decent but still short of the 90% benchmark for a "no-kill" shelter.
- Overcrowding puts animals at risk of euthanasia and increases stress for shelter staff. Adopting or fostering even one animal can make a big difference.

Animal Cruelty in Oklahoma

Cases of animal cruelty in Oklahoma more than quadrupled in recent years, from 70 in 2018 to 344 in 2022.

- The Law
    - Intentional abuse (like torture or killing) is considered a felony and can lead to up to 5 years in prison and a $5,000 fine.
    - Abandoning an animal is a misdemeanor, with penalties up to 1 year in jail and a $500 fine.
- Vets in Oklahoma are required by law to report any suspected abuse within 24 hours, and they're protected from liability when doing so in good faith.

What's the ASPCA Doing in Oklahoma?

While the ASPCA doesn't run a shelter in Oklahoma City, they are involved in a major statewide project, the Equine Transition and Adoption Center (ETAC). This program is specifically focused on helping horses and their owners.

- What ETAC Offers
  - Low-cost vet care
  - End-of-life support (euthanasia, when needed)
  - Adoption and rehoming services
- Over 400 horses have been helped so far through the program.

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BIOGRAPHIES

Sam Presti – Thunder Executive Vice President and General Manager

Samuel (Sam) Presti has been the general manager for the Oklahoma City Thunder since June 7, 2007, and was named the second youngest person to hold this title in NBA history. The season after, he gained another title as the executive vice president. Presti has already served 18 seasons with the OKC Thunder, leading the team to the second-best record in the NBA between 2009 and 2020.

As Thunder's GM, Presti manages who gets drafted on the team, makes decisions regarding the team, and is the primary spokesperson at media events. One of his central focuses is community involvement, initiating 2,850 community appearances since 2008 in the Oklahoma City area.

Aside from community engagement, Presti was involved with the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum as an elected member of the Executive Committee. During his time on the committee, he helped lead the Memorial's Oklahoma Standard campaign, a movement built on resilience, compassion, acts of honor, service and kindness.

Matthew Bershadker – ASPCA CEO and President

Matthew (Matt) Bershadker has been with the ASPCA since 2001 and was named the CEO and president in 2013. Throughout his time with the organization, he has reinvented the organizational strategy and created many programs to better the lives of animals in unfortunate situations.

Under Bershadker's leadership, the ASPCA has partnered with the New York City Police Department to answer animal cruelty calls, created the ASPCA Behavioral Rehabilitation Center in North Carolina for canine cruelty and neglect victims, and implemented a variety of support for pets and their owners during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bershadker is also an avid speaker on animal welfare issues, writing articles for the New York Post, CNN and other esteemed publications. He has also appeared on numerous national media sites, including The Today Show, Good Morning America and The New York Times.

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