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**A Discussion and Activity Guide For**  
**Teachers, Librarians, and Parents**

**Extraordinary Dogs**

**Stories From Search and Rescue Dogs, Comfort Dogs,  
and Other Canine Heroes**

Photographs By Liz Stavrinides

Essays By John Schlimm

St. Martin's Press

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# **Table of Contents**

<b>Introduction: Using <i>Extraordinary Dogs</i> in the Classroom, Library, or at Home</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Kindergarten to Second Grade: Lessons</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Third to Fifth Grade: Lessons</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Sixth to Eighth Grade: Lessons</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Ninth to Twelfth Grade: Lessons</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>College: Lessons</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Book Club Discussion Questions</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>The Organizations in <i>Extraordinary Dogs</i></b>	<b>32</b>
<b>About the Author</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>About the Photographer</b>	<b>33</b>

# **Introduction:**

## **Using *Extraordinary Dogs***

### **in the Classroom, Library, or at Home**

*Extraordinary Dogs* portrays more than 50 working dogs, along with the police officers, firefighters, veterans, and other trained volunteer handlers who serve side-by-side with them. Their moving stories and beautiful photographs are an unprecedented glimpse at Comfort Dogs and Search and Rescue Dogs, along with bomb-detecting TSA dogs and canine ambassadors from across the United States.

Read individually or collectively, among the 40 essays in *Extraordinary Dogs* there are several natural launching points for discussions and activities in the classroom, library, and at home with children and young adults—kindergarten to college level—about the numerous questions and topics we all confront in our lives every day. From personal and headlining national tragedies, trauma, and healing to love, hope, courage, compassion, service, advocacy, faith, connection, mental wellness, leadership, and heroism, the following suggested discussions and activities will allow you—as a teacher, librarian, or parent—to actively engage and inspire children and young adults across multiple academic subjects and curriculums with the stories shared throughout the book.

The following lessons are divided by grade levels and focus on several timely topics: heroism and leadership; feelings, emotions, and mental wellness; helping others by answering calls to action; exploring how inspiring and motivational concepts like compassion, hope, and advocacy apply to our everyday lives; and working together as a team. These discussions and activities, and *Extraordinary Dogs* itself, are meant to be resources that you can tweak and tailor to your specific grade level, subject, and curriculum as needed.

As an educator, it is always my goal to do everything I can to help young people find and use their voices and recognize their natural talents, while also supporting the tireless efforts of teachers, librarians, and parents everywhere who are literally shaping the future each day. And for this particular journey, we get to have fifty of the best furry, four-legged teachers to assist us!

~ John Schlimm

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# **Kindergarten to Second Grade**

For each discussion or activity below, read one or more of the essays of your choice from *Extraordinary Dogs* to the students.

## **Lesson 1:**

### **What is a hero? What is a leader?**

The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* are heroes and leaders in many ways.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What does the word hero mean?
2. Can you name some heroes?
3. What is a leader?
4. How is a hero also a leader?
5. In what ways are the dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* each a hero and a leader?
6. In what ways can you be a hero?
7. In what ways can you be a leader?

#### Activities:

1. Have the students use their imagination and creativity to describe or draw a picture of what they think a superhero dog looks like.
2. Invite a local first responder and their dog to visit your classroom.

## **Lesson 2:**

### **Happy Dogs, Happy People**

The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* help bring happiness and healing to people.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to be happy or sad?
2. Can you name some other feelings or emotions?
3. What does the word heal mean?
4. In what ways did the dogs in *Extraordinary Dogs* help people to be happy or heal?
5. Do you have a dog or other pet? If so, how do they make you feel?
6. How can you help to make people happy today?

#### Activities:

1. Have students draw a picture of themselves with a dog, showing how the dog makes them feel.
2. Have the students research online (including on the organizations' websites on Page 32) or in print resources for pictures of dogs who appear to express various feelings and emotions, and then discuss those pictures and respective feelings and emotions in class. Or, show the students the photographs in *Extraordinary Dogs* and ask them to express how the photographs make them feel.

