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## Children's Lighthouse wins franchise award

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**By Dan Scanlan, My Southside Sun**

Jacksonville's Children's Lighthouse Learning Center has won the franchise's first "Franchise of the Year Award."

The center, owned by Lucinda Hietbrink, opened in 2006. Children's Lighthouse executives recognized the Jacksonville location because they believe the center has exceeded its "Promise to Parents" in providing management and staff who do what's right for students.

Children's Lighthouse Corp., based in Fort Worth, Texas, has 21 locations in three states.



## **Childrens Lighthouse marks National Teacher Appreciation Week**



Students at Childrens Lighthouse Learning Center in Deerwood recently made sure their teachers were recognized for all their hard work during National Teacher Appreciation Week. Instructors at the childhood learning center received pampering back massages and ice cream sundaes.

## RIVER CITY NEWS

### RIVER CITY NEWS

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## Dogs help youngsters with reading

Reading Education Assistance Dogs was held Nov. 2.

Special to River City News

The children read and the dogs listened recently as Children's Lighthouse Learning Center in Deerwood hosted a fundraiser for the Reading Education Assistance Dogs, or READ program, which aims to improve children's reading and communication skills by having them read to trained and certified dogs.

On hand were two READ teams: Maggie and her trainer Linda Tipton and Molly with her trainer Sue Banister.

Children from Children's Lighthouse were given the opportunity to read to the READ teams while their parents could purchase their children's artwork through Original Works, the first company to develop a school-based program focused on the creativity and artistic expression of each and every child.

Artwork created by the children was assembled into packages for each parent. Each package included the artwork, order form, full color brochure and a customized letter describing the program. A portion of the money from those items purchased by parents went to the READ program. A total of \$400 was raised through the READ fundraiser.



Linda Tipton and Maggie assist Collin Wilson and Elissa Stutmann in reading a book at the Reading Education Assistance Dogs event at Children's Lighthouse Learning Center in Deerwood. Special



Jackson Turner poses with Maggie and Molly at the program, where kids read to dogs. Special

Noble.

Established in 2006, Children's Lighthouse Learning Center at Deerwood provides care and preschool preparation for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years old.

Around the country, hundreds of volunteer READ teams, which consist of owners and their pooches, go into schools, libraries and other settings to work with children.

The team of Maggie and Linda this year has visited places such as Barnes & Noble in the St. Johns Town Center, Juvenile Detention Center, Maxville branch library, Main Library and many other community libraries and facilities.

Children's Lighthouse owner Lucinda Hietbrink partnered with Kelly Blackburn in starting Pawsitive Pets about a year ago in efforts to bring READ to the Jacksonville area.

The READ teams are currently serving Arlington Middle School, Greenland Pines Elementary, Hendricks Elementary, J. Allen Axon Montessori Elementary, New Berlin Elementary, Lakeside Junior High, Ramona Elementary, Jacksonville Public Library, Duval County Detention Center, Children's Lighthouse Learning Center and Barnes &

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## RIVER CITY NEWS

RIVER CITY NEWS

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### Kids make friends with Duce the snake

And they meet  
 others at the  
 'Zoofari' event.

Special to River City News

Students at Children's  
 Lighthouse Learning  
 Center recently had the  
 chance to get up-close  
 and personal with  
 different types of animals during the Jacksonville Zoo's "Zoofari" event.



Tamara Rodda of the Jacksonville zoo tells (from left) Thanmai Posina, Amy Yan and Lindsey Rolewicz about the ball python she's holding. The Lighthouse Learning Center students learned about and met five animals.  
 Special

Before the kids got to see  
 and touch the creatures, Jimmy Kahre and Tamara Rodda from the zoo went over  
 all the different types of animals (farm, zoo, pets and wild animals).

Animals on hand were Gomez the parrot, Rocky the chicken, Shortail the baby  
 alligator, Duce the ball python, and Hobbes the ferret.

Each child got to touch the animals and learn about their features and habitats.  
 Children were also given the chance to look at rare feathers, skulls and bones of  
 some of the animals that were discussed during the program.

"I liked the parrot because it can climb," student Jackson Sirdevan said.

"I liked the rooster because it has soft feathers," said Thanmai Posina, while Amy

Yan said she liked it "because they are colorful."

According to Kahre, many children in the city do not get the chance to see a variety of animals.

"This program helps them to see these different animals," he said in a news release. "The children are also given the opportunity to learn about each animal's habitat, which in return teaches children how to respect animals."



Anes Thairovic pets Hobbes the ferret during a "Zoofari" event. The visits teach children about the habit and habitats of different creatures.  
Special

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