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The Green Spot of Omaha Named 2017 Nebraska Retail Champion

OMAHA, NE (June 15, 2017) -The Green Spot of Omaha has been named the 2017 Second Congressional District- Nebraska Retail Champion by the Nebraska Retail Federation. Owned by sisters Jessica Ellis and Whitney Kamish, The Green Spot specializes in natural, organic and eco-friendly pet food and supplies.

The award will be presented at their Shoppes at Aksarben store by State Senator Sara Howard and Nebraska Retail Federation president Jim Otto on June 20th at 3 p.m. Senator Howard nominated Jessica and Whitney and their business for consideration. The award includes an expense paid trip to the 2017 America's Retail Champion competition in Washington D.C, July 17-19, 2017 sponsored by the National Retail Federation.

Otto explained that the purpose of the Nebraska Retail Champion/America's Retail Champion competition is to emphasize the huge contributions local retailers make to their communities. They pay local taxes, create local jobs, sponsor local charities, and collect the sales tax that is due on each retail purchase while their out of state online competitors do none of those. Otto also expressed his excitement over the quality of all the nominees and especially Green Spot owners. He commented "Jessica and Whitney exemplify what Retail Champions do to generously support local community causes and succeed in spite of keen competition. They embody the fighting spirit of American small business and give back to community efforts in countless ways. Jessica and Whitney are truly Nebraska Retail Champions."

In 2008, Jessica and Whitney helped to form Pug Partners of Nebraska. It was with their work with rescue groups that they realized the need for a store such as The Green Spot (TGS). TGS opened in January 2012 with 1300 square feet of retail space, located on 72nd & Pacific Streets in Omaha at the Shoppes of Aksarben. The natural pet food sector is a vast and largely growing industry, so they stock only all natural products that go through much scrutiny before being carried in the store. TGS prides itself on product knowledge as well as the assurance that every product they sell is something they would be confident giving to their own pets. Since there aren't strict regulations on what companies can label 'natural' or 'healthy' regarding pet products, it is up to the owners to scrutinize the ingredients and sourcing. TGS strives to be completely transparent to its customers when educating about and recommending products sold in their store.

TGS also supports locally made and made in the USA products as much as possible. They are committed to the environment and practice many eco-friendly processes throughout the store. Beyond recycling, TGS uses reusable rags rather than paper towels for cleaning, offers discounts for customers who choose to use reusable bags, and uses all natural, non-toxic cleaners throughout the store.

In May of 2012, Full-Service Grooming was added to the store's offerings. They are proud to offer one-on-one full-service grooming in a low-stress environment. TGS' grooming department is usually booked out months in advance. Their two groomers offer a combined 60+ years of expertise in dealing with dogs of all shapes and sizes.

An e-commerce website was launched in early 2013 to accommodate TGS' growing customer base. TGS also launched Omaha's first mobile food truck for dogs in the summer of 2013. An old FedEx box truck was purchased and converted into a 'food truck' for dogs so that they could further their community reach by attending more dog related and other community events in the area. In 2014, TGS expanded into the corner bay next to the original space, expanding to its current 3300 sqft. At this time, self-serve dog wash areas were added and have proved to be a much needed facility for the community.

TGS understands how important supporting the community is and they make every effort to be as involved as possible. They host fundraisers in-store twice a month, called Trimming Claws for a Cause, in which all proceeds are donated to various rescue groups. They coordinate food drives, are a donation drop off for several rescues, host Meet & Greets with rescue groups on the weekends and work with their distributors to help donate and deliver foods to rescues. For several years now, their "Photos with the Grinch" fundraiser has gained in popularity and last year raised over \$1000 for the local Husky and Malamute Rescue, Taysia Blue. They also offer their self-serve dog wash areas at no charge for those with foster dogs and provide discounts to rescue groups on foods and supplies for the animals in their care.

As mentioned previously, Jessica and Whitney helped create a local pug rescue non-profit, Pug Partners of Nebraska which is dedicated to rescuing, rehabilitating and re-homing pugs in need. Since its founding in 2008, PPN has rescued over 650 pugs in the area. With a degree in graphic design, Whitney has helped PPN build and maintain their website and other marketing materials throughout the years. She also served on the Board of Directors for 3 years.

Jessica is the president of the Nebraska Rescue Council, which was formed so that independent, state-licensed, animal shelters and rescues can work together to promote one another, reduce euthanasia and provide information to the public about these organizations. Together, they are working on bringing forward legislation that helps to end breed specific legislation in the area as well as a Good Samaritan law for providing immunity to rescuers saving animals trapped in hot cars.

Most recently, Jessica and Whitney joined the Green Omaha Coalition as well as the Pet Sustainability Coalition (PSC), which unites pet-driven businesses, providing them with resources so they can collaborate on advancing their business goals while maintaining their commitment to the planet. This is a way for everyone in the pet industry to work together – not just towards offering superior products and services, but towards sustainable, community-minded business solutions. With support from PSC, Jessica and Whitney are actively working to create and implement sustainable business practices to improve their impact.

In 2014, TGS was named the small business of the year for Congressional District 2 by the Nebraska District Office of the U.S. Small Business Administration. TGS has also been voted #1 in the Best of Omaha yearly voting campaign for the past several years. Their first and second year open awarded them with third and second places, respectively.

The Nebraska Retail Federation named The Kloset/My Kloset of Broken Bow as the Third Congressional District Nebraska Retail Champion and will name the First Congressional District Champion in the next several days.