## **Lesson 3:**

### **Helping Others**

The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* help people in many different ways.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to help others?
2. In what ways are the dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* helping people?
3. In what ways have you helped other people in your life?
4. What is something you can do today to help other people?

#### Activities:

1. Have the students each draw a picture of a dog who is helping someone.
2. Have the students research online (including on the organizations' websites on Page 32) or in print resources for pictures of dogs helping people, and then present the photos to the class.

## **Lesson 4:**

### **Words to Bark About**

#### Vocabulary words for discussion:

Love

Hope

Joy

Compassion

Courage

Hero

Help

Heal

Service

Faith

Community

Team

Volunteer

Extraordinary

Leadership

Advocacy

Call to action

#### Activities:

1. Have each student choose one of the dogs or handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* and create a card for them. The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* can each be reached using the addresses referenced on Page 32. Or, create cards for the dogs at your local animal shelter, or local service dogs, police dogs, search and rescue dogs, or another special dog.
2. Have the students each choose one of these vocabulary words and create a collage or other multi-media piece depicting what the word means to them.



## **Lesson 5:**

### **Team Players**

The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* are part of many teams who work together.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to be part of a team?
2. How many different examples of teams can you name?
3. What teams, or groups, are you a part of?
4. In what ways are the dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* part of a team or teams?
5. What did you learn from the dogs and handlers about being a team player?
6. What talents or attributes do you have to contribute to a team?
7. Why is it important to work together with other people?

#### Activities:

1. As a class, create a list of all the ways people work together or can work together. Then have each student either choose one example and draw a picture depicting it, or have each student draw a picture of what they think a team looks like.

2. As a class, create a Participatory Art piece. On a large sheet of paper or canvas, have each student draw something. By the end, all of the students' contributions will create one final art piece that is unique and could only have been created by them as a team. Once finished, as a class, discuss the art piece with the students.

Or, use a specific theme, such as a flower garden, a galaxy of stars, or a town. Give each student a piece of paper and ask them to draw a specific object, such as a flower, a star, or a house/building/street. Then have the students pass their papers to other students who will draw another flower, star, or house/building/street, depending on which theme you are using. Do this until every student has drawn (and colored in) something on every piece of paper, creating unique flower gardens, galaxies of stars, or towns.

# **Third to Fifth Grade**

For each discussion or activity below, read one or more of the essays of your choice from *Extraordinary Dogs* to the students.

## **Lesson 1:**

### **What is a hero? What is a leader?**

The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* are heroes and leaders in many ways.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What does the word hero mean?
2. Can you name some heroes?
3. What is a leader?
4. How is a hero also a leader?
5. In what ways are the dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* each a hero and a leader?
6. In what ways can you be a hero?
7. In what ways can you be a leader?

#### Activities:

1. Have the students use their imagination and creativity to describe or draw a picture of what they think a superhero dog looks like.
2. Invite a local first responder and their dog to visit your classroom.

## **Lesson 2:**

### **Happy Dogs, Happy People**

The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* help bring happiness and healing to people.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to be happy or sad?
2. Can you name some other feelings or emotions?
3. What does the word heal mean?
4. In what ways did the dogs in *Extraordinary Dogs* help people to be happy or heal?
5. Do you have a dog or other pet? If so, how do they make you feel?
6. How can you help to make people happy today?

#### Activities:

1. Have the students each draw a picture of themselves with a dog, showing how the dog makes them feel.
2. Have the students research online (including on the organizations' websites on Page 32) or in print resources for pictures of dogs who appear to express various feelings and emotions, and then discuss those pictures and respective feelings and emotions in class. Or, show the students the photographs in *Extraordinary Dogs* and ask them to express how the photographs make them feel.

