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September 15, 2014

Dear Parents,

It is my pleasure to introduce Linden Grove School's newest "staff" member, Stella. Stella was referred to Linden Grove via Ms. Parker, 6-8 team teacher and owner of Stella. Stella is a certified therapy dog and has all of her shots. She will be coming to Linden Grove every Monday, starting September 22nd, so students can read to her and so she can help students relax and self-regulate. On occasion, she might be here on other days, too. We feel fortunate to have Stella as part of our team, as it is well-known (and scientifically proven) that interaction with a gentle, friendly pet has significant benefits.

Physical Health:

- lowers blood pressure
- improves cardiovascular health
- releases endorphins (oxytocin) that have a calming effect
- diminishes overall physical pain
- the act of petting produces an automatic relaxation response, reducing the amount of medication some folks need

Mental Health:

- lifts spirits and lessens depression
- decreases feelings of isolation and alienation
- encourages communication
- provides comfort
- increases socialization
- reduces boredom

- lowers anxiety
- helps children overcome speech and emotional disorders
- reduces loneliness

Reading: (PAWS for Reading)

- helps children focus better
- improves literacy skills
- provides non-stressful, non-judgmental environment
- increases self-confidence, reduces self-consciousness

Below is a list of guidelines that we will review with all students, and it may be helpful for you to review them with your child too:

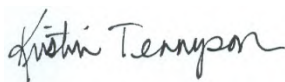
Guidelines for Stella:

1. When students are walking Stella, please ask them to walk only (Stella isn't a very good runner).
2. If Stella is breathing heavy, she may be hot and would like a drink of water.
3. Stella shouldn't be outside in the heat for long amounts of time.
4. When Stella is outside with a student, an adult should be there too.
5. Stella may lick a student if they smell good. If the student doesn't like it, you can tell her "Leave it" in a firm voice and she will listen. This command works anytime you want her to leave something alone.
6. Stella's leash can be off in the classroom but must be on in the hallways and outside.
7. There will be a designated area outside for Stella to use to go to the bathroom.

Please feel free to email us your child's experience with Stella, as he/she is talking about their day. Also, if your child has allergies and/or is afraid of dogs, please let us know right away. We've attached a picture of Stella so you know who we are talking about!

As always, feel free to ask any questions and let me know of any concerns.

Regards,



Kristin Tennyson

Principal of Academics

