



The Shadow Project

Media Alert Valentine's Day Story

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SHADOW DAY COMBINES KIDS WITH DOGS AND BOOKS

WHAT: On *Shadow Day*, a celebration of The Shadow Project's 15th anniversary as a nonprofit, and in honor of our mascot on her Valentine's Day birthday, we are collaborating with Columbia River Pet Partners to bring local dog "Molly" into the classroom so kids who struggle with literacy can find courage in reading aloud.

WHEN: Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2018, 10 to 11 a.m.
There is no formal program; reporters may drop in as available during this time frame

WHERE: Sitton Elementary School, 9930 N. Smith Street, 97203. Please sign in at the office and come to room 3.

BACKGROUND: Many children with learning challenges like dyslexia and ADHD, or kids with anxiety are afraid to read out loud in front of their peers for fear of ridicule. That's one reason why students with learning challenges are often one- to three levels behind in reading. Educators say that dogs make great reading partners because they can encourage students with a gentle nudge to keep going, or strategically place a paw to offer support and enhance focus. Dogs also have a calming effect that can reduce anxiety, and their quiet presence boosts confidence, courage ... and reading comprehension.

**BITES/
VISUALS:** Kids and dogs! Four Sitton children in special education who struggle to read will take turns sitting comfortably in the brightly colored SuperSensory Literacy Space bean bag chairs to show their growth mindset (perseverance at a challenging task) by reading aloud to Shadow friend "Molly" from their favorite book. The four students are available for questions, as is their teacher, Mande Bish, and Shadow Project founder/executive director Christy Scattarella.

The Shadow Project (shadow-project.org) is a Portland nonprofit that makes school more accessible and engaging for students with learning challenges so they can achieve their full potential.

Columbia River Pet Partners (columbiariverpetpartners.org) is a therapy animal group promoting health and happiness through visits to a wide variety of facilities.