Kind News helps students learn about animals and think critically about their responsibilities towards the wellbeing of others. The magazine encourages empathy and critical thinking in students and motivates students to take action to improve the lives of animals. Kind News uses articles and short features to introduce issues affecting animals, how to understand animal behavior and how to care for pets.

**Teacher Guide**

**RECOMMENDED FOR GRADES 3-6**

Happy Spring! In this issue we’ll learn about the myth of “teacup” pigs and what pet pigs need to be happy and healthy. We’ll meet an amazing young woman who is making a difference for bunnies, and check in with two rescued tigers.* We’ll also explore some cool science facts about composting and learn how dog and cat tongues are different.

Looking for more ways to help your students build connection?

Check out our empathy app, The Restricted Adventures of Raja, a bilingual, interactive series of book and game apps that includes questions and play-based learning that parents and educators can use to help children practice the three steps needed for empathy.

Visit RedRover.org/empathyapp for more information.

*We are sad to learn that one of the tigers, Misty, passed away in January.

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To learn about our educational program for students or groups ages K-6 visit our website at FWACC.ORG.

Prince William SPCA is celebrating 12 years of sponsoring Kind News for classrooms in Prince William County, Manassas Park, and Manassas, Virginia.

To learn more about sponsoring classrooms with Kind News, email KindNews@RedRover.org.
Critter Clues from Page 7

Our mystery critter is the wood duck.

If you visit your local park, chances are you’ve seen wood ducks! They’re easily recognizable due to the distinct differences between the male and female bodies. The male’s green head and markings help him attract a mate, while the female’s brown and gray feathers help her blend in with her surroundings.

Wood ducks get their name from being “cavity-nesters,” nesting in tree cavities near water. Due to forest loss and being hunted, the wood duck almost became extinct around the turn of the 19th century. The population began to bounce back in the mid 1900s, after the Migratory Bird Treaty Act was passed.

People also began building nest boxes to help mitigate the loss of the wood duck’s habitat. Although we often see people feeding bread to wood ducks, this is a harmful practice. Bread is like junk food for ducks—it has very little nutritional value. When ducks get used to eating bread, they are less likely to forage for healthy food themselves. This can also cause a deformity called “angel wing,” a condition that results in ducks losing their flying abilities.

Bread is easily available, it can increase duck populations drastically, which means there is less healthy food to go around. It’s best to allow ducks to stick to their natural diet.

What can you do to help wood ducks? Educate others about why ducks shouldn’t be given bread. If you have the space, consider building a nesting box. To learn how, visit nfw.org and search “duck nesting box.”

The Adventures of a South Pole Pig: A novel of snow and courage
Written by Chris Kurtz

Flora leaves the farm for Antarctica to run with sled dogs, showing how all of us can dream big and be more than people expect.

Written for grades 5-7, this is the story of an adventurous pig, Flora, who is born into a cage with her family. She learns about the outside world from a farm cat named Luna and escapes from her cage where she witnesses a sled dog team practicing for an Antarctic expedition. Flora is taken onboard a ship with the sled dogs. Flora is there to become food for the crew, but she thinks she’ll be part of the mushing team. She learns of her intended fate after the boat hits an iceberg, when she helps save the captain’s life. The surviving crew and animals have taken lifeboats to Antarctica and are trying to survive the cold and lack of food.

Written in third person and giving dialogue to pigs, cats, and dogs, the book delves into the emotional lives of these animals: their dreams, their sorrow and their frustrations at being at the mercy of humans. However, the emotion of pride is also given to the dogs, which is questionable, as scientists studying the emotional lives of animals have concluded it is unlikely that dogs experience pride. In fact, research shows that dog emotions are most like that of a human toddler. This distinction is relevant since those who use dogs in activities to make money, such as dogfighting, say the dogs feel pride in winning, when it is more likely they do these activities to please the humans caring for them. This topic could provide the basis for a good discussion or persuasive writing assignment with older kids around whether they think using dogs in sled racing (or other activities, like dog shows) is humane or not.

The book doesn’t give the same voice to rats, who are vilified for their hunger, beady eyes, and naked tails. Most of the sled dog theme is glamorized; however, there are times later in the book when the harsh side of mushing comes through.

Overall, the book would provide an excellent opportunity to discuss with students how they think animals really feel and how they feel about the ways animals are bred and used differently in society for food, entertainment, sport or companionship.

For more book recommendations, visit RedRover.org/books.