

# Show of Hands

Fairfax County Public Library  
Volunteer Newsletter

Summer 2009

## A Reader's Best Friend

Not all library volunteers stand on two legs. Just ask Lloyd, Kodi, Benji, Rusty and O'Malley. They don't say much either, but these four-pawed volunteers are great listeners.

Lloyd, a regular at the Centreville Regional Library, is a mixed breed boxer and American bull dog. As a trained therapy dog, this canine is the attraction at the Read-to-Lloyd programs at the Centreville branch. Kids aged 6-12 sign up for 15-minute sessions to read to an attentive audience of one who never interrupts or judges.

Virginia and Brian Eller, Lloyd's owners, have been bringing Lloyd to the branch since July 2007. After an instructor at a local dog training club noticed Lloyd's talents, the couple got the dog certified. Therapy dogs must be trained to respond well to handling by multiple people and – in the case of kids – occasional tail tugging.

The Ellers knew Lloyd had an aptitude for listening when their young niece would visit. She would sit on the floor attempting to read a book, and Lloyd would just walk over and lie down beside her.



*Kodi listens to a young reader at a Read to the Dog program at Pohick Regional Library.*

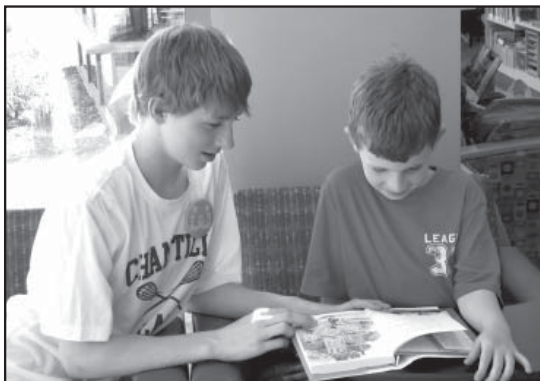
At the Read-to-Lloyd programs, the Ellers try to create a secluded, comfortable and relaxed atmosphere. Some parents bring their children just to be around a dog. Some youngsters have special needs. "Each interaction between the children and the dog is different," Brian explains. "But often I watch them become more comfortable, their voice is stronger. They enunciate better."

Over at the Pohick Regional Library, several dogs share the spotlight at the branch's Read-to-the-Dog programs. Chris Ballad, a member of People Animals Love, a pet therapy organization, began the programs in February with his golden retriever O'Malley. He has been joined by Tricia Lowney and her husband Bob, whose three-legged dog Kodi, also a golden retriever, fascinates young readers, as well as Nan Siemer and her dog Benji. "Often kids will come in with books about dogs and pet the dog as they read. The dogs love to be touched and loved," says Tricia.

The program is so popular that PAL members will be starting Read-to-the-Dog programs at the Burke Centre and Sherwood library branches.

— Pat Bangs, Library Administration

## Oakton's Book Buddies



*Middle-school student Matthew helps his Little Buddy – also named Matthew – with reading skills during Oakton's three-month Book Buddies program.*

The library loves to have student volunteers, but sometimes the requests to fulfill community service hours are overwhelming and there are just not enough tasks. Oakton Library solved this dilemma when its Book Buddy program paired up eager teens with young readers looking for reading practice.

Following the Fairfax County Public Schools' model which teams up sixth graders with first graders for reading practice, Nancy Bronez matched middle school students looking for service hours with emerging readers looking for reading help. From February through April, three days a week, teens came faithfully for two-hour slots and listened to young readers read aloud. Relationships formed between the Big Buddies and the Little Buddies over the weeks. Reading improved and service hours were met above and beyond the requirement as the teens felt they were providing a valuable service and enjoyed helping their Little Buddies make reading progress.

Boys, in particular, and quite a few children of non-native English speakers comprised the bulk of the Little Buddies. Parents, teens and little buddies were all sad when the program ended, but hopefully we will run it again next

year as it gave our student volunteers a great service project and our customers a great service. Over the three-month period 20 student volunteers donated more than 700 hours of reading practice.

— Nancy Bronez, Oakton Library

# Datatel Employees Donate Time at Three Libraries

After 12 Datatel employees volunteered at three Fairfax Public Library branches the afternoon of May 1, one of the volunteer teams received this handwritten message from Gari Phelal, assistant branch manager at the City of Fairfax Regional Library:

"Many, many thanks for your most generous donation of your valuable time," she wrote. "These days with shortages everywhere, we are struggling to get our work done with less. The fact that you would set aside time to come help us with ours is just amazing!"

The six volunteers at the City of Fairfax Regional Library reshelfed returned books, shifted books on shelves, pulled weeds out of the branch's garden (a task that absolutely none of the staff wanted to do) and one of Datatel's vice-presidents even dusted computers. "The shrubs outside must have been happy after you were here ... they burst into bloom," Phelal concluded in her note.

