

Lucky Dog Humane Education – Letter from a Shelter Pet

Aligns to the following Common Core Standards for K-5

(ELA = English Language Arts)

! **ELA Re Literature** - Standards 1, 2 & 9

! **ELA Speaking and Listening** - Standards 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6

! **ELA Writing** – Standards 3 & 4

Aligns to Social Emotional Learning Outcomes

! **Self Awareness:** Identifying emotions, thoughts and values

! **Self Management:** Self-discipline - Impulse control

! **Social Awareness:** Perspective-talking - Empathy - Respect for others - Diversity

! **Relationship Skills:** Communication - Relationship building

! **Responsible Decision-making:** Identifying problems - Analyzing situations - Solving Problems - Ethical responsibility - Reflecting

OBJECTIVE: To inspire children to feel compassion and empathy by asking them to look into the heart and mind of a shelter pet and write a letter from that pet's perspective.

PREPARATION: Children will meet PAWfessor Leaf with his mom Cynthia and her newest guest Pawfessors. (Cynthia saves animals from the local animal shelters and partners with us in many community outreach programs to help local dogs all find their happily ever after) – Presenters will ask children to think about what life is like in an animal shelter and what they think Leaf and friends wished for while living there.

IMPLEMENTATION:

After participating in the Empathy for Animals lesson and story, the classroom teacher will read the book Belly Rubbins for Bubbins By Jason Kraus, then facilitate a class discussion on ways to help an animal feel safe, happy and loved. The teacher will ask open-ended questions about how an animal feels if forgotten/neglected or when a stray or in the shelter. The class can also discuss what animals wish for and dream of and compare their own wishes and dreams.

The children will then be given the task of writing a letter from a forgotten or stray animal or a shelter pet's perspective. They can write it as a hopeful letter to a future family, a wish list to an animal rescuer, or a plea to other families to not let their pets end up as a stray or in the shelter.

Materials:

Paper, pens, and real pictures of shelter pets (Download photos from your local shelter's website)

Concepts: Teaching empathy and compassion. Teaching the importance of keeping your pets for life, giving your pets the love and care they need, and keeping pets safe and in your home. Promoting the concept of adopting from an animal shelter as opposed to purchasing from a pet store or breeder. Teaching the importance of treating pets and people with kindness and making sure all peers feel included.

CONCLUSION: Have children take turns reading their letters aloud while displaying a photo of the shelter pet they are writing for. Save letters and photos to display at "Kindnessfest" at the conclusion of the Lucky Dog Humane Education Program