## **Lesson 3:**

### **Helping Others**

The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* help people in many different ways.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to help others?
2. In what ways are the dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* helping people?
3. In what ways have you helped other people in your life?
4. What is something you can do today to help other people?

#### Activities:

1. Have the students each draw a picture of a dog who is helping someone.
2. Have the students research online (including on the organizations' websites on Page 32) or in print resources for pictures of dogs helping people, and then present the photos to the class.

## **Lesson 4:**

### **Words to Bark About**

#### Vocabulary words for discussion:

Love

Hope

Joy

Compassion

Courage

Hero

Help

Heal

Service

Faith

Community

Team

Volunteer

Extraordinary

Leadership

Advocacy

Call to action

#### Activities:

1. Have each student choose one of the dogs or handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* and either write a letter to them or create a card for them, using some of the vocabulary words in this section. The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* can each be reached using the addresses referenced on Page 32. Or, create cards for the dogs at your local animal shelter, or local service dogs, police dogs, search and rescue dogs, or another special dog.
2. Have the students each choose one of these vocabulary words and create a collage or other multi-media piece depicting what the word means to them.

## **Lesson 5:**

### **Team Players**

The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* are part of many teams who work together.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to be part of a team?
2. How many different examples of teams can you name?
3. What teams, or groups, are you a part of?
4. In what ways are the dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* part of a team or teams?
5. What did you learn from the dogs and handlers about being a team player?
6. What talents or attributes do you have to contribute to a team?
7. Why is it important to work together with other people?

#### Activities:

1. As a class, create a list of all the ways people work together or can work together. Then have each student choose one example and draw a picture depicting it.
2. As a class, create a Participatory Art piece. On a large sheet of paper or canvas, have each student draw something. By the end, all of the students' contributions will create one final art piece that is unique and could only have been created by them as a team. Once finished, as a class, discuss the art piece with the students.

Or, use a specific theme, such as a flower garden, a galaxy of stars, or a town. Give each student a piece of paper and ask them to draw a specific object, such as a flower, a star, or a house/building/street. Then have the students pass their papers to other students who will draw another flower, star, or house/building/street, depending on which theme you are using. Do this until every student has drawn (and colored in) something on every piece of paper, creating unique flower gardens, galaxies of stars, or towns.

# **Sixth to Eighth Grade**

For each discussion or activity below, either read one or more of the essays of your choice from *Extraordinary Dogs* to the students or have the students read an essay(s).

## **Lesson 1:**

### **What is a hero? What is a leader?**

The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* are heroes and leaders in many ways.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What does the word hero mean?
2. Can you name some heroes—both famous heroes and more local heroes?
3. What is a leader?
4. How is a hero also a leader?
5. In what ways are the dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* each a hero and a leader?
6. In what ways can you be a hero—in school, at home, in your community, in the country, and in the world?
7. In what ways can you be a leader—in school, at home, in your community, in the country, and in the world?

#### Activities:

1. Using print and online resources, have the students create a collage of images and words that depict heroes and heroism, and leaders and leadership.
2. Invite a local first responder and their dog to visit your classroom.

## **Lesson 2:**

### **Happy Dogs, Happy People**

The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* help bring happiness and healing to people.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to be happy or sad?
2. What are some other feelings or emotions that young people your age have, and why?
3. What are the many meanings for the word heal?
4. In what ways did the dogs in *Extraordinary Dogs* help people, and how did that make those people feel?
5. Do you have a dog or other pet? If so, how do they make you feel?
6. How can you help to make people happy today?

#### Activities:

1. Draw a picture of yourself with a dog, and show how the dog makes you feel, or write a paragraph sharing a story about how a dog or other animal has made you feel better.
2. Have each student identify three to five different feelings or emotions, and then draw or otherwise create dog emojis to depict those feelings or emotions. Or, show the students the photographs in *Extraordinary Dogs* and ask them to express how the photographs make them feel.



