



"From a teacher's point of view, the program is uplifting, stimulating, and encouraging. It's a win-win situation for everyone. It confirms that public school teachers do a great job with a great bunch of kids."

Kyra Battle

### Dogs in a school or library?

Although dogs can't read, they are great listeners and many studies have shown that being in the presence of a dog aids in relaxation, lowered blood pressure, and lowered stress levels. Dogs provide a gateway for setting up an environment that is:

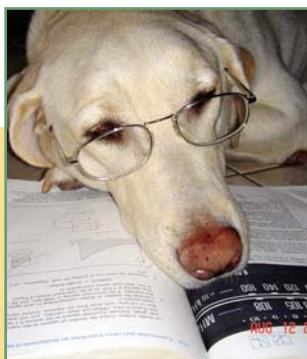
- Non-judgemental
- Relaxed
- Comfortable
- Safe
- Empowering and enjoyable!

### The statistics are substantial!

Children participating in the Wags & Tales Reading program have improved levels of confidence, communication skills, and self-esteem. These children have also shown marked improvement in areas such as:

- Printing and drawing skills
- Sentence structure
- Articulation of feelings and
- Reading and language arts skills.

It has also been documented that high levels of enthusiasm were maintained and that attention to task increased. Students and parents reported an intensified interest in reading (especially to the family pet) during non-school hours.



### Interested in volunteering for this special program with your dog?

This prestigious program requires training for both the human volunteer and the dog. The baseline criteria for volunteers with companion dogs interested in this program is as follows:

#### Orientation & Training

- Volunteers interested in this program must attend the general HSBC Volunteer Orientation.
- Volunteers must attend the Pet Therapy pre-requisite class.
- Where applicable, volunteers and dogs must attend a 6 week pet therapy obedience class.
- Volunteers and dogs will attend a specialized training class for the Wags & Tales Reading program.
- Volunteers and dogs will be evaluated and certified for this program.

\* All orientations and training classes are held at the Humane Society of Broward County.

#### Qualifications

To participate in the Broward County Public Schools Wags & Tales Reading program, you will need to have flexible hours during the morning and early afternoon when school is normally in session. To participate in the Broward County Library's Wags & Tales Reading program, you will need to have flexible hours during the early afternoon and evening (Monday – Sunday) when school is normally not in session.

The baseline criteria for dogs include, but is not limited to the following:

- Dogs must be over one year old
- Must be spayed/neutered
- Must be current on all required vaccinations
- Must be non-aggressive in all situations
- Must be non-aggressive with other animals
- Must enjoy being around children of all ages, genders and ethnic backgrounds
- Must be interested in people
- Must be well behaved and know all basic obedience commands
- Must be able to maintain a sit/down stay for long periods of time
- Must pass the Humane Society of Broward County's Pet Therapy Evaluation in order to be certified for the program

The baseline criteria for volunteers include, but is not limited to the following:

- Volunteers must be good with children with unlimited patience and tolerance
- Teaching skills are preferred but not required
- Good listening skills required
- Good oral and communication skills required
- Ability to travel to assigned location
- Ability to commit to program for a full year
- Ability to work at assigned school four times per month
- Ability to work at assigned library at least once per month
- All volunteers must be at least 18 years of age or older to participate
- Handlers must have owned their dog for a minimum of one year

**Please note:** All volunteers are personally responsible for their actions and those of their pets. It is suggested that each person have their own liability insurance to protect them in the event of an accident.