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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 6, 2020

Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA Now Offering Popular Reading to Dogs Program Virtually

Burlingame, CA –The Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA (PHS/SPCA) in partnership with the Redwood City Public Library, San Mateo Main Library and branches in the San Mateo County Library system is now offering their very popular free of charge Paws for Tales reading program virtually.

“Our Paws for Tales program helps children who are experiencing difficulty or shyness when reading,” said PHS/SPCA Communications Manager Buffy Martin-Tarbox. “It’s a simple but effective program where a child reads a book out loud to perhaps the most non-judgmental being on the planet: a Pet Assisted Therapy dog. Normally we offer the program in-person at the libraries, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the shelter-in-place order, Paws for Tales is now available via Zoom.”

Paws for Tales is free and affords young readers the opportunity to practice their reading and speaking skills. The youth take turns reading out loud to a PHS/SPCA Pet Assisted Therapy dog. PHS/SPCA Assisted Therapy program is made up of San Mateo County residents and their pets who undergo rigorous training and health checks before being certified. After certification, the Pet Assisted Therapy teams provide in-person visits to health care facilities, drug rehabilitation centers, schools, libraries and correctional facilities. The in-person visits are temporarily suspended at this time.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us all to rely more heavily on technology than ever before, and that includes our Pet Assisted Therapy programs,” according to Tarbox. “Since in person Pet Assisted Therapy visits have ceased during the shelter-in-place, we devised alternative methods of reaching people with the healing and calming presence of an animal, something very much needed in these challenging and anxious times.”

From the comfort of their own homes, via Zoom, the kids will take turns reading books to the Pet Assisted Therapy dogs who will be at their own residences with their handlers.

The virtual Paws for Tales program is being offered by The San Mateo Main Library on the second Monday of the month from 4:00-5:00 pm, the Redwood City Public Library on the first Saturday of the month 11 am to 12:00 pm, and the branches in the San Mateo County library system will host their first virtual event on Wed, Aug 26th from 3:00-4:00 pm. Youth do not need to be San Mateo County residents, but pre-registration is required. To register please visit <https://pHS-sPCA.org/volunteer/pet-assisted-therapy/>

PHS/SPCA’s Pet Assisted Therapy teams have also created videos with their Pet Assisted Therapy animals for viewing by residents of hospitals and other care centers, as a way to help



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provide the healing benefits of animals during this time of social-isolation. Those videos are available on PHS/SPCA's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/peninsulasPCA>.

About the Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA

The Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA (PHS/SPCA) is a local, private, non-profit charitable organization dedicated to animal welfare. Among our major programs, PHS/SPCA adopts fully 100% of the healthy dogs and cats in our care and also, through our charitably funded Hope Program, makes well and finds homes for thousands of animals who come to us sick, injured, or too young to survive without supportive care. PHS/SPCA is truly an open admission shelter, not only accepting many pet animals who might be refused at other shelters, but also taking care of injured and orphaned native wildlife from San Francisco through San Mateo and the northern half of Santa Clara County. Our work means 5,700 lives saved each year. Please visit www.phs-sPCA.org to learn about all our programs and services, ways to help our animals and special events.