



## Benefits

Our therapy dogs are ideal reading companions. Some of the benefits of reading aloud to a therapy dog are:

- reading to a dog is not intimidating
- the dogs listen attentively
- the dogs do not interrupt or make fun of the student
- the dogs do not judge or criticize
- the students are relaxed; their blood pressure is lowered

The students who participate in the R.E.A.D. program develop an increase in self-confidence and self-esteem. They become more comfortable in their social skills and foster a love for reading because of their interactions with the therapy dogs!



### Volunteer Information:

If you are interested in volunteering with the Tallahassee READs! program, please use the contact information provided below for the Tallahassee Memorial Animal Therapy Program.

### Contact Us

Tallahassee Memorial  
Animal Therapy Program  
1300 Miccosukee Road, Suite 5200  
Tallahassee, FL 32308

Stephanie Perkins  
Heather Ashley  
850-431-5352

[TMH.org/animaltherapy](http://TMH.org/animaltherapy)

Connect with us

Tallahassee Memorial Animal Therapy Program

**R.E.A.D.**  
READING EDUCATION ASSISTANCE DOGS®



TMH *Your Hospital for Life™*



Tallahassee Memorial  
Animal Therapy



### What is R.E.A.D.?

R.E.A.D. is an international literacy program developed in 1999 by Intermountain Therapy Animals of Salt Lake City, Utah. The program focuses on improving children's reading and communication skills through the use of trained, appropriate therapy dogs as reading mentors.

The local R.E.A.D. program named Tallahassee READs! is sponsored by the Tallahassee Memorial Animal Therapy Program. These teams have found that creating a safe, nonjudgmental learning environment has made reading more fun and exciting for the children of the Big Bend area!

### Student Participation

The R.E.A.D. program is designed to give reluctant readers in grades 1-8 an opportunity to practice reading aloud to a therapy dog. Our R.E.A.D. teams commit to making weekly visits with their students throughout the school year. Studies have shown that students who participate in this program not only improve their reading and writing skills but also improve their attendance record – no one wants to miss a day of reading to our dogs!

A second grade teacher at one of the local schools we visit offers these words about how the program has helped her students:

“ *The R.E.A.D. program offers young readers the addition of furry tails, occasional confidence-boosting licks, and the loving sort of eye gazes that only our canine companions seem to provide!*

*Each year my 2nd graders make great gains in their reading, and the R.E.A.D. program is a huge contributor to their success. Knowing my emerging readers are receiving this sort of weekly, quality attention in addition to our in-class studies, helps me enormously as a teacher, and provides the student's positive associations with reading that only these unconditionally loving, furry friends can provide! ”*