

GATEWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Photo Caption: (top) Dogs from Hilltown Sled Dogs visited with Littleville's readers last week, much to students' delight. (bottom) Hilltown Sled Dogs arrival at Littleville.

Littleville readers are going to the dogs

Huntington – Littleville students who complete their monthly “pawsome” reading challenge have been rewarded with canine-special assemblies, thanks to coordination by reading teachers Gail Gingras and Margaret Petzold and funding by the Gateway Education Foundation.

March has been no exception.

On March 1, five fifth graders performed at the school's monthly assembly. These students wanted to encourage the school to read and support the monthly reading challenges. They wrote and choreographed a song to the tune of “Shake it Off” by Taylor Swift. Performing were Alexandria Henrichon, Elizabeth Kadzic, Dominic Nazzaro, Lily Peloquin, and Ashley Tacke. Music teacher Renee Mosher was a great help to the students by letting them practice with her, finding the karaoke song, and helping students with the choreography.

On Tuesday, March 5, Jessica from *Heroes, Horses and Hounds* visited Ms. Shultz's first grade classroom, with her service dog Crow. Ms. Schultz's class had 100% participation in the Pawsome Reading Challenge for the month of January. Jessica read two picture books—*Dog Breath* and *Fergus* to the students, as Crow laid at her feet enjoying both the stories AND the students. Jessica then answered questions are Crow, an Irish Wolfhound.

Most recently, a special treat was planned for Littleville students who had all completed their February reading challenge. Marla B. Brodsky from Hilltown Sled Dogs in West Chesterfield, brought a team of dogs and a sled to the school. “Marla read a sled dog story to students, let the children meet the dogs, and then hitched two dogs to her sled and mushed across the playing fields behind the school to the delight of students and staff,” said Petzold of the event.

This is the second year of Pawsome Reading Challenge at Littleville, as the dog-based rewards were very popular and motivating to students last year. A new reading challenge is given out each month and every student who completes the challenge and turns in their work by the due date gets to take part. In addition to special assemblies, students have received Dog Tags and have earned extra book charms for the necklaces over time.

The Gateway Education Foundation has funded several grants to Gingras and Petzold to run this reading program. The grants have paid for the dog tags and charms, the assemblies, and for books that students earn and can keep. Since 2012, the Gateway Education Foundation has funded 95 projects totaling \$95,414 to Gateway classrooms and schools. Funding for the Foundation comes from various fundraisers and donations from staff, parents, alumni, businesses and community members. For more information on how you can support programs like this, visit the Gateway Education Foundation website (www.GatewayEducationFoundation.org).

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