



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, Barrie, ON January 10, 2012**

C.O.P.E.'s Reading Buddy and Canines in the Classroom programs will be the recipient of proceeds from the Gryphon Guild's 2011 Author's Night, when a cheque from that evening's presentation of award winning authors is presented on January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012, by President Marilyn Harris.

"Gryphon Guild has decided to donate the profits from our annual Author's Night to different community charities each time. We chose C.O.P.E. Service Dogs as our first charity as we were drawn to its educational role, especially at the elementary and high school levels. We are also currently partnering with the Simcoe County District School Board on another initiative as part of our future plans," said Harris.

The presentation will take place during C.O.P.E.'s Reading Buddy session at Goodfellow Public School next Friday, at 12:30 p.m. Jane Boake, C.O.P.E. founder and Canines in the Classroom instructor will lead her class of high school student trainers of C.O.P.E. service dogs-in-training, and their canine partners as they work with elementary school students, helping to enhance the motivation to read in younger students.

"Our program helps high school students in Simcoe County develop leadership and employability skills as they learn to train service dogs. An important part of Canines in the Classroom is to improve literacy levels among our student trainers, and to help foster interest and motivation to read in the elementary students who take part in our Reading Buddy program," says Boake. "These children are among the more than 40 people whose lives are positively affected by a single service dog, even before they begin supporting a life partner with disabilities."

The goal of the program is to motivate children to read in a positive environment, before lack of reading skills closes doors to future learning. Elementary students, who otherwise may not read aloud in front of their peers or teachers, feel more comfortable reading to a service dog-in-training. The program allows them to practice and develop reading skills that build confidence along with literacy skills. The Reading Buddy program also helps to develop leadership skills in high school trainers who work with the elementary students.

"Our service dogs in training make a huge difference in the lives of our students", said Jean Hargreaves, Principal of Program K-12, Simcoe County District School Board. "While people know C.O.P.E. for raising and training service dogs for people with disabilities, the Canines in the Classroom Program helps our students gain confidence and skills. We have seen remarkable results in improved student attendance, increased grades as well as an overall improvement in learning skills."

Event Details:

Date: Friday, January 13, 2012

Time: 12:30 p.m. – 12:55 p.m.

Location: Goodfellow Public School, 827 9<sup>th</sup> Line, Innisfil, L9S 1A6

For further information, please contact:

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About C.O.P.E. Service Dogs

C.O.P.E. programs utilize community resources to impact multiple areas of need.

Through the training of special service dogs, C.O.P.E. engages and creates positive change in the lives of youth, children and people with disabilities. Life partners experience enhanced quality of life through the support and companionship their service dogs offer. Students learn employability skills, experience increased confidence, and are motivated to be successful in school. Through therapy visits to senior`s homes and hospitals, and work with elementary students struggling with reading, C.O.P.E. Service Dogs empower many people throughout their lives. C.O.P.E. is a registered charity and all donations are tax-deductible. <http://www.copedogs.org/>