When two volunteers at the Tyson's Pimmit Regional Library arrived for duty, they asked what the branch's most crucial task was so that it could be tackled first. Staff needed to catch up book reservation requests. There was a printout of nine pages of requests for approximately 60 books, cassettes and DVDs. The library closed at 6 p.m. but our Datatel volunteers decided they were going to stay until the entire list was completed, which they finished at about 5:55 p.m. They not only pulled the books, cassettes and DVDs, they processed them and put them in the bins to go to other libraries.

Four volunteers donated time at the Kings Park Library in Burke. Two spent several hours shifting and reshelfing hundreds of books to make room for new books. The other two pulled specific books from the shelves to either go into storage for the summer or to be re-evaluated by the assistant manager. The assistant manager was extremely thankful for the help we gave and she said it was a huge timesaver for the staff because it freed them up for more pressing duties.

This experience benefited local library branches, but also had some side benefits. One of Datatel's volunteers signed up for a library card while she was there and another enjoyed this so much he plans on doing additional volunteer work on a regular basis.



*Datatel volunteers at the City of Fairfax Regional Library.*

*Adapted from an article by Datatel's DeAnn D. Jelinek for the company's employee newsletter.*

## Thanks, Datatel Volunteers

**City of Fairfax:** DeAnn Jelinek, Chamara Mendis, Tami Rotem, Megan Trimberger, Florence Upson and Josh Deitrich.



**Kings Park:** Pamela Deaner, David Eldrige, Mike Sherick and Debbie Stenger.

**Tyson's-Pimmit:** Maurlin Lowks and Wayne Pulsifer.



*Library Foundation volunteer Helen Burnett*

## Foundation Volunteer: "Libraries: Havens of Peace and Civility"

Helen Burnett is a lifelong lover of the library and speaks highly about the unlimited wealth of information that it offers. She has spent many hours volunteering for both the Fairfax County Public Library and Fairfax County Public School libraries.

She is proud that her children are avid readers and committed library users. Helen currently volunteers for the Fairfax Library Foundation to assist with the branch orders and payment processing of ear buds and flash drives. Library customers can purchase ear buds and flash drives at each library branch to use at Internet stations. The foundation orders them and processes the payments submitted by each branch.

Burnett states, "For me, the library was always a haven of peace and civility in addition to being a source of unending knowledge. We need to make sure that this wonderful resource is always available to all of the citizens of Fairfax County."

— Roberta Longworth, Executive Director Fairfax Library Foundation

# Tricky Idioms and Other Mysteries of the English Language

On any given day at many Fairfax County Public Library branches, volunteer leaders at English conversation groups may be explaining the intricacies of such puzzling expressions as “out of the woods” or “bite the bullet” to English language learners.

“We try to emphasize reading, writing and speaking,” says Antoinette Robertson, who leads a group with fellow volunteer Lois LaChapelle every Wednesday morning at the Oakton Library. Between 10-15 individuals, representing at least a half-dozen countries from China, Korea and Vietnam to Romania and Iran gather to practice their English. Robertson and LaChapelle often bring in newspaper articles to spark discussions – perhaps on day trips in a travel section or articles from a health section.

Robertson, who has travelled widely with her husband, a foreign service officer, enjoys getting to know the attendees. “I love people,” she says. “A Korean girl came in after being away from the group for a month and a half and gave me a hug. That meant a lot to me,” she says, explaining that such displays are unusual in some cultures.

• *story continued on page 4*

## Afraid of Commitment? Apply Here!

Volunteers for Change is a flexible evening and weekend volunteer program run by Volunteer Fairfax targeted towards busy active adults with a desire to serve. Currently volunteers from this program come on a monthly basis to five Fairfax County Public Library branches.

Volunteers work for two hours once a month helping with a variety of tasks. Generally the volunteer group is composed of a team captain and three to six other volunteers who have signed up to help. For Ilze Long, the assistant branch manager at the Reston Regional Library, having the Volunteers for Change program has been a wonderful experience and a huge help. “I just breathe a sigh of relief when I come into work knowing the volunteers will be here later on in the evening,” said Long. Even though the volunteers may be new people each month, the library staff can quickly bring them up to speed on the tasks that need to be done and put them to work right away. Volunteers perform tasks such as shelf reading, locating books on library reports, reshelving picture books in the children’s area, checking-in books that have been returned, and providing general assistance keeping the library looking good.