## **Lesson 3:**

### **Call to Action**

The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* help people in many different ways.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What does call to action mean?
2. How are the dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* answering a call to action?
3. In what ways have you answered a call to action or helped other people in your life?
4. What is something you can do today to help other people?

#### Activities:

1. In groups or individually, have the students choose one of the organizations from *Extraordinary Dogs*, which are listed along with websites on Page 32, to research. Using the websites, essays from the book, and any other resources, have the students research the organizations and then present their findings to the class in a format of your choosing.
2. Have the students research online (including on the organizations' websites on Page 32) or in print resources for stories about dogs helping people, and then present their findings to the class.

## **Lesson 4:**

### **Words to Bark About**

#### Vocabulary words for discussion:

Love

Hope

Joy

Compassion

Courage

Hero

Help

Heal

Service

Faith

Community

Team

Volunteer

Extraordinary

Leadership

Advocacy

Call to action

#### Activities:

1. Have students each choose one of the dogs or handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* and write a letter to them using some of the vocabulary words in this section. The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* can each be reached using the addresses referenced on Page 32. Or, have the students each write a letter to the dogs at a local animal shelter, or local service dogs, police dogs, search and rescue dogs, or another special dog.

2. Have the students each choose one of these vocabulary words and either write a personal reflection or create a collage that expresses what the word means to them.

## **Lesson 5:**

### **Team Players**

The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* are part of many teams who work together.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to be part of a team?
2. How many different examples of teams can you name?
3. What teams, or groups, are you a part of?
4. In what ways are the dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* part of a team or teams?
5. What did you learn from the dogs and handlers about being a team player?
6. What talents or attributes do you have to contribute to a team?
7. Why is it important to work together with other people?

#### Activities:

1. Divide the class into groups of five to seven students. Have the groups discuss the following questions, and then present their collective findings to the class as a group.

What do you like and dislike about working in a team?

What does it mean to compromise?

Why is compromise important when you are part of a team?

How should a team leader be chosen?

How should your role in a team be defined?

How have teams had a positive effect at school, in the community, and in the country?

2. As a class, create a Participatory Art piece. On a large sheet of paper or canvas, have each student draw something. By the end, all of the students' contributions will create one final art piece that is unique and could only have been created by them as a team. Once finished, as a class, discuss the art piece with the students.

# **Ninth to Twelfth Grade**

For each discussion or activity below, either read one or more of the essays of your choice from *Extraordinary Dogs* to the students or have the students read an essay(s).

## **Lesson 1:**

### **What is a hero? What is a leader?**

The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* are heroes and leaders in many ways.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What does the word hero mean?
2. Can you name some heroes—both famous heroes and more local heroes?
3. What is a leader?
4. How is a hero also a leader?
5. In what ways are the dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* each a hero and a leader?
6. In what ways can you be a hero—in school, at home, in your community, in the country, and in the world?
7. In what ways can you be a leader—in school, at home, in your community, in the country, and in the world?

#### Activities:

1. Have each student identify a hero and/or a leader in your school or community. In either a brief essay or a multi-media work, have the students explain or depict why those individuals are heroes/leaders to them.
2. Invite a local first responder and their dog to visit your classroom.

## **Lesson 2:**

### **Happy Dogs, Happy People**

The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* help bring happiness and healing to people.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to be happy or sad?
2. What are some other feelings or emotions that young people your age have, and why?
3. What are the many meanings for the word heal?
4. In what ways did the dogs in *Extraordinary Dogs* help people, and how did that make those people feel?
5. Do you have a dog or other pet? If so, how do they make you feel?
6. How can you help to make people happy today?

#### Activities:

1. Have each student identify a dog in their life or one they find through research. In either a brief essay or a multi-media work (such as a meme, video, PowerPoint, drawing, sculpture, collage, or performance piece they create), have the students explain or depict why those dogs make them laugh or happy, or generally feel good.
2. Have each student identify three to five different feelings or emotions, and then draw or otherwise create dog emojis or memes to depict those feelings or emotions. Or, ask each student to take selfies of themselves acting out those various emotions. Then as a class, discuss the images.

