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Canadian Veterinary Technicians Endorse the Be a Tree Dog Bite Prevention Program for School Children

The Be a Tree dog bite prevention program is an innovative and interactive dog bite prevention education program aimed at primary grade children. It is endorsed by the Canadian Association of Animal Health Technologists and Technicians (CAAHTT).

/24-7PressRelease/ - CAMPBELLVILLE, ON, CANADA, February 11, 2007 - Doggone Safe is a non-profit organization dedicated to dog bite prevention through education, and dog bite victim support. Doggone Safe promotes the Be a Tree dog bite prevention program, which is an innovative and interactive dog bite prevention education program aimed at primary grade children. Half of all children are bitten by a dog by the time they are 12 years old. Dog bites are considered to be a serious public health problem by the American Veterinary Medical Association and by the Canada Safety Council. Most bites are by the family dog or other dog known to the child and can be prevented through education. Both children and adults can benefit from understanding dog body language and knowing how to act in situations involving dogs. The Be a Tree program is endorsed by the Ontario Association of Veterinary Technicians and by the Canadian Association of Animal Health Technologists and Technicians (CAAHTT), making it the only such program in the world to have received endorsements from major professional associations.

The "Be a Tree" program is available in communities across Canada and the US and is delivered by Doggone Safe presenters, veterinary technicians, dog trainers, dog behaviorists, public health nurses, emergency medical services personnel, animal control officers, police officers, teachers and humane educators. Presenters use a teacher kit produced by the company Doggone Crazy! which contains large format photographs showing dog body language signs. The script is written on the back of each photograph for convenient reference. The kit also contains games and activities and can be supplemented with learning materials such as coloring books, paint sheets, a story book, poster, stickers, bookmarks and fridge magnets. These materials can be branded with a sponsor's logo to allow local companies to become involved with community dog bite prevention.

"The Be A Tree program is fun and terrific. The kids and teachers loved it", said Jennifer Shryock - Dog Bite Prevention Educator and Dog Behavior Specialist - Family Paws - North Carolina.

"I believe your program [Be a Tree] is the best dog bite prevention program available", said Sherri Utter - Retired Elementary School Teacher, Animatch Volunteer - Quebec.

In a letter to its members organizations the CAAHTT executive directors said:

"The CAAHTT Board of Directors was informed at their last conference call that the Alberta Association of Animal Health Technologists (AAAHT) will promote the Doggone Safe initiative. They join the Saskatchewan Association of Veterinary Technicians (SAVT), Manitoba Animal Health Technologists Association (MAHTA) and the Ontario Association of Veterinary Technicians (OAVT) who have initiated the program within their association.

The OAVT was the first association to implement the program and CAAHTT/ACTSSA wholeheartedly supports this initiative and has chosen to endorse the Doggone Safe, "Be a Tree" program nationally to our member associations. This program is very easy to run, volunteers need not be afraid to the presentations, the directions are well laid out and self explanatory."

Children learn to read dog body language and how to act safely around dogs by looking at large format photographs and by playing interactive games. The Be a Tree program is unique in its use of several different teaching strategies, its focus on physical activity and its emphasis on positive messages. Instead of telling children "don't do this and don't do that", the Be a Tree program empowers them with the knowledge they need to make safe decisions based on the body language and the actions of the dog and the situation at hand. The central message of the program is "Be a Tree" (stand still and quiet and don't look at the dog) if a strange dog approaches or any dog is causing concern or becoming too frisky.

The Be a Tree program was developed as a classroom version of the board game Doggone Crazy!, which also teaches about dog body language and how to be safe around dogs. Well-known author and dog behavior expert, Stanley Coren said, "Doggone Crazy is a fun game that teaches children how to interpret the body language and expressions of dogs. I gave the game to my grandchildren and they enjoyed it immensely. The oldest taught the dog signals and appropriate responses to her younger brothers and then proceeded to 'instruct' her parents as well. I think that this is a wonderful contribution toward understanding dogs better and keeping kids safer."

"Experts agree that public education has an important role to play in reducing dog bite risk to children, and the Be a Tree program is one of the ways Doggone Safe is contributing", said Joan Orr, president of Doggone Safe.

Doggone Safe is well regarded in the humane education community and is a leading provider of dog bite prevention educational materials worldwide. Doggone Safe also offers training programs for parents and for workers who visit homes with dogs while on the job. For additional information visit www.doggonesafe.com.

About Doggone Safe

Doggone Safe is a non-profit organization dedicated to dog bite prevention through education and dog bite victim support. Visit us at www.doggonesafe.com.