Although the ad hoc nature of the Volunteer Fairfax’s Volunteers for Change Program is what initially sparked his interest, Dan has been faithfully volunteering at the branch for the past two years and after six months became the team captain. For Dan, this has been a great way to give back to his community. Although there are many options of places to volunteer through Volunteers for Change, Dan chose the library because he loves books, lives close to the branch and liked the idea of supporting the library which he considers to be a community center. When asked what his favorite task was, Dan replied, “Finding and pulling all the books that are on the Last Actives list. This is a list of all the books in the library that have not been checked out in the past 18 months. I think it’s very interesting (and sometimes a little sad!), to see what books people are not reading.”

Dan is a big fan of the Volunteers for Change program. “It’s great because it’s so flexible. You can look at the list of opportunities each month and decide what you can commit to. It’s really perfect for busy people who don’t want an on-going commitment or who like the idea of being able to volunteer with a different organization each month. Most people can find two hours in their schedule once a month to help their community.”

— Erin Chernisky, Volunteer Coordinator



**Dan Nolin, a participant in Volunteer Fairfax’s Volunteers for Change program donates time at the Reston Regional Library.**

## Volunteers For Change Monthly Library Locations

- **Burke:** 2nd Thursday, 7 to 9 p.m.
- **Chantilly:** 4th Tuesday, 7 to 9p.m.
- **Centreville:** 3rd Tuesday, 7 to 9 p.m.
- **John Marshall:** 1st Tuesday, 6:30 to 8:30 pm
- **Reston:** 2nd Wednesday, 7 to 9 p.m.

- To sign up as a Volunteers for Change volunteer at
- any of the library locations, contact Annie Duffield at
- 703- 703.246.3895 or [ADuffield@volunteerfairfax.org](mailto:ADuffield@volunteerfairfax.org).

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Fairfax County Public Library  
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# Volunteer Opportunities at the Fairfax County Public Library

The Fairfax County Public Library is recruiting volunteers. Please help us advertise our opportunities by sharing this list with friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, schools, clubs or places of worship – wherever someone may be able to help.

## Summer 2009

### Alexandria

**Adopt-a-Shelf or pull hold requests** off the shelves at the Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria. Good attention to detail required and some computer skills preferred; Put your skills and creativity to work. We especially welcome those willing to put their hands to work **mending books, straightening items** on our shelves or **tending our garden**. We're also looking for **folks with an MLS degree** to work with our customers at the information desk. Contact David Hanlon at 703-765-3645; [David.Hanlon@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:David.Hanlon@fairfaxcounty.gov).

### Annandale

Help keep us organized! Volunteers are needed to **shelve books** at the George Mason Regional Library, 7001 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Must be 16 years or older and be able to volunteer two hours per week for approximately three months. Please contact Chris Duggan at 703-256-3800 or [Christopher.Duggan@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Christopher.Duggan@fairfaxcounty.gov).

### Burke

Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, needs volunteers to **search for books** on the shelves, **shelve books** and assist with various circulation functions including **checking in books** and **processing materials** returned to the branch.

Contact Jerry Herrera at 703-249-1522 or [Gerardo.Herrera@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Gerardo.Herrera@fairfaxcounty.gov).

### Fairfax (county-wide)

Volunteers are needed to help the library's Early Literacy Outreach Specialist with the **Ready to Read Program** by reading books aloud at preschools and childcare centers. Prior experience teaching or leading children's programs is required. Volunteers can work in an area of the county that is most convenient for them. Contact Renee Edwards at 703-324-8413 [Renee.Edwards@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Renee.Edwards@fairfaxcounty.gov).

**Other volunteer opportunities may be available as well and training is available for all positions. For more information, contact the branch/department where you are interested in volunteering. For a list of volunteer coordinators and their contact information, visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library). Under *How to...* click on *Volunteer*.**

## • "Tricky Idioms and Other Mysteries of the English Language," cont'd from page 3



*The Tuesday night English conversation group poses with leaders Lenore Currence (far left) and Nina Larson (standing, right).*

George Mason Regional Library, the Kingstowne Library and the Patrick Henry Library. Volunteers assist English language learners one-on-one at the Reston Regional Library.

LaChapelle enjoys learning about different cultures. A former English as a Second Language instructor, she says as attendees present information about their countries of origin she has learned that in China a person never places a photo of a themselves or a spouse above or near the bed, because it resembles a memorial or that in Vietnam it is unlucky to have three people in a photo.

There is another special pair of volunteers coordinating an English conversation group at the Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library – Lenore Currence and Nina Larson. "ESL students gather together with two terrific teachers at the branch each week for talk that testifies to the twists and turns of the English tongue," says James Vroom, the adult services manager at the branch.

In addition to the Oakton and Tysons-Pimmit branches, volunteers coordinate English conversation groups at the Centreville Regional Library, the Chantilly Regional Library, the

— Pat Bangs, Library Administration



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