



## THE R.E.A.D.® PROGRAM

### READING EDUCATION ASSISTANCE DOGS®

*A Program of Intermountain Therapy Animals*

#### WHAT IS R.E.A.D.®?

The Reading Education Assistance Dogs® (R.E.A.D.) program improves children's reading and communication skills by employing a powerful method: reading to a dog. But not just any dog.

R.E.A.D. dogs are trained, tested, registered, liability-insured therapy animals who volunteer with their owner/handlers as teams, going to schools, libraries and many other settings as reading companions for children.

Today, thousands of registered R.E.A.D. teams work throughout the United States, Canada, and 25 more countries around the world, at last count, from Sweden and Spain to Taiwan, Slovenia and South Africa.

R.E.A.D. is one of those ideas that, in the words of Bill Moyers, "pierces the mundane to arrive at the marvelous."

**Intermountain Therapy Animals (ITA)**, a nonprofit organization, launched R.E.A.D. in 1999 as the first comprehensive literacy program built around the appealing idea of reading to dogs. At 20 years, more than 6,000 therapy animal teams and affiliated organizations have helped R.E.A.D. grow to all 50 of the United States and ever more countries, and the program keeps on growing because it works—awakening the love of reading and books for children everywhere!

#### HOW DOES IT WORK?

R.E.A.D. utilizes registered therapy animals who have been trained and tested for health, safety, appropriate skills and temperament. When these special animals come to hear children read, it's fun! And that makes all the difference.



READING EDUCATION  
ASSISTANCE DOGS®

*Since 1999*

A PROGRAM OF  
INTERMOUNTAIN THERAPY ANIMALS



*When a R.E.A.D. dog is listening, the environment is transformed, a child's dread is replaced by eager anticipation, and learning occurs. The handler is a skilled facilitator, too—shifting performance pressure off the child and providing support, while the child gets the supervised reading practice necessary to build vocabulary, increase understanding of the material, and gain fluency and confidence as a reader.*

## BUT WHY DOGS?

Learning to read is often less about intellectual limitation than about overcoming fears and being interested. As you may recall from your own schooldays, fear can paralyze intelligence. Animals are ideal reading companions because they:

- help increase relaxation, slow heartrate, and lower blood pressure
- listen attentively
- do not judge, laugh or criticize
- allow children to proceed at their own pace
- are less intimidating than peers
- let the child become the tutor

## WHAT? DOGS CAN'T READ!

Of course they can't. But they can be great listeners. And their presence creates an inviting and motivating environment:

- relaxed
- comfortable
- safe
- nonjudgmental
- empowering, and
- FUN!

## WHERE DOES R.E.A.D. HAPPEN?

R.E.A.D. programs are being implemented all across the country in:

- elementary schools
- libraries
- preschools and child care facilities
- before- and after-school programs

- healthcare facilities
- boys and girls clubs
- youth detention facilities

Creative new ideas and variations occur with our teams all the time!

## THE RESULTS ARE STUNNING

Participating kids make enormous strides in reading and communication skills while, along the way, building self-esteem, confidence, and social skills. And there are bonus benefits—performance in other subjects tends to improve, as does class participation, attendance and even personal hygiene.

## "PAWTOGRAPHED?"

When children accomplish their individual goals set in the program, they receive brand new books to keep which are "pawtographed" by their 4-footed reading companions—no small reward!





## MEDIA ATTENTION AND SERIOUS RESEARCH

Literally thousands of media features have praised the R.E.A.D. program, from national newspapers and news broadcasts (ABC, NBC, National Geographic and more), magazines like Time, Life, and Family Circle, and TV shows like "Martha Speaks" on PBS. And now only are individual reading scores soaring (as tested by elementary schools), but scientific studies are verifying these results. Educational journals such as the Association for Childhood Education International and the International Literacy Association are likewise enthusiastic.

## WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

"When children read to dogs, the experience is just magical—there's no other way to describe it."

—Dana Tumpowsky  
Director of Public Relations, Salt Lake City Library

"When my son started reading to Buddy ... I started to notice how excited he was about

reading, how he talked about it, and about the dog, all the time, and how the excitement and interest in reading carried over, even when the dog wasn't there."

—Keegan's dad  
Twin Falls, Idaho

"Little did we realize what an impact you would make. Academically, those students that participated in R.E.A.D. experienced phenomenal growth. And, as icing on the cake, students began to enjoy reading to themselves, too, began to exhibit a curiosity for different books, and most importantly gained self confidence in not only their reading ability, but their ability to interact with others in positive ways. I look forward to expanding the program to touch more children."

—Rae Louie  
Principal, Bennion Elementary School, Salt Lake City, Utah

INTERMOUNTAIN  
THERAPY  
ANIMALS (ITA) is a Utah nonprofit organization, founded in 1993, whose mission is to enhance quality of life through the human-animal bond.

Please contact us to learn more about the R.E.A.D. program and to find out how you can help bring this wonderful experience to more children.



INTERMOUNTAIN THERAPY ANIMALS

PETS HELPING PEOPLE

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