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Teachers Invited to Enhance Classroom through Grant Program

The Pets in the Classroom grant program provides teachers with funding to enhance their classroom through small animal pets.

As teachers look for new ways to bring excitement and growth to the classroom, the Pets in the Classroom grant program is prepared to help by providing teachers with an important tool that can increase student engagement while also providing educational, social and emotional benefits: classroom pets.

The Pet Care Trust's Pets in the Classroom grant program provides grants to Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade teachers in both private and public schools for the purpose of purchasing and maintaining classroom pets. Classroom animals are wonderful resources for teachers that, when incorporated into lesson plans, can make learning fun in any subject.

According to a study conducted by the American Humane Association and Pet Care Trust, teachers see classroom pets as having real educational, leadership and character-building value. The study's findings indicate that teachers view both the uses and benefits of classroom pets as primarily centering around six objectives:

- To teach children responsibility and leadership via animal care.
- To teach children compassion, empathy and respect for all living things, including animals, humans, nature, and the world we share.
- To enhance and enrich a variety of traditional academic lessons, from science to language arts.
- To provide an avenue for relaxation when children are stressed or when their behavior is unstable and/or challenging to manage (for both typically developing children and those with special needs).
- To help students feel comfortable and engaged in the classroom and with their peers, so that the school environment is more conducive to quality learning, growth, and social connections.
- To expose students to new experiences and opportunities (particularly for those who do not have pets of their own), which may translate to a decrease in unfounded fears and biases among children.

The research corroborates the experience of many teachers who have shared stories of academic, social, and emotional improvements in their students due to their classroom pets.

Because many school teachers have very limited resources for the support of classroom animals, the Pet Care Trust began supporting teachers with this educational grant program in 2010. The grant program has awarded over 70,000 grants to teachers and brought a pet into the lives of more than 3 million children. With a goal of introducing 5 million children in 100,000 classrooms to pets and the benefits they provide, the Pet Care Trust hopes to help teachers impact future generations through its grant program.

For more information on the Pets in the Classroom grant program, visit www.PetsintheClassroom.org.