## **Lesson 3:**

### **Call to Action**

The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* help people in many different ways.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What does call to action mean?
2. How are the dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* answering a call to action?
3. In what ways have you answered a call to action in your life?
4. What causes are you passionate about, and how can you impact those causes right now?

#### Activities:

1. In groups or individually, have the students choose one of the organizations from *Extraordinary Dogs*, which are listed along with websites on Page 32, to research. Using the websites, essays from the book, and any other resources, have the students research the organizations and then present their findings to the class in a format of your choosing.
2. Ask each student to commit to exploring a service activity at school or in the community. Brainstorm a list of the possible activities they can maybe do. Once the student fulfills the call-to-action service activity, have them either write a brief essay or deliver a brief presentation about the experience.

## **Lesson 4:**

### **Words to Bark About**

#### Vocabulary words for discussion:

Love

Hope

Joy

Compassion

Courage

Hero

Help

Heal

Service

Faith

Community

Team

Volunteer

Extraordinary

Leadership

Advocacy

Call to action

#### Activities:

1. Have students each choose one of the dogs or handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* and write a letter to them using some of the vocabulary words in this section. The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* can each be reached using the addresses referenced on Page 32. Or, have the students each write a letter to the dogs at a local animal shelter, or local service dogs, police dogs, search and rescue dogs, or another special dog.

2. Have the students each choose one of these vocabulary words and either write a personal reflection or create a collage that expresses what the word means to them.

## **Lesson 5:**

### **Team Players**

The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* are part of many teams who work together.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to be part of a team?
2. How many different examples of teams can you name?
3. What teams, or groups, are you a part of?
4. In what ways are the dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* part of a team or teams?
5. What did you learn from the dogs and handlers about being a team player?
6. What talents or attributes do you have to contribute to a team?
7. Why is it important to work together with other people?

#### Activities:

1. Divide the class into groups of five to seven students. Have the groups discuss the following questions, and then present their collective findings to the class as a group.

What do you like and dislike about working in a team?

What does it mean to compromise?

Why is compromise important when you are part of a team?

How should a team leader be chosen?

How should your role in a team be defined?

How have teams had a positive effect at school, in the community, and in the country?

2. Divide the class into groups of five to seven students. Have the students pretend they are reality show producers. Their goal is to develop a reality show that would be filmed at the school and would be about people and dogs doing positive things for the community. Have each group then present their reality show concept to the class.



# **College**

For each discussion or activity below, either read one or more of the essays of your choice from *Extraordinary Dogs* to the students or have the students read an essay(s).

## **Lesson 1:**

### **What is a hero? What is a leader?**

The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* are heroes and leaders in many ways.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. In today's world, what does the word hero mean to you?
2. Can you name some heroes—both famous heroes and more local heroes?
3. What is a leader?
4. How is a hero also a leader?
5. In what ways are the dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* each a hero and a leader?
6. In what ways can you be a hero—on campus, at home, in your community, in the country, and in the world?
7. In what ways can you be a leader—on campus, at home, in your community, in the country, and in the world?

#### Activities:

1. Have each student identify a hero and/or a leader in their lives—famous or more personal. In either a brief essay or a multi-media work, have the students explain or depict why those individuals are heroes/leaders to them.
2. Invite a local first responder and their dog to visit your classroom.

## **Lesson 2:**

### **Happy Dogs, Happy People**

The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* help bring happiness and healing to people.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to you to be happy or sad?
2. What are some other feelings or emotions that young people your age have, and why?
3. What are the many meanings for the word heal?
4. In what ways did the dogs in *Extraordinary Dogs* help people, and how did that make those people feel?
5. Do you have a dog or other pet? If so, how do they make you feel?
6. How can you help to make people happy today?

