



## INTRODUCING R.E.A.D.®

# (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 registered therapy animals who volunteer with their owner/handlers as a team, going to schools, libraries and many other settings as reading companions for children.

Today, hundreds of registered R.E.A.D. teams work throughout the United States and Canada. 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, 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, and the program has been spreading rapidly and happily ever since!

### 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.

### 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!



READING EDUCATION  
ASSISTANCE DOGS®

A PROGRAM OF  
INTERMOUNTAIN THERAPY ANIMALS



## BUT WHY DOGS?

Learning to read is often less about intellectual limitation than about overcoming fears. “Fear can destroy intelligence,” says educator William Ayers.

Animals are ideal reading companions because they:

- help increase relaxation 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

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 as a reader.

## THE RESULTS ARE SIGNIFICANT

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 attendance and even personal hygiene.

In addition, when children accomplish goals set in the program, they receive brand new books to keep which are “pawtographed” by their 4-footed reading companions—no small reward!

## 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!

## R.E.A.D.® HAS RECEIVED WORLDWIDE MEDIA ATTENTION

More than 300 articles have been published about the R.E.A.D. program, from the Wall Street Journal and national magazines like *Time*, *Parenting*, *Family Circle*, and *Our Children* (of the National PTA), to national television (Animal Planet and the Westminster Dog Show), and even to the cover of *The Weekly Reader* (First Grade Edition)! R.E.A.D. has also been featured in both a book and journal published by the Association for Childhood Education International.





“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*

## WHAT OTHERS SAY ...

“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*

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.<sup>®</sup> program, and to find out how you can help bring this wonderful experience to more children:

**801.272.3439**

**[www.therapyanimals.org](http://www.therapyanimals.org)**



INTERMOUNTAIN THERAPY ANIMALS

PETS HELPING PEOPLE

PO BOX 17201, SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84117

READING EDUCATION ASSISTANCE DOGS<sup>®</sup> AND R.E.A.D.<sup>®</sup> ARE REGISTERED SERVICE MARKS OF INTERMOUNTAIN THERAPY ANIMALS.  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.