

NEWS

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Pets in the Classroom Offers Grants for 2010-2011 School Year

Bel Air, MD - [The Pet Care Trust](#) has developed the [Pets in the Classroom](#) grants program to help teachers support classroom pets through direct, no-hassle grants. These easy to apply for grants can be used for the purchase of new pets, pet environments or pet food and supplies for existing classroom pets. According to Pet Care Trust Executive Director, Steve King, the program was developed to further the Trust's mission of enhancing the human-animal bond. "We felt that if we could help expose kids to pets and to the proper care and keeping of pets early on, they'll be successful at it and much more likely to be pet owners when they are older. So this program is really an attempt to foster that and to support classroom teachers who wish to have pets in their classroom as a way to enhance the teaching experience."

The Pets in the Classroom application process was designed to be simple. "We've tried to make it as easy as possible, knowing how starved for time teachers can be," says King. Teachers can fill out an online application for either a [sustaining grant](#) for an existing classroom pet or a [new pet grant](#). Once the grant request is approved, a certificate and equipment checklist is sent out to the recipient in a matter of days.

Grants are offered to Kindergarten through 6th grade classes, and can be used for the purchase of fish, small animals, small birds, reptiles or amphibians; as well as pet environments and supplies. Grants are awarded in amounts of \$50, \$100 or \$150.

The program offers teachers a way to add to the classroom environment, making it more interesting, as well as providing the opportunity to utilize the pet in the curriculum itself. Classroom pets can play a role in science, math, language arts and creative arts curriculums, as well as providing a place for children to spend some of their free time in the classroom caring for and interacting with the pet.

King shares feedback from one teacher who had maintained a classroom aquarium for years because she found it to be a useful teaching tool and something that brought fun to the classroom as well. "The care and upkeep of the aquarium had all come out of her own pocket. To have this grant available that allows her to get some different fish and to care for them was really a Godsend for her," says King.

Pets in the Classroom has funds available for 700 classrooms this year and is encouraging teachers to visit the website for information on the benefits of classroom pets and for access to the easy online application process.

The Pet Care Trust is a national pet care education charity founded in 1997 that exists to educate the public in all aspects of responsible pet ownership, by conducting *ad hoc* research and advocating the benefits of pet ownership, as well as promoting high standards of education and training across the pet care business community.

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