Context Clues

Read the article below. Look at the word underlined and how it used in the sentence. Choose a word at the right that would be a synonym for each word underlined.

Teacher's pet: How dogs are helping students feel at ease





USA TODAY NETWORK
July 2024

As a child, Ann Ott sought solace in Tippy, her family's dog, after she was sexually abused.

solace

As she worked through the trauma, Ott would hug Tippy and cry almost every night.

trauma

"She slept with me and licked my tears," she said.



Ott worked hard to **overcome** the abuse, but never forgot Tippy. In 2018, life took an unexpected and sad turn when she lost her father, father-in-law, and her shih tzu-Lhasa apso mix, Tipper, who was named in honor of Tippy.

overcome

The multiple losses left the Iowa high school teacher looking for a **purpose.**

purpose

It was then that Ott, a social studies teacher with the Osage Community School District, decided she wanted to train the family's outdoor hunting dog, Millie, to be a therapy dog and take her to school.

"One of the things that got me through (the abuse) was our dog," Ott said, "and I love that dog so much and what I wouldn't have given to have a dog in (school)."

Though some doubted the yellow Labrador retriever had the right **temperament** for the work, a fully trained Millie joined Ott at school in January 2021.

temperament

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Ott is not alone in wanting to bring the healing power of animals into the classroom. In schools across the country, teachers and administrators have brought dogs, rabbits, frogs, hamsters and the occasional chinchilla to class in the hopes of teaching students about **empathy**, responsibility and how to be good wildlife **stewards**.



Experts have long said animals in the classroom can be a calming **presence** for kids.

Ott saw this **firsthand** when a middle school student stopped by her classroom to pet 9-year-old Millie. The girl told the long-time teacher she only came to school that day to see the dog.

"I'm so glad you are here," Ott recalls telling the girl as she choked back tears, "she wants to see you, too!"



"That **validated** everything," she said. "I know (having Millie) has helped at least one student on one day. It has been one of the most rewarding things I've done in my nearly 31 years in education."

Things are not always so heavy with Millie, Ott said. The dog had to be taught not to steal students' water bottles. Another time, Millie got away and crashed a girls basketball practice.

"I was just going down to make some copies," Ott said with a laugh, "and before I know it, she's running into the girls basketball practice trying to catch all these balls and they just thought it was so much fun."

Keep reading to learn more about how Iowa's teachers' pets are helping students learn, heal and laugh.

empathy

stewards

presence

firsthand

validated

LIVEWORKSHEETS