

HOMES FOR THE HOMELESS PARTNERS WITH BIDEAWEE

Bideawee's Therapy Dogs and Volunteers offers Reading to Dogs Program to Homeless Children

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Tina Loncaric, 646.341.1012 or e-mail: tina.loncaric@bideawee.org

New York, NY-6/12/2008- Bideawee, one of the nation's oldest humane organizations, focused on finding forever new homes for dogs and cats and Homes for the Homeless, the nation's largest provider of residential, education and employment training centers, focused on helping homeless children and their mothers, unite in this special partnership using dogs' therapeutic abilities to help homeless children with literacy challenges.

Bideawee's innovative pet therapy program Reading to Dogs allows the children to have one-on-one sessions with a Bideawee therapy dog, reading aloud their favorite book. The dog is truly the best audience a child could have. A dog's physical ability to hear is at least 100 times stronger than a human's and a dog will never judge or criticize you. The dog will listen politely and will most likely embrace you with kisses when your session is over. Bideawee volunteers serve as listeners, gently coaching the children when appropriate, as well as encouraging the dog to focus on the child and the book.

Bideawee volunteers, teachers and parents are amazed by the drastic improvements in the children participating in the program.

"Reading to Dogs at Bideawee has been a great addition the literacy programs we offer our shelter residents. The children have formed a special bond with Missy, and have developed a newfound enthusiasm for reading," said Leah Sandals, Communications Associate at Homes for the Homeless.

"I like reading to Missy because she puts her soft fur on me and she licks my hands and I can give her treats. When I am standing at the front door she comes running to me and waits for me to get a book and read it to her. Missy is the best dog in the world. I wish her a happy birthday," said Reading to Dogs student Katherine, 7 years old.

Bideawee and Homes for the Homeless will be celebrating the Bideawee therapy dog Missy's birthday party at Homes for the Homeless' Prospect Family Inn, located at 730 Kelly Street in the South Bronx, on Tuesday June 17th at 4 pm. Media is for the first time invited to witness the Reading to Dog session at the homeless shelter.

About Bideawee

Founded in 1903 by Mrs. Flora D'Auby Jenkins Kibbe, Bideawee, which means "stay a while" in Scottish, is one of the oldest humane organizations in the United States. Bideawee's three locations in New York,

Wantagh, and Westhampton is home to approximately 250 to 300 animals at any time and place thousands of dogs, cats, puppies and kittens in loving homes every year. The organization operates two full service veterinary practices in Manhattan and Westhampton and is also home to two of the oldest and largest Pet Memorial Parks in the country located in Wantagh and Westhampton, NY. Bideawee's Learning Centers in all three locations provide a wide range of educational programs and fun activities that help strengthen the bond between people and pets. Our mission is to promote and support safe, loving, long-term relationships between people and companion animals by providing a continuum of services and programs that are innovative, personalized and of high quality.

Bideawee is a not-for-profit 501 (c) 3 humane organizations and 100 % of Bideawee's funding comes from private sources. For more information, please visit www.bideawee.org.

About Homes for the Homeless

Founded in 1986 through a collaboration with Leonard N. Stern, The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, and the city of New York, Homes for the Homeless houses up to 600 homeless families and 1200 homeless children each night. With over twenty years of experience with homeless families, Homes for the Homeless recognizes that homelessness is not merely a housing problem – it is an education problem and a family problem, and predominantly, it is a poverty problem. Homes for the Homeless aims to alleviate the problems of poverty by providing our families with the tools necessary to move out of the shelters and live on their own. These include educational resources, job training resources, health services, and the summer camps that are so valuable to the children living in our shelters.

For more information, please visit www.hfnyc.org

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