

## **Reading Education Assistance Dogs (R.E.A.D.) ®**



### **Longacre Elementary**

Lynne Hagmann and Elle and Rhonda Shuster and Roxy visit Longacre Elementary School in Farmington every Monday morning. Kelly Bittner and Mickey serve as our substitute team. Each team reads with five children in 15-minute increments. The same children are seen for a 10-week period.

Our liaison teacher at Longacre is Rhonda Henry. She selects the students and makes the schedule.

Lynne and Rhonda have been volunteering for three years and find it to be a rewarding experience. The kids just love the program.

### **Plymouth District Library**

As a R.E.A.D.® (Reading Education Assistance Dogs) team, Elle and I (Lynne Hagmann) do a R.E.A.D. program at the Plymouth District Library the first Monday evening of the month. Kelly and Mickey occasionally sub for us. Lauren Baker is the Youth Librarian who coordinates the program. She signs up children for one of the six 15 - minute sessions and makes reminder calls to the families. She has books available for a variety of reading levels, along with coloring and information sheets and other goodies. Children can also bring books from home.

When the children arrive for their session, Lauren brings them into the Children's Activity Room where Elle and I are waiting, and introduces the child to us. Each child then chooses a book to read to Elle. Some children like to pet Elle while they read; some wait until they are done. They give her a treat and play with her for a minute or two if they wish.

The room has double glass doors and windows along one wall so we can be seen at all times for safety reasons. Many of the children come back as often as they can because they enjoy the experience.

We are looking for dedicated teams who have R.E.A.D. certification or are willing to become R.E.A.D.® members. Previous experience working with children is preferred, but not a requirement. Your dog must also be a certified therapy dog. Here is the link for the R.E.A.D. certification program: [www.therapyanimals.org](http://www.therapyanimals.org).

If you and your dog love working with children and you are looking for a fun and rewarding experience, then the R.E.A.D. program is for you. Please contact Rhonda at: [rhondashuster@gmail.com](mailto:rhondashuster@gmail.com).