

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(Asheville, NC) The City of Asheville has declared the week of June 4, 2018, as the first “City of Asheville 7-Day Vegan Challenge.” Indeed it’s the first “city-proclaimed” vegan challenge in the US.

"This groundbreaking effort was initially proposed to the city by Brother Wolf Animal Rescue. Brother Wolf’s goal for the challenge is to promote awareness of the health, environmental and ethical benefits associated with choosing a vegan diet.

Brother Wolf is partnering with Garth Davis, MD, and his team at Mission Health to create a healthy and delicious 7-day vegan meal plan that includes recipes and a grocery list of ingredients used in the meal plan. The meal plan will be designed to make veganism accessible to all income levels and lifestyles.

Dr. Davis, medical director of Mission Weight Management, is also the author of *Proteinaholic*, featured MD in the documentary *Forks over Knives* and star of the hit TLC show *Big Medicine*. “I’ve just moved to Asheville, and I’m so impressed that the city has issued this proclamation,” said Dr. Davis. “My team and I are very excited to be working on this amazing opportunity with Brother Wolf.”

Folks can sign up for the challenge and download the free Challenge Guide at CityVeganChallenge.org. The free guide includes Dr. Davis’ 7-Day Meal Plan and grocery list as well as recipes and info on plant-based nutrition. “Our goal is to have 500 people signed up by June 4th. We want to show the United States that as a community, we can come together to create real change for the animals, the Earth, and us,” said Denise Bitz, founder and president of Brother Wolf.

During the week of the Vegan Challenge, Dr. Davis and his team will also be offering live cooking classes and plant based health tips that will be streamed live on the Asheville VeganFest Facebook page. (Facebook.com/AshevilleVeganfest/)

Brother Wolf will also be partnering with local grocery stores to promote their vegan foods during the week of the challenge. Brother Wolf will also partner with local restaurants to highlight their abundant vegan options. “We are very blessed to have so many great restaurants in our community, and most all the chefs offer wonderful vegan options,” said Bitz. “Our local

grocery stores have abundant selections of vegan foods, too. We're working with local restaurants and local grocers to offer discounts on their vegan foods to encourage participation in the challenge."

The 7-Day Vegan Challenge will be June 4-10, the week leading up to Brother Wolf's Asheville VeganFest (June 8-10). Now in its fourth year, VeganFest has expanded to a three-day festival, and Brother Wolf is expecting a record crowd of more than 15,000 attendees this year. The full fest schedule can be viewed online at veganfest.bwar.org.

On Friday, June 8, and Saturday, June 9, daytime fest programming will be hosted at The Orange Peel featuring renowned speakers from across the US and beyond. On Friday and Saturday nights, VeganFest will host two concerts at The Orange Peel to benefit Brother Wolf Animal Sanctuary. The benefit concerts will feature "the fierce and fearless political comedian" Lee Camp, the Brooklyn-based afrobeats band Antibalas, award-winning vegan rapper Grey and Asheville's own vegan hip-hop artists Debrissa McKinney and Austn Haynes. Tickets for both nights are now on sale at <http://theorangepeel.net/>. Proceeds benefit Brother Wolf Animal Sanctuary.

On Sunday, fest goers can enjoy the all-day outdoor festival at beautiful Pack Square Park in downtown Asheville. The outdoor fest on Sunday will include a full lineup of expert speakers and over 75 vendors showcasing vegan food, beer, lifestyle products and more.

The theme for VeganFest this year is to bring urgent awareness to the dual crises of mass species extinction and climate change—and explain their leading cause and most immediate solutions.

All events during the 7-Day Vegan Challenge and Asheville VeganFest are free to the public, except for benefit shows on the evenings of June 8-9. Purchase tickets to the benefit shows by visiting <http://theorangepeel.net/>.

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Brother Wolf Animal Rescue, located in Asheville, NC, was founded in 2007 to provide the resources and life-saving programs to help build No-Kill communities. As a grassroots organization, Brother Wolf believes strongly in community engagement and making it easy for caring citizens to adopt, volunteer and become involved in our No-Kill mission. In addition to our work in Asheville, Brother Wolf's No Kill Community Development Initiative is currently working in four other communities to help them implement life-saving programs and build their own No-Kill communities. Celebrating 10 years, Brother Wolf broke ground in 2017 at its new Sanctuary location 20 minutes from Asheville. The Sanctuary will be a place for people and animals to heal, as well as focus on working toward the vision of Uncompromised Compassion for all animals.

ABOUT MISSION HEALTH

Mission Health, based in Asheville, North Carolina, is the state's sixth-largest health system. In 2018, for the sixth time in the past seven years, Mission Health has been named one of the nation's Top 15 Health Systems by Truven Health Analytics, an IBM Company and part of IBM Watson Health. We are the only health system in North Carolina to achieve this recognition. Mission Health operates six hospitals, numerous outpatient and surgery centers, post-acute care provider CarePartners, long-term acute care provider Asheville Specialty Hospital and the region's only dedicated Level II trauma center. With approximately 12,000 team members and 2,000 volunteers, Mission Health is dedicated to improving the health and wellness of the people of western North Carolina. For more information, please visit mission-health.org or [@MissionHealthNC](https://twitter.com/MissionHealthNC).