Greetings!

Thank you for hosting an interactive event inspired by the remarkable picture book *Rescue and Jessica: A Life-Saving Friendship*. This illuminating book about life with a Service Dog encourages us to think about how other people experience the world differently.

Like Rescue and Jessica, people and dogs can form incredible and enduring partnerships and learn how to get through everyday challenges together. Their inspiring story demonstrates that hard work and persistence can overcome even the toughest challenges.

This kit provides you with prompts for group discussions about understanding individuals with disabilities and the roles and talents of Service Dogs. The included activities will help build your participants’ compassion and empathy while they learn about inclusion and community.

We are grateful that you’re sharing this important story, helping to demystify physical disabilities and grow empathy in young readers.
Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean for someone to have a disability? What types of disabilities exist? Why is it important to understand different types of disabling conditions?

2. Why is it important to ask someone if they want assistance before providing help? What are other ways that you can respect an individual’s independence? How do you know if you are giving too much help to someone? What are the signs?

3. Can you think of another book that you have read about an individual that has a disability? How is the character similar to and/or different from Jessica? What important message or central theme do you learn in both books?

4. How did Rescue’s training help prepare him to become a Service Dog? What was his daily life like during training? What was Rescue’s daily life like with Jessica?

5. What were some of the ways that Jessica and Rescue communicated with each other? How did Rescue show Jessica that he understood her physical and emotional needs? How did Jessica show Rescue that she understood him?

6. Jessica encountered many challenges throughout the story. What were Jessica’s visible and invisible struggles? How did she overcome those obstacles as the story progressed? How did Jessica change throughout the story? What caused her to change emotionally and physically?

7. Why is it important to support everyone in a community? How can your community be supportive of someone who is experiencing physical or emotional challenges? Can you think of a time you provided someone in your community with support?
Activities

Check Your Space
Take an interactive walk with your patrons around the bookstore or library that includes brainstorming ideas, discussion, and asking questions. As you walk, note the structures that provide access for an individual with a physical disability like Jessica and the things that might be challenging for that person. Have everyone sketch the space. After the walk, discuss ways to make the bookstore or library more accessible without sacrificing what is already accessible. Then have people sketch their ideas. The new designs should show upgraded navigation and ease of access within the environment.

Pets Are Important Family Members
Assistance animals are special, highly trained animals, yet every pet is meant to be a working pet in its own way. Create books that describe the ways pets improve our lives and families. The book should follow the order below:

Page 1: Book cover and title
Page 2: Illustration and description of how Jessica and Rescue work together
Page 3: Illustration and description of how your pet or a pet you know improves someone’s life
Page 4: Conclusion: Explain why animals/pets are an important part of our lives

Reading Around the Community
Partner with a retirement home, nursing home, veterans hospital, or veterans organization to read to residents. Invite patrons to read Rescue and Jessica: A Life-Changing Friendship aloud and share other favorite books to read aloud and discuss during the visit.
**Activities**

### No-Bake Treat

In the book, Jessica did many things to care for Rescue. Host a pet treat party. Use the steps below to make delicious, healthy snacks for your canine patrons.

Note: Remind patrons that it is never acceptable to feed a dog without the owner’s permission and that it is best to speak with a veterinarian before introducing new foods into a dog’s diet.

#### Ingredients

- ¾ cup organic no-sugar-added applesauce
- ½ cup nonfat organic Greek yogurt
- Extra: Grated carrot (a favorite of Rescue’s!)
- 1 small muffin tray (or egg cartons that can be easily taken home)

#### Directions

1. Mix 2 tablespoons of applesauce with 1 tablespoon of Greek yogurt and some grated carrot.
2. Place the mixture in the muffin tray/egg carton.
3. Repeat until all the ingredients are used up.
4. Freeze for one hour and then store in refrigerator.

### Thank-You Card

Make copies of the card template on the next page. Ask patrons to write why they believe the role of assistance animals or trainers is important, how it improves the lives of others, and why it is inspirational. Encourage participants to sign and decorate their cards.

Gather the cards in a large mailing envelope and send them to:

NEADS
P.O. Box 1100
Princeton, MA 01541

#### Materials

- copies of card template
- pens and pencils
- crayons and/or markers for decorating and coloring
- large mailing envelope and postage
THANK YOU
Activities

Service Dog or Police Dog (K-9) Visit

Invite a local assistance dog trainer or K-9 police officer to visit your store or library to demonstrate a dog’s special abilities and build community awareness.

Before the visit: Contact the trainer or local police department and inquire about planning a visit. Depending on the trainer or department policies, they may be able to speak about the dog’s special job requirements, ongoing training, skills, equipment, and appropriate interaction. In preparation for the visit, have patrons read Rescue and Jessica: A Life-Changing Friendship and generate a list of questions for the special visitor. Finally, discuss dog safety and assign appropriate locations for patrons to view the dog.

During the visit: Remind patrons about the participation expectations regarding dog safety. Depending on the group size and your timing, consider arranging a simultaneous activity so a smaller number of patrons can pose their questions easily.

After the visit: Write a thank-you letter to the visitors for sharing their time and information. Have your patrons add things they learned during the visit.

Rescue Read-Aloud

There are organizations dedicated to improving reading outcomes by having children read aloud to dogs, such as Reading with Rover and SitStayRead. Many reluctant readers feel more confident reading aloud to a dog than another student or adult. Invite a dog to your store or library and let patrons know when they can come read to your visitor.

This guide was written by Dawn Jacobs Martin, an assistant professor of special education who works to improve student academic outcomes through teacher development, instructional design, and research in the areas of response to intervention, and social support.