

Fidos DEAR© Program

- Children improve their reading skills in a unique and fun environment
- Children forget their limitations and develop a “can-do” attitude
- Children increase their oral skills and self-confidence
- Provides individualized mentoring for each child
- Provides a personalized, less stressful environment for reading
- Complements the existing literacy program
- Flexible, cost-efficient program that is easy to implement in many settings
- Therapy Dogs effortlessly cross all socioeconomic and cultural lines
- Another way in which animals can make a positive difference
- Animals are without bias and judgment and increase a child’s comfort level
- Professional acceptance of program by educators, librarians and counselors



Fidos For Freedom, Inc.

Founded in 1987, Fidos For Freedom, Inc. (Fidos) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located in Laurel, Maryland. The organization is composed of a dedicated group of volunteers who strive to improve the quality of life for people living in the Baltimore-Washington Metropolitan Area through the use of Hearing Dogs, Service Dogs and Therapy Dogs. Participation requires a high level of dedication. Even after passing a stringent entrance exam, each handler and his/her dog is required to attend special classes at the Fidos Training Center. In addition to the temperament and obedience requirements of our program, many of our Therapy Dogs have passed additional testing to be certified by Therapy Dogs International, Inc.

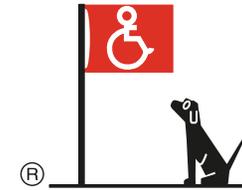
If you are interested in further information about the Fidos DEAR© program, please contact the Fidos For Freedom, Inc. Therapy Dog Program at (301) 490-4005 (410) 880-4178 or e-mail office@fidosforfreedom.org

Fidos DEAR© Program Sponsored By:

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Fidos For Freedom, Inc.



DEAR© Program

Dogs Educating & Assisting Readers



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Fidos For Freedom, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and is a voting member of Assistance Dogs International (ADI).

All donations are greatly appreciated and are tax deductible.



**Combined Federal Campaign:
CFC # 41908
Maryland Charity Campaign:
MCC # 2605**

United Way - Write-in: “Fidos For Freedom, Inc.”

Fidos DEAR© Program

Fidos DEAR© Program is an exciting venture by Fidos For Freedom, Inc. that is taking place in local schools and libraries. Fidos DEAR© Program improves reading skills by encouraging children to read one-on-one with a Fidos Therapy Dog and trained volunteer.



Upon recommendation by educators and a signed permission slip from the parent or guardian, each child is matched with a Therapy Dog Team for a semester. DEAR© Teams arrive as a group and pair off with their assigned child. Each team will bring a reading mat, water and dog treats. A few minutes will be spent letting the dog and child greet before starting each reading session. At the end of the session, the child will be given time to pet the dog, and the handler will give the dog a treat and water. Each child will be assigned to the same DEAR Team for the entire semester; however, substitute DEAR Teams will be available to ensure that, in the event a volunteer cannot attend, no child is left without a DEAR Team.

Fidos DEAR© Program begins with age and competency appropriate books, most with animal themes. Fidos DEAR Teams will provide a selection of books for the children to read. As they advance to the next level of reading, a “pawto-graphed” book for that level will be given to the child to keep, as both a reward and an incentive.

Additionally, at the completion of the semester, each child will be given a Certificate of Accomplishment which will include a picture of the child reading with the DEAR Team (upon parental permission) or a picture of the Therapy Dog.

A child tends to focus better on an activity or discussion when a dog is present. An additional advantage is the child is very inclined to forget his/her reading limitations while working with a dog. Reading to the dog is far less intimidating than reading to classmates and teachers. A child is often more willing to interact with an animal than another person.



There are physiological benefits to interacting with dogs that encourage a more relaxed learning environment, including increased relaxation and lower blood pressure. Children find that reading to a dog is less intimidating than reading to a person. Participation in the Fidos DEAR© Program is a special time for children that is helpful, fun, and transforms the formerly dreaded reading experience into a positive experience which facilitates learning.

DEAR© Teams

All dogs participating in Fidos DEAR© Program are Therapy Dogs in good standing with Fidos For Freedom, Inc. This means that the teams have participated in various other visits, programs and training. Before being accepted into the Fidos program, each Therapy Dog is tested for personality, temperament and obedience. Fidos also requires ongoing obedience training each month, which, in addition to improving the training levels, keeps each dog well socialized with both people and other dogs. Additionally, all dogs are bathed within 48 hours prior to each visit.

