

CANINES & COCKTAILS EVENT

May 6, 2010



Shep and Isobel Spink's cockapoo Lily is a hit at Twin Lakes Elementary School, where she is getting her paws wet as a reading education assistance dog. Like other pups in the program, Lily visits local elementary schools and snuggles down with a good book and a student to read it to her. Reading aloud in a group is a chore that produces anxiety in many children, whose reading skills are below their peers'. But reading to a warm, friendly pooch is fun and less intimidating. Apparently the feeling is mutual. During her fourth READ session, Lily was so enchanted with student reader Dillon that "she got up in the middle of the story and gave him a big wet kiss," Shep said.

Lily and fellow READ dogs were among 90 therapy dogs getting a little R&R at an event called Canines and Cocktails at Selva Marina Country Club on April 24. The "yappy hour" menu included gourmet canine cookies; the dogs' humans were served hors d'oeuvres and wagaritas, pawtinis, salty dogs and whisker sour beverages. The event raised about \$4,000 for Pawsitive Pets, a pet-assisted therapy service that comforts and heals through animal/human bonding at rehabilitation and assisted living facilities, retirement communities, hospitals, libraries

and schools. Pet-related service providers at the party passing out treats, discounts and information were: Jacksonville Humane Society, Pet Doctors of America, Mandarin Landing Animal Hospital and Pet Resort, K-9 Perceptions obedience training, Pooches' Playhouse dog day care, Fresh Prints pet lodge, First Coast Scoopers, Pawsch pet supplies, CLIX portrait studios, Boutique Unique, Ipsa Art and Jax Pet Massage. For information about Pawsitive Pets, e-mail Executive Director Kelly Blackburn at PawsitivePetsInc@aol.com.