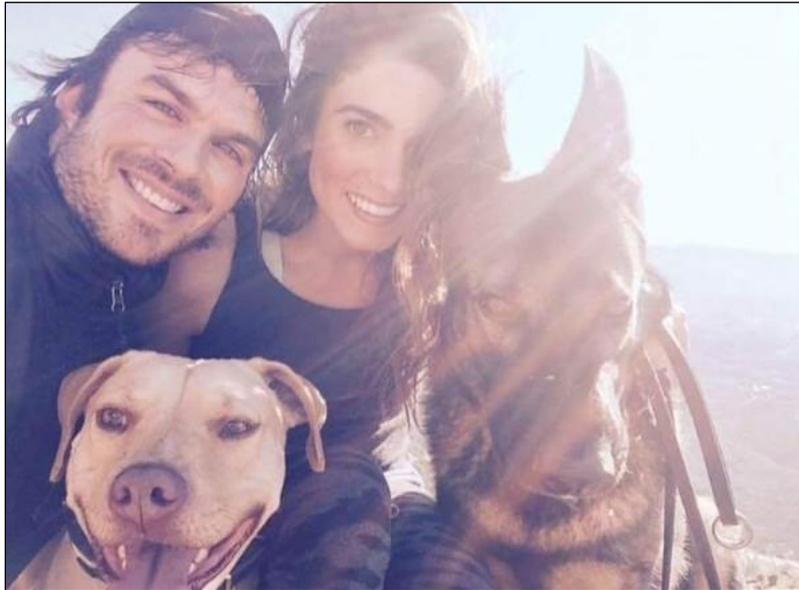


Ian Somerhalder to host K-9 Mardi Gras ball in Mandeville

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Ian Somerhalder and Nikki Reed, enjoying the company of some canine companions. (ISF photo)

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The Mystic Krewe of [Mardi Paws](#), a popular North Shore dog parade that rolls the week after Mardi Gras, will hold its inaugural ball next year, hosted by Hollywood star and animal rights activist Ian Somerhalder. The Mutts to Models ball will be held Jan. 20 at the Fleur de Lis events center in [Mandeville](#).

The evening will start with a VIP cocktail reception followed by a show with celebrities, local philanthropists and media personalities walking the runway with their dogs. The runway event will be followed by an after-party.

General admission tickets are \$125 in advance and details about tickets and sponsorship opportunities can be found on www.MuttsToModels.com. Proceeds from both the parade and the ball will benefit two charities: the [Ian Somerhalder Foundation](#), which raises awareness about environmental and animal awareness issues; and [Scott's Wish](#), which provides aid for children with leukemia and other life threatening illnesses.

The annual Mardi Paws parade will roll along the Mandeville lakefront on Feb. 18, on its usual Sunday after Fat Tuesday. The theme will be "Fables, Fairy Tales & Nursery Rhymes!"

Denise Gutnisky, who founded Mardi Paws 23 years ago, said the ball seemed like a natural extension of what is now viewed as a K-9 superkrewe. More than 25,000 people attended the 2017 dog parade.

Gutnisky said the ball is poised to be one of the must attend events of the Mardi Gras season. "The Mutts to Models Ball will be a high-end evening of style...", she said.

Somerhalder, star of "The Vampire Diaries" and a [Covington](#) native, started his namesake foundation to positively impact the planet and its creatures. The foundation has purchased 100 acres of land near Mandeville with the intention of preserving about 70 acres of wetlands and using the other 30 acres to support pet projects that serve the needs of animals, youth and the community at large, according to a Mardi Paws news release.

The actor and his celebrity wife, Nikki Reed, share a passion for animals, youth and the environment. Their combined efforts are the driving force behind the Ian Somerhalder Foundation. Somerhalder, Reed and the foundation have a combined total of more than 35 million social media followers.