#### Activities:

1. Have each student identify a dog in their life or one they find through research. In either a brief essay, poem, or a multi-media work (such as a meme, video, PowerPoint, drawing, sculpture, collage, or performance piece they create), have the students explain or depict why those dogs make them laugh or happy, or generally feel good.
2. Have each student identify three to five different feelings or emotions, and then draw or otherwise create dog emojis or memes to depict those feelings or emotions. Or, ask each student to take selfies of themselves acting out those various emotions. Then as a class, discuss the images.

## **Lesson 3:**

### **Call to Action**

The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* help people in many different ways.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What does call to action mean?
2. How are the dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* answering a call to action?
3. In what ways have you answered a call to action in your life?
4. What causes are you passionate about, and how can you impact those causes right now?

#### Activities:

1. Ask each student to commit to exploring a service activity on campus or in the community. Brainstorm a list of the possible activities they can maybe do. Once the student fulfills the call-to-action service activity, have them either write a brief essay or deliver a brief presentation about the experience.
  
2. In groups or individually, have the students choose one of the organizations from *Extraordinary Dogs*, which are listed along with websites on Page 32, to research. Using the websites, essays from the book, and any other resources, have the students research the organizations and then present their findings to the class in a format of your choosing.

## **Lesson 4:**

### **Words to Bark About**

#### Vocabulary words for discussion:

Love

Hope

Joy

Compassion

Courage

Hero

Help

Heal

Service

Faith

Community

Team

Volunteer

Extraordinary

Leadership

Advocacy

Call to action

#### Activities:

1. Have students each choose one of the dogs or handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* and write a letter to them using some of the vocabulary words and/or concepts above. The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* can each be reached using the addresses referenced on Page 32. Or, have the students each write a letter to the dogs at a local animal shelter, or local service dogs, police dogs, search and rescue dogs, or another special dog.
2. Have the students each choose one of these vocabulary words and either write a personal reflection or create a collage that expresses what the word means to them.

## **Lesson 5:**

### **Team Players**

The dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* are part of many teams who work together.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to be part of a team?
2. How many different examples of teams can you name?
3. What teams, or groups, are you a part of?
4. In what ways are the dogs and handlers in *Extraordinary Dogs* part of a team or teams?
5. What did you learn from the dogs and handlers about being a team player?
6. What talents or attributes do you have to contribute to a team?
7. Why is it important to work together with other people?

#### Activities:

1. Divide the class into groups of five to seven students. Have the groups discuss the following questions, and then present their collective findings to the class as a group.

What do you like and dislike about working in a team?

What does it mean to compromise?

Why is compromise important when you are part of a team?

How should a team leader be chosen?

How should your role in a team be defined?

How have teams had a positive effect on campus, in the community, and in the country?

2. Divide the class into groups of five to seven students. Have the students pretend they are reality show producers. Their goal is to develop a reality show that would be filmed on campus and would be about people and dogs doing positive things for the community. Have each group then present their reality show concept to the class.

# **Book Club Discussion Questions**

1. Which essay or story in *Extraordinary Dogs* inspired or impacted you the most? Please explain.
2. What is the greatest lesson you learned from the essays in *Extraordinary Dogs*?
3. In what ways did the stories in *Extraordinary Dogs* support or change the way you think about dogs or other animals?
4. Do you currently have, or have you ever had, a pet or other special animal in your life? If so, what lessons did you learn from them?
5. Every dog and handler in *Extraordinary Dogs* exemplifies courage and heroism in various ways. What were the most inspiring and impactful examples of courage and heroism to you personally within these essays? How did these stories affect your understanding of courage and heroism?
6. Many of the essays in *Extraordinary Dogs* take you behind the scenes of some of the country's biggest headlining tragedies and disasters. How did these first-hand accounts of the dogs and handlers impact the way you previously thought about these events?
7. What did the stories in *Extraordinary Dogs* teach you about the connection between people and dogs or other animals?
8. After reading the essays in *Extraordinary Dogs*, how have the meanings of the following words and emotions changed for you: Love, hope, joy, compassion, faith, healing, courage, hero, volunteer, and community service?

