

## We Are All Wonderful

**Objective:** Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe why older or differently-abled pets make great companions
- Understand the reasons senior and special needs pets are sometimes overlooked for adoption
- Analyze how individuals (people and animals) feel in different types of situations
- Appreciate the diversity of animals and people and share this with others through creation of a public poster

### Lesson Procedure:

#### Opening Activity:

1. Ask the students to share what they know of the term “special needs pet”. Accept answers and help define the term. (Examples may include that special needs pets are differently-abled pets and may or may not require extra care; special needs pets may be seniors or younger pets.)
2. Ask the students what it means to be a senior pet. Help define “senior.”
3. Relay that the group is going to talk about a some differently-abled and senior pets.

#### Body:

1. Introduce the book, *Tiffany Rolls On*. Before reading, ask students what the title might mean.
2. During reading, ask the students:
  - a. How did Tiffany hurt her legs?
  - b. How do you think she felt when she was stuck in the wire cage at the puppy mill?
  - c. If you were Tiffany, how would you feel when rescued from the puppy mill?
  - d. Tiffany felt frustrated when she could not use her legs. What things do you do to help yourself calm down when you feel frustrated?
3. After reading, ask the students:
  - a. How is Tiffany differently-abled?
  - b. In what ways is she just like all other dogs?

#### Materials Needed:

- Book [\*Tiffany Rolls On\*](#) by Stephanie Itle-Clark
- Pictures of animals who were older or who had differing abilities and who were adopted from the shelter (may show these in a PowerPoint or projected on a screen)
- Printed out pictures of the oldest animals or companions needing currently residing at the organization (enough for each student to have their own picture of one adoptable companion; each picture should also include the pets name and any personality traits known)
- Drawing paper (1 sheet per student)
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils (a variety for the students to share)
- Scissors (enough for all students)
- Glue sticks or paste (1 per student)

- c. How was she able to adapt to her challenge?
  - d. How did she seem to feel about her challenge at certain points in the story?
  - e. How do you think she felt when she got her wheels?
  - f. How does her family feel about her? What evidence in the story shows this?
  - g. Pippin was Tiffany's friend. What did she do to show she supported her friend?
4. Let students know that Tiffany and Pippin from the story were real dogs. Just like them, there are other companion animals who also have special abilities or needs. Show the students the pictures of pets from the local shelter/rescue if any have had different abilities or have been seniors. Explain their stories and share how happy and loved they were/are in their homes.
5. Ask the students:
  - a. Who do you think often gets adopted first, seniors, fully-abled, or special needs pets? Why do you think this? (Answers may include, but are not limited to: families might not think they are capable of taking care of a special needs pet or they might not be educated about how to take care of a senior or special needs pets.)
  - b. Why would an older pet make an amazing companion? (Answers may include, but are not limited to: an older pet has outgrown many of the destructive puppy behaviors and they are often less excitable.)
6. Relay that special needs pets and senior pets are just as wonderful to adopt as fully-abled and younger pets. Share that, like Tiffany in the story, pets with special needs adapt well to their challenges and lead happy lives. Reiterate some of what they shared above - that older pets are often already trained, have established personalities, and can be calmer than young pets.
7. Explain that the students get the chance to help some of the seniors or special needs animals at the local shelter get adopted by making "adopt me" signs with information about why the oldest cats and dogs or those who are differently-abled currently residing at the organization will be great to adopt.
8. Pass out pictures and personality information to the students. Explain that you want them to create a poster about what makes their particular animal a perfect companion and that the posters they make will be hung near the pet waiting for a home so potential adopters can see it. (If the lesson is being done in a school, these can be sent over to the shelter or rescue after they are complete.)
9. Give students the art supplies to do create their poster.

### Closure:

1. After they've completed their posters, give students an opportunity to show and explain their work to the group.
2. Reiterate that the adoption posters will be placed with their companion animal at the shelter to help tell people why the particular pet would be perfect in a new home and welcome the students to bring their families in to see their work.