

Claire Caro has combined a number of her passions into this resource guide; biology, canines, equines and teaching.

Ms. Caro graduated from Colorado State University with a Bachelor's of Science degree in Microbiology. After years in cancer and endocrine research, she began teaching high school biology in 1977 and retired in 2004, from Smoky Hill High School, Cherry Creek School District in Colorado. During this time, she also owned, trained and loved Golden Retrievers.

By 2001, she had amassed files of articles and photos regarding dogs, teaching and science. She applied for a grant from The Golden Retriever Foundation and the Evergreen Colorado Kennel Club, which was funded.

With this financial support, she produced the following inter-disciplinary resource guide for high school teachers. In 2005, the guide was presented at the NSTA (National Science Teacher's Association) Annual Meeting in Dallas, Texas.

After the Columbine School tragedy in 2001, Ms. Caro mused on the reasons why students would choose such a violent and destructive act against their school, peers and administration. She concluded that teens may become alienated from the student body, if their interests, dress, physical appearance or socio-economic status is different from the mainstream.

The day after this national tragedy, Claire brought Juneau, her Golden Retriever who is a registered Delta therapy dog, to school. He was placed in an exercise pen in the corner of the room, which also held a couple of easy chairs, and was referred to as the 'living room'. Students petted Juneau, as they discussed the Columbine tragedy. Students with body piercings and spiked bright hair stood next to those dressed in preppy clothes. Claire observed students talking together who normally didn't mix socially. Juneau followed a long line of Golden Retrievers owned by Claire that accompanied her to school.

She also noted that Juneau exemplified unconditional love (a dog shows rather than tells) and gave students the time needed to bond. Juneau helped the students to become integrated rather than be segregated emotionally, as only a Golden Retriever can do <s> Sterling, in goggles, is featured on the cover page of this guide.

Claire relates that her homeroom became a popular gathering place. Students would bring in their friends to meet the dogs. Others would bring lunch and eat in her classroom. The 'living room' was a quiet spot where students, encountering a hard day emotionally, could sit with a companion dog. It's easy to hug a dog. There's great emotional value to one-on-one for humans and canines. Claire also introduced canine career opportunities for those students who did not plan to go on to college or vocational school.

All of Claire's dogs also sport a school ID badge on their leash, identical to the ones students and teachers wear. They have been mistaken as drug dogs and have helped disperse unsavory characters in the surrounding neighborhood. They are also used on stage at the beginning of the school year during orientation week.

Besides teaching Honors Biology, *Claire* developed a general biology class, where kids who were heavily involved in other areas, such as art, drama, or marching bands could take a science class without the demands of a hard science course. In addition, Claire developed an elective science class, "The Equine/Canine Biology" class, also combining Claire's love of horses.