



North Vancouver District  
Public Library

Connecting Community. Sharing Knowledge. Inspiring Stories.

# Inspiring Stories

## February 2018

### Paws-ing 4 Stories

We know our community loves to read! In particular, BC Summer Reading Club participation statistics illustrate just how much local children love to read and enjoy literacy activities at the library during summer months. However, reading does not come as easily to some children as it does to others. It can take time, encouragement, and a comfortable environment to help foster the joy of reading in young children. And that's where the heartwarming new Paws 4 Stories programs comes in! Paws 4 Stories is a St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog community service program that is designed to assist in helping to improve reading skills of children. Reading to a therapy dog can be motivating for children, and is especially beneficial to those who are hesitant or anxious about reading. Children participate in 20 minute sessions reading to a certified therapy dog named Starr, the friendly Great Dane, and Starr's owner Heather Fowler. Starr is patient and calm, and children read a book of their choosing at their own pace, sounding out words with Heather and petting Starr along the way.

Over 27 sessions filled up over a week before the program started, and we're hearing wonderful comments from our community. One of the young girls who has been participating in Paws4Stories brought Starr a necklace she had made. The beaded necklace has two hands and a heart, and when Starr wears it it's like she is wrapped in a constant hug (photo above). We're also hearing from community members wishing to volunteer their own pets to take part!

The program will take a short break in March, but will be back by popular demand in April!



*Paws 4 Stories participant Conor May reads to Heather Fowler and St. John Ambulance therapy dog, Starr.*