9. What did the essays in *Extraordinary Dogs* teach you about people and the human spirit?
10. What do you think it is about dogs that make them perfect for both working with *and* working to help people, whether it is as Search and Rescue dogs, TSA dogs, Comfort Dogs, service dogs, or as canine ambassadors?
11. After reading the essays in *Extraordinary Dogs*, how do you think your community could benefit from dogs? Or, are there ways in which dogs and other animals already impact your community in a positive way?
12. In what ways did the dogs portrayed in *Extraordinary Dogs* demonstrate that dogs and other animals can be good for our mind, body, and spirit?
13. In what ways is *Extraordinary Dogs* a call to action—locally, regionally, and nationally? How can you put this call to action into practice within your own life?
14. The majority of the handlers portrayed in *Extraordinary Dogs* are volunteers for the respective organizations. Are you a volunteer in some way? If so, where do you volunteer? How has volunteering affected you? After reading these stories, how has your idea of volunteering changed?
15. *Totally impossible question to answer, but here it goes:* Which dog in *Extraordinary Dogs* is your favorite, and why?

**BONUS:** Two sets of pages were left blank at the end of *Extraordinary Dogs* after the Acknowledgments section. John and Liz encourage you to now add photos of the extraordinary dogs in *your* life, along with a few words about how very special they are to you.

## **The Organizations in *Extraordinary Dogs***

To learn more about the organizations in *Extraordinary Dogs*, or to follow them on social media, please visit the following websites.

If you are having your students write to one of the dogs or handlers in the book, please use the dog's or handler's name in care of the most recent address listed on the organization's website below.

### **Lutheran Church Charities**

[www.LutheranChurchCharities.org](http://www.LutheranChurchCharities.org)

### **National Disaster Search Dog Foundation**

[www.SearchDogFoundation.org](http://www.SearchDogFoundation.org)

### **Puppy Prodigies**

[www.SurfDogRicochet.com](http://www.SurfDogRicochet.com)

### **Returning Soldier Initiative**

[www.ReturningSoldierInitiative.com](http://www.ReturningSoldierInitiative.com)

### **Search and Rescue Dogs of the United States**

[www.sardogsus.org](http://www.sardogsus.org)

### **Transportation Security Administration**

[www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov)

### **The Vanderpump Dog Foundation**

[www.VanderpumpDogs.org](http://www.VanderpumpDogs.org)



## **About the Author**

**John Schlimm** is a Harvard-trained educator, artist, activist, and the award-winning author of 18 previous books, including his memoir *Five Years in Heaven*. A longtime advocate for dogs and other causes, John is also the creator of the Participatory Art pieces *Planting COMPASSION* and *THE SMILE THAT CHANGED THE WORLD (is yours)*, which have been installed across the country. He has appeared on such national media outlets as *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, Bravo's *Watch What Happens Live*, Martha Stewart's *Everyday Living*, NPR, QVC, and *The Splendid Table*.

For more information about John, please visit: [www.JohnSchlimm.com](http://www.JohnSchlimm.com)

## **About the Photographer**

**Liz Stavrinides** is a critically-acclaimed photographer and author of *Miracle Dogs Rescue Stories*. Combining her passion for photography with her infinite love of dogs, Liz's uniquely creative style emanates from her lifelong pursuit of being a professional photographer. In addition to also photographing people, architecture, and interiors, Liz has particularly combined two of her greatest passions in life—her love for animals and photography—into a meaningful career. Unleashing her creative eye in the studio and on location, Liz exclusively uses FUJIFILM X/GFX Series cameras. Her work has been published and exhibited widely, including in *Modern Cat*, *Carmel Magazine*, *Pebble Beach–The Magazine*, *Coastal Canine*, and *FujiLove Magazine*.

For more information about Liz, please visit: [www.lovedogandco.com](http://www.lovedogandco.com)