



R.E.A.D.®

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Continuing Education for R.E.A.D. Teams

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Remembering James Lynch



We learned recently that Dr. James J. Lynch, PhD, died on Monday, May 19, 2025, of complications from a fall. He was 87.

As you probably remember, it was his original research that demonstrated how much being with a dog lowers human blood pressure.

I will never forget finding his essay on “Developing a Physiology of inclusion” (pages 26-29 in the current edition of the R.E.A.D. manual), and calling him in Baltimore to talk about our concept of the R.E.A.D. program. He said, literally choking up, that he had given up, that he didn’t think anyone was going to wake up to the concept of reading with dogs during his lifetime.

If you were there at our first R.E.A.D. conference, way back in 2005, you will also never forget his electric presence there. When I was forced to suggest that we needed to end the question-and-answer session that followed his keynote address, in order to not destroy the whole conference schedule, I was greeted with a loud chorus of boos. (If anyone had had tomatoes, they would have been flying through the air!) Of course his session continued!

I have included a few of his career highlights below. Unfortunately, I don’t think he was able to finish his last book, *Speaking of Love*. You would probably enjoy re-reading his essay in our R.E.A.D. manual, too. Rest in peace, Dr. Lynch.

About James J. Lynch, PhD

Ever since I first watched a dog’s blood pressure drop more than 50% in response to human petting in The Pavlovian Laboratory at The Johns Hopkins Medical School in 1962, my life has been dedicated to understanding the links between human contact and physical health, as well as better understanding the devastating consequences of human loneliness. I am now in the process of finishing a book entitled “Speaking of Love” in which I am analyzing the spoken word “I Love You” and examining what the human heart—which modern medicine informs us is nothing more and nothing less than a mere pump—has to do with this spoken sentence.

Beginning in 1965 I have served on the Medical Faculties of The Johns Hopkins University, The University of Pennsylvania Medical School and the University of Maryland Medical School. In 1976 I was appointed Full Professor of Psychiatry at Maryland. In 1989 I began a full time practice and writing career at Life Care Health Clinics in Baltimore, Maryland.

More than ten chapters in medical textbooks, I have also published more than 100 research articles in peer review medical journals. My research, and that of my colleagues, has been discussed in numerous newspapers, television and radio programs. My “60 Minutes” broadcast was the first to document the therapeutic benefits of animal companionship. My research was also the first to document the devastating health consequences of human loneliness; the major increases in blood pressure during human dialogue, and the links between these communicative physiological changes and major health problems including migraine headaches.

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R.E.A.D. Member Authors



Candace Robinson, Co-Director of Therapy Dogs of Rockland (NY), wrote recently to let us know about three amazing authors (as well as handlers) in their organization. She says:

We are so proud of our members who have authored books detailing their experiences with their canine companions and their therapy dog work.

Fran Hellman has written four books about her adorable therapy dog, Starburst.* Fran uses her books with R.E.A.D.®

Jamie Mitrani has written a book about his therapy dog, Greta, and her journey from being a rescue pit bull to the most amazing therapy dog.

Kathy McLoughlin has written a book about animal rescue. Her book has an incredible amount of information about the adoption process, care and training, managing foster homes and so much more. Kathy and her therapy dog, Teddy, visited many facilities including participating in the R.E.A.D. program.

All of these books are available on Amazon.

Thanks to Candace for sharing these titles with us—and to the authors for their hard work and impressive results!

**Fran wrote a follow-up message, letting us know that the first three of Starburst's books are already in their second edition, and that she's especially excited about them because they have even better illustrations.*

Happy summer reading, everyone!

