



► Latest Neighborhoo



News from Eastpointe, Roseville, Fraser, St. Clair Shores, Harper Woods, Grosse Pointe, Grosse Pointe Farms, Grosse Pointe Park, Grosse Pointe Shores, Grosse Pointe Woods

Marketpla

- Browse
- New & U
- Employr
- Homes c
- Shop Or

Home Page  
Essentials  
CyberSurveys  
Forums  
Photo Galleries  
Weather  
Horoscope  
Lottery  
Giveaways  
Crossword  
Advanced Search  
Contact Us  
Autos  
Autos Insider  
Drive  
-- Car Reviews  
-- Latest Deals  
-- Model Reports  
Joyrides  
Business  
Business  
Money & Life  
Careers  
-- Find a Job  
Real Estate  
-- Find a Home  
Metro  
Metro/State  
Wayne  
Oakland  
Macomb  
Livingston  
Commuting  
Obituaries  
-- Death Notices  
Schools  
Special Reports  
Editorials  
Columnists  
Detroit History  
Nation/World  
Nation/World  
Politics/Gov  
Census  
Health  
Religion  
Technology  
Sports  
Sports Insider  
Lions/NFL  
Pistons/NBA  
Red Wings/NHL  
Tigers/MLB  
Shock/WNBA  
MSU  
U-M  
More Colleges  
High Schools  
Golf  
Motor Sports  
Outdoors

Wednesday, May 12, 2004

## Dogs help kids learn to read

Grosse Pointe library program lets struggling students relax

By Lisa Martino / The Detroit News

**GROSSE POINTE FARMS** — Sherri Dedyne never thought her 9-year-old son Justin, who has dyslexia, would ever rush to get to the library.

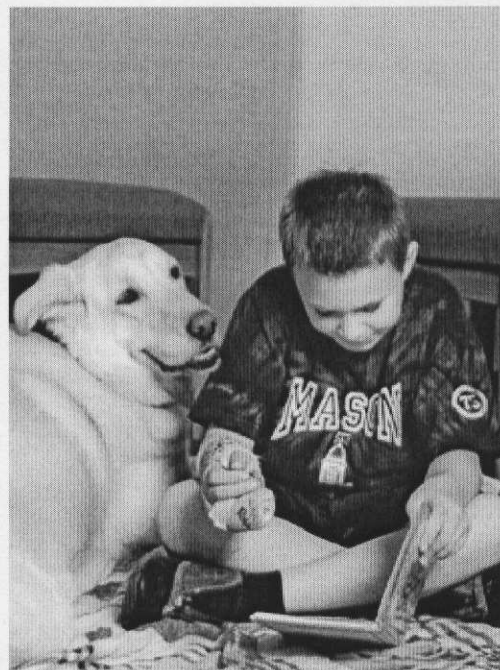
But Justin Dedyne, who has been part of Central Library's Reading Education Assistance Dog's program for four four-week sessions, no longer finds reading a chore when he's doing it with his canine friends, Bob, Barney, Shadow or Cocoa.

"I like reading to the dogs," said the Mason Elementary School fourth-grader. "We sit down and start reading, and if I need help, we sound it out."

"I'm catching up to the other people that read better than me."

Dyslexia is a learning disorder marked by impairment of the ability to recognize and comprehend written words.

The READ program, open to children in the Grosse Pointe school system, began in 1999 as a literacy program in Salt Lake City, Utah. It improves a child's literacy skills by pairing them with a dog. In turn, children who have trouble reading at their age level do not



John F. Martin / Special to The Detroit News

**Justin Dedyne reads to Shadow as part of Grosse Pointe Central Library's Reading Education Assistance Dog program. The 9-year-old has dyslexia and found reading to his furry companions gives him the incentive to improve his skills.**

