



# R.E.A.D.® **ON!**

Continuing Education for R.E.A.D. Teams

VOL. VIII ~ No. 7

July 2023

## Letter Dog Treats Inspired by R.E.A.D.

**This incredibly fun item missed the June issue by just one day:**

Our R.E.A.D. team in the Netherlands, Saskia DeGroot Korsten with Luna (Bernese Mt. Dog), Pippa (Bernedoodle), Balou & Lola (Old Eng. Sheepdogs), managed to inspire the owner of the Boxby dog treat company to support her R.E.A.D. programs! How cool is that?

She just told us, "Boxby has launched the letter treats! "The AAI-maatje Foundation has been providing the Reading Education Assistance Dogs® (R.E.A.D.®) project in the Netherlands since 2019. The Lettergame snacks will help us extra during our reading sessions, but also because Boxby gives us a donation for every Lettergame box sold. This will allow us to help even more children with reading support from a four-legged Aai-mate, the reading dog!!! So hurry to the store and check out <https://www.readnederland.nl/letter-games> for fun interactive games."

Congratulations and thanks to Saskia! We are bummed that these are not available in the U.S., but hey, we're still thrilled!



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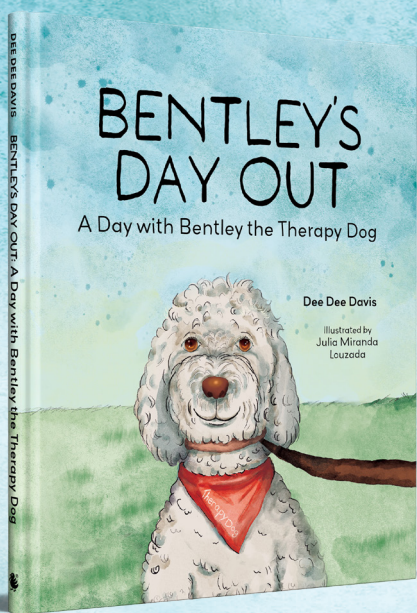
# Another Great Book About Therapy Dogs<sup>2</sup>

**W**e have a whole lot of amazing people in our world of animal-assisted interactions! Dee Dee Davis has been a R.E.A.D. member since 2015, as well as a member of our affiliate, MidSouth Therapy Dogs in Memphis, TN. She has written a lovely new kids' book about her partner, Bentley, and all the various things he does as a therapy dog. We haven't seen anyone else describe our "jobs" in such perfect and helpful detail.

What's more, *Dee Dee is donating 100% of the proceeds of Bentley's book to the R.E.A.D.® program which they love so much.*

This story could be great fun and education for *all* kids, not just those in the R.E.A.D. program. Think about it for the "kids" in your own life—no matter their age—and it could go a long way toward "explaining" therapy dogs to the vast, confused public!

Huge thanks to Dee Dee and Bentley for their talent, creativity and generosity!



**BENTLEY'S DAY OUT**  
A Day with Bentley the Therapy Dog

Dee Dee Davis  
Illustrated by  
Julia Miranda  
Louzada


**\$18.95 us**  
**/25.95 CAN**

**ISBN: 9781637555293**

**Ever wonder how a therapy dog makes kids smile?  
Spend the day with me, Bentley the Therapy Dog!**

If you are feeling sick or mad or lonely, I can cheer you up. Want to know what I did to become a therapy dog? Come along with me and meet the special people I've encountered during my day out, and how it all began! Everyone is filled with hope when they experience the special bond between humans and animals.

This special book teaches children the role of therapy dogs, the difference between therapy and service dogs, environments where a therapy dog visits, and how therapy dogs enhance the human-animal bond.

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Bentley's book will be out on September 12, but it can be pre-ordered now on Amazon. Here is the link:

<http://amzn.to/42yuFaO>

# ... And Don't Forget About Buster!

**Christina Pellegrino** in Cedar Grove, NJ is R.E.A.D. team #6376 with her sweet partner, **Buster**. They've been with us since September 2019, and Christina is the proud author of two published books featuring Buster, which are also available on Amazon and which we highly recommend.

You recently helped Christina be able to achieve the minimum number of 100, so they could produce stuffed "Busters."

Here is Buster posing with his books and his plush namesake, and below celebrating his birthday with Christina!



