



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:

Mary Jo Bernardo
925-296-3177
mjbernardo@arf.net

READING TO ROVER: STUDY SHOWS IT REALLY WORKS

Press Conference at UC Davis on March 19 to Announce Findings

WALNUT CREEK, California – March 17, 2010 – WHAT: A new study has for the first time documented that when kids regularly read aloud to dogs, their reading skills, self-esteem and empathy for others all get a significant boost. Children and dogs participating in this study will be available to demonstrate why kids, books and dogs are a winning combination.

The study is a collaboration and partnership between the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine and Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation (ARF) of Walnut Creek, in Contra Costa County.

WHEN: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Friday, March 19

WHERE: Room 1349, Surge III building, UC Davis – (See directions below)

WHO: Eleven children from Davis and the Sacramento area; researchers Martin Smith and Cheryl Meehan from the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine; and Erika Hart, people connect manager at ARF in Walnut Creek, accompanied by three shelter-rescued dogs.

VISUALS: Children sitting on quilts as they read aloud to the dogs, and interviews with parents, children, researchers and an ARF representative.

BACKGROUND: It has been recognized anecdotally that children become better readers when they regularly read aloud to a dog. While this concept has been widely embraced, until now there has been no scientific evidence to back up those observations. In partnership with ARF in Walnut Creek, researchers at UC Davis' School of Veterinary Medicine have now collected data indicating that reading to dogs results in improvements to children's reading fluency. ARF is the first national animal welfare organization to obtain scientific documentation that reading to dogs improves children's reading skill-sets.

The study is an outgrowth of ARF's *All Ears Reading*® Program, an animal-assisted therapy program which encourages reading by creating a supportive environment for children, fostering an eagerness to read and celebrating the unique bond children and pets share.

DIRECTIONS & PARKING:

Take Interstate 80 to Highway 113, just west of the city of Davis and UC Davis. Drive north on Hwy. 113 toward Woodland. Take the first exit, which is Hutchison Drive, and turn right onto Hutchison. Go past Health Sciences Drive, La Rue Road, Dairy Road and Bioletti Way.

The one-story building on your right, at the corner of Hutchison and Bioletti, is Surge III. Turn right into the next driveway just past Surge III. There are about 10 parking spots in the driveway. Park as close to Hutchison as you can. There is a small building (Surge II) between the driveway and Surge III. You can enter Surge III on the east end. **To park free, place a news media business card on the driver's side of the dashboard.**

Additional media contacts:

-- Martin Smith, School of Veterinary Medicine (530) 752-6894, mhsmith@ucdavis.edu
-- Cheryl Meehan, School of Veterinary Medicine (503) 475-3964 clmeehan@ucdavis.edu

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