



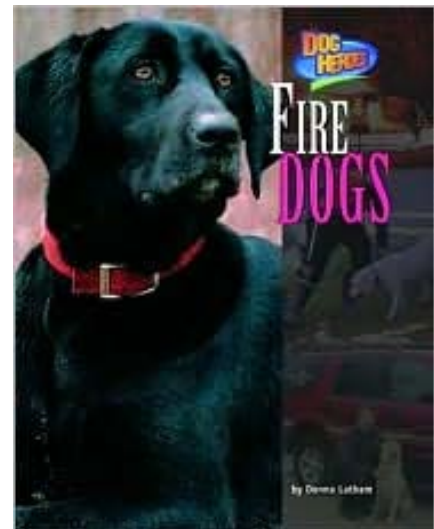
Literature Guide

Dog Heroes: Fire Dogs

By Donna Latham

Winner, 2006 ASPCA® Henry Bergh Children's Book Award

Visit the nonfiction section of your library to sniff out this exciting, real-life adventure! Blaze, a devoted yellow Labrador retriever, works bravely alongside firefighters and forensic experts. Alert, intelligent, and loyal, Blaze delights in pleasing her partner, an arson investigator. How? She follows her super-sensitive nose to pick up minute traces of accelerants used to start fires, even when evidence has seemingly gone up in smoke. Accompany Blaze as she identifies the vengeful culprit who ignited a garage fire. You'll have the opportunity to explore the vital services working dogs provide for individuals and communities. Discuss with your child that all members of a community—including working animals—contribute to its well-being. Have children discuss different community workers who are important in their lives—firefighters, police officers, librarians, medical professionals, etc. How has a community worker helped you? How do working dogs help people?



Dog Heroes: Fire Dogs by Donna Latham (Bearport Publishing, 2006)

ISBN: 1-59716-141-1

Theme: Working Dogs, Arson Investigation, Firehouse Dogs

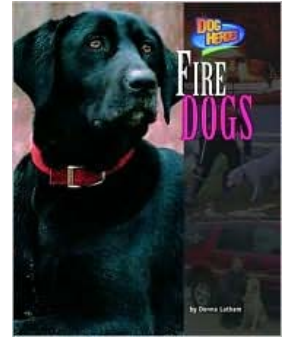
Suggested Ages: 2nd Grade through 7th Grade

Before Reading

- Ask: How might a devoted dog work with investigators to solve a crime?
- Show: Preview photographs in the book to brainstorm and identify the special abilities and qualities of fire dogs. (Personality, intelligence, agility, sensitive noses, devotion to partners, etc.)
- Connect: Have you ever encountered a working dog? What was it doing? How did the dog make you feel? Discuss different types of working dogs. (Service dogs, therapy dogs, police dogs, etc.) Explain that working dogs are highly trained to do jobs that help individuals and the greater community.
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During Reading

- Ask:** How do Blaze and Scott work as a team? Why do you think Blaze loves nothing more than pleasing her partner? How does Scott keep Blaze safe on the job? What does Blaze do when she's not at work?
- Show:** Look at photos of fire dogs in action. What special training do fire dogs and their handlers receive? Look at photos of Blaze with Scott and of Blaze playing with her tennis ball (page 17). How can you tell Blaze and Scott are devoted to each other? How do you think Blaze feels when she receives her playtime reward?
- Connect:** When have you worked with a partner or a team to accomplish a goal? What role did you play? How did you work cooperatively? What did you like best about working with others?

After Reading

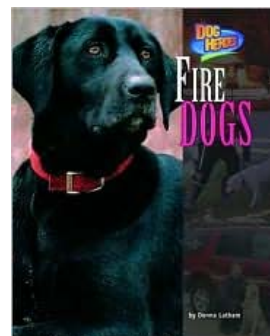
- Ask:** How do you think Blaze felt after she identified the arsonist? How do you think Michael and Carli felt? Imagine you were part of the crowd of people watching the fire. What would you do or say when you learned Blaze sniffed out the culprit?
- Show:** Contrast the photos on pages 4-5 and 26-27. Discuss the different settings in which Blaze interacts with people. What experiences do Blaze and Scott share during a day on the job? How do you think these experiences keep them bonded as partners... and more?
- Connect:** Think of news stories about your community or other places in the world. When have animals and people worked together in a time of need? (Natural disasters, fires, accidents, etc.) How have people joined forces to work as a team? What can you do to reach out to help others in the world?

Activities

1. Sniff out working dogs in your community! Become a Rover, er, roving reporter, and take photos of pooches at work. Next, research the different types of working dogs you encounter. Then, write an informative caption to go with each photo, and print out the photos. Finally, arrange the photos into a scrapbook or a computer slideshow and share them with others.
2. Dogs are called "man's best friend." Why do people and dogs make such terrific teams? Discuss the ways people and pooches help, love, and take care of one another. Create a poster to show how you can care for and protect dogs and other amazing animals.
3. Working dogs are important members of the community. Yet, not all dogs have jobs. Sadly, some don't even have homes. How can you and your family do a community service project to help animals waiting for adoption? For example, you might donate towels and blankets to an animal shelter to use as bedding. Or you could volunteer at the shelter. As you work together, notice how you've become part of an important team—a team of helpers!

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