## New Book Ideas: <sup>3</sup> Children & Nature

In late June, Margaret Renkl, who lives in Nashville and writes beautifully on nature for *The New York Times*, named a slew of brand new children's books that celebrate the natural world.

While, as she points out, only one of our 50 United States—New Jersey—includes climate change in the curriculum for all kids K through 12, Renkl nevertheless holds out hope that it is the children who will care enough to make a difference for our planet.

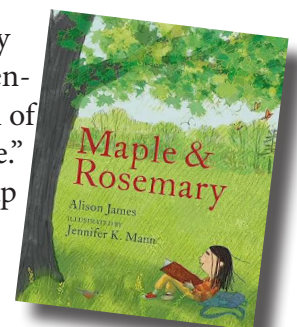
Following are her comments about six of the books she recommends:



Here's a story about the pleasure of being in community with the nonhuman world. "The City Tree," written by Shira Boss and illustrated by Lorena Alvarez, describes the way life changes for

the better when city workers plant a tree in front of a child's building. Where once there was only the rumbling of garbage trucks, for instance, now there is birdsong. "The city clanged and snorted and roared ... the tree rustled and swished and soothed," writes Ms. Boss. At the end of the book, she includes four pages of information about how urban trees help people and how people can help trees.

"Maple and Rosemary," written by Alison James and illustrated by Jennifer K. Mann, is a subtle reversal of Shel Silverstein's "The Giving Tree." Mr. Silverstein's little boy grows up to be a man who takes and takes from his pathologically generous tree friend, but Ms. James's little girl grows up to be a woman who understands not just what the tree provides but also what it needs. As it is in any ecosystem, their relationship is reciprocal.



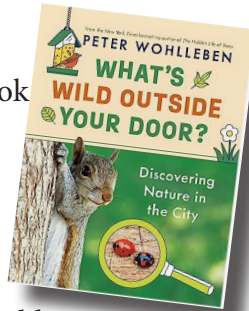
I am partial to stories as a vehicle for inspiring change, but many children respond best to facts. (At story time, the son of one of my friends would say impatiently, "I want information.") For those children, there are plenty of nature-specific titles, too.

(Cont. next page)

## Children's New Books Celebrating the Natural World (cont.)

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I especially loved Peter Wohlleben's "What's Wild Outside Your Door?" and Dan Rouse's "The Children's Book of Birdwatching." Both are lavishly illustrated with nature photographs and stocked with suggestions that invite kids to investigate their own



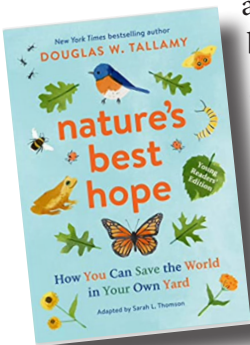
ecosystems and help their own wild neighbors. Children will inevitably worry about the safety of what's wild outside their doors, but these books teach them how to help.



This is the message, too, of the new middle-grade edition

of Douglas W. Tallamy's "Nature's Best Hope,"

a best-selling approach to conservation that begins at home. "Over the years, human beings have shown that we're very good at destroying habitats. Now we have to show that we're smart enough and thoughtful enough and caring enough to restore what we have ruined," Mr. Tallamy tells young readers. "I believe we can do it, if you help."



My favorite picture books are the ones that include the whimsy of imaginative storytelling with the information children need to understand what is happening to their planet — all in ways that empower rather than terrify.

One of the best new books in this genre is "One World," written by Nicola Davies and illustrated by Jenni Desmond. Beginning at one minute before midnight and traveling across the globe hour by hour, the book follows two children as they fly around the planet. At each stop on this fantastical journey, they learn about animal species imperiled by habitat degradation, a heating climate, human predation and the like. Miraculously, this is not a sad book. Ms. Desmond's magical illustrations are cheerful and bright, and Ms. Davies takes care to explain how all is not yet lost for these creatures, that we can still save them.



This is all crucial information for children who live in a country where only one state — New Jersey — includes the study of climate change at all grade levels, and where the science standards for middle-school students in more than 40 states include only a single reference to climate change. In hurricane-plagued Florida, middle-school science standards make no reference to climate change at all.

As I read those books, it dawned on me that picture-book authors and illustrators are laying the groundwork for a better climate future by tapping into children's inborn compassion, curiosity and sense of justice. These books explain how important it is for everyone to help, kids included, and they give the adults no place to hide. If a child can care so much, shouldn't we care, too?

— Margaret Renkle