Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association Convention Raffle to Benefit R.E.A.D. Program

The 2011 Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association (WVMA) Convention will be held October 20-23 at the Monona Terrace Convention Center in Madison, Wisconsin. The 2011 WVMA Raffle will be showcased in the exhibit hall throughout convention. Drawings will be during the Evening Reception and Entertainment on Friday, October 21 with proceeds benefiting the Wisconsin Reading Education Assistance Dogs (R.E.A.D.) program.

Intermountain Therapy Animals of Utah launched R.E.A.D. in 1999 as the first comprehensive literacy program built around the idea of reading to dogs, and the program has been spreading ever since. The R.E.A.D. program has been offered in Wisconsin since 2004 through Dogs On Call, Inc.

The mission of the R.E.A.D. program is to improve the literacy skills of children through the assistance of registered therapy teams as literacy mentors.

The 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. utilizes registered therapy animals that have been trained and tested for health, safety, appropriate skills and temperament. R.E.A.D. dogs volunteer with their handler as a team, going to schools, libraries and many other settings as reading companions for children.

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.

Participating kids make enormous strides in reading and communication skills while, along the way, building self-esteem, confidence, and social skills. Performance in other subjects tends to improve as well.

Today, thousands of registered R.E.A.D. teams work throughout the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, and beyond.

Support the Wisconsin R.E.A.D. program by visiting their website at www.dogsoncall.org/r-e-a-d/ or the 2011 WVMA Raffle booth!

For more information or to register for the convention go to www.wvma.org and click on the 2011 WVMA Convention logo, or contact the WVMA at 608-257-3665 or wvma@wvma.org.

The mission of the Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association is to advocate and promote veterinary medicine, while enriching animal and human health. Founded in 1915, The Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association has more than 2,400 members.

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