### Canine help

**What:** Reading Education Assistance Dogs program

**When:** Next session starts in June; sessions are twice a week for one month

**Where:** Central Library, 10 Kercheval, Grosse Pointe Farms

**Phone:** For information, call Betty Kellog at (313) 343-2325

Home Del

- Start ho
- Renew s
- Custom



Neighbor

More Sports  
 Scoreboards  
 Entertainment  
 Entertainment  
 Events  
 -- Event Finder  
 Movies/TV/DVD  
 -- Movie Finder  
 -- TV Listings  
 Eats & Drinks  
 -- Restaurants  
 -- Wine Report  
 Books  
 CD Reviews  
 Escapes  
 Casino Guide  
 Michigan's Best  
 Living  
 Lifestyle  
 Homestyle  
 Fitness  
 Forums  
 News Talk  
 Faith Talk  
 Autos Talk  
 Wings Talk  
 Lions Talk  
 Pistons Talk  
 Tigers Talk  
 Big 10 Talk  
 High Schools  
 Movie Talk  
 Tech Talk  
 Weblogs  
 Politics Blog  
 Tigers Blog  
 Pistons Blog  
 Golf Blog

view reading as a chore, and forget about their limitations when they are with the animals, Library Operations Manager Betty Kellog said. The program is open to all reading-age children.

"Even a first-grader, if they can read, they're welcome. The requirement is that they have basic reading skills," Kellog said.

The program, which offers 20-minute sessions twice a week for four weeks, has been offered to students for almost a year. Although Kellog stresses that it is not a remedial reading program, a volunteer and the dog's owner are usually on hand to assist the reading child with words if they get stuck.

"It's very nonjudgmental. They don't have to compete with anyone," she said. "We're not here to teach them to read, this is about fun."

As a result of the program, Justin's reading level has gone from first grade to reading age-appropriate books for a 9-year-old, his mother said.

"He's made great progress," Sherri Dedyne said. "I've never seen him so excited to read — it was like pulling teeth (before)."

Children choose their own books to read, and at the conclusion of the program, receive a photo of themselves with "their dogs" to keep as mementos. The dogs are provided through Cottage Hospital's therapy dog program, where they visit patients during the week to cheer them up.

Grosse Pointe Farms resident Dave Richards has been bringing his Labrador retrievers Shadow and Cocoa to the library to participate in the program for nearly a year.

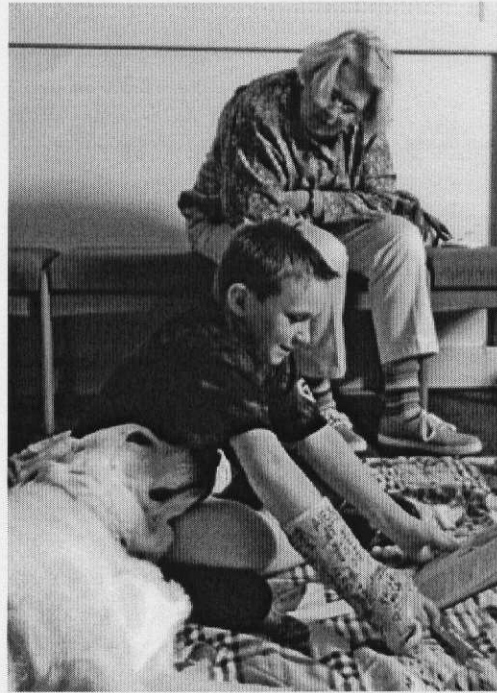
"The bond that the children form with the dogs is just awesome," he said. "We almost become invisible after the kids start reading with the dogs."

"In four weeks, the improvement is just miraculous."

Kellog said she has trouble explaining exactly how the program improves the children's skills, but never fails to see an improvement.

"We can barely explain it ourselves," Kellog said. "Whatever it is, it seems to be the right combination."

*You can reach Lisa Martino at (313) 222-2717 or [lmartino@detnews.com](mailto:lmartino@detnews.com).*



John F. Martin / Special to The Detroit News

**Justin Dedyne, 9, reads to Mary Ann McKenna and Shadow at the Grosse Pointe Central Library. "I like reading to the dogs," he says.**

- ▶ Comment on this story
- ▶ Send this story to a friend
- ▶ Get Home Delivery

- Neighb index for W 12, 2004
- Dogs he read
- Church years
- School revitalized
- Library I means
- Fraser tr
- Student Anne Marie Lakeview H
- School t
- Pro team Lake pitche
- On The (
- Meeting:
- News br
- Public S
- Mileston
- Reunion

Sections

Tuesday

Select inc

Copy  
 The E  
 Use of this  
 agreemer  
 Service (up