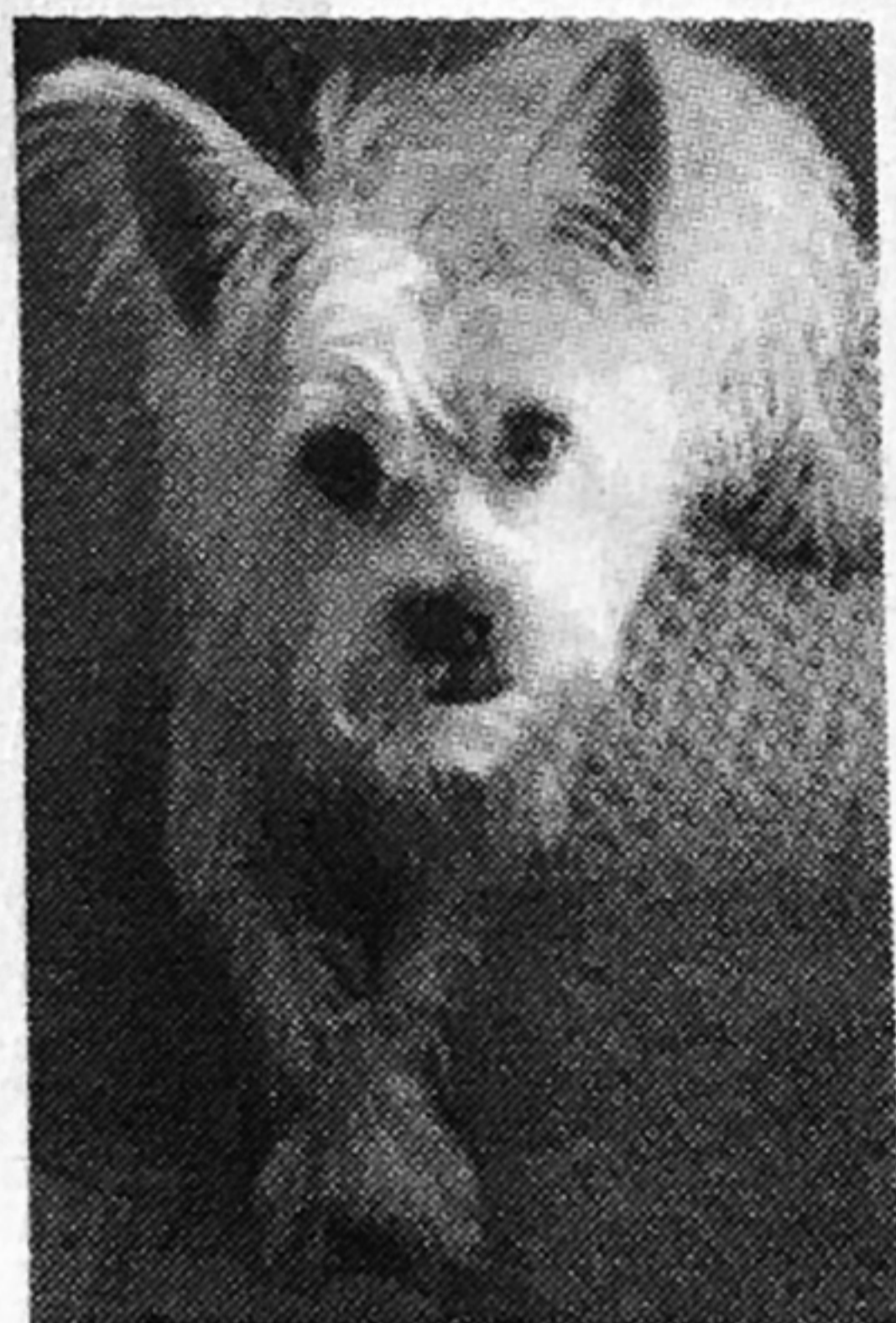


Mutt-i-grees® social-emotional learning curriculum expanding

By Hancock Place Elementary

Paws on Wellness founder Marion Endress is entering into her second year teaching the Mutt-i-grees® curriculum to the students at Hancock Elementary. Ms. Endress holds the Illinois CRSS (Certified Recovery Support Specialist) and the Missouri CMPS (Certified Missouri Peer Specialist) credentials. Her 'furry' partner, Desi, loves people of all ages. Warm and friendly, with crinkly fur, crazy ears, and a cold wet nose, he brings a smile to every face and joy to every heart.

Pets make us happy, and pets in the classroom mean a happier learning community. Research shows that human-animal interactions create calmer, better-focused, more social students. In fact, the presence of a pet, even in the form of a video, book, photo, or toy leads to laughter, conversation, and excitement. Pets bring us together, and mutts or shelter pets contribute something unique to the equation.



Desi

Mutt-i-grees uses the natural affinity between kids and pets to teach social-emotional learning (SEL) skills like empathy, self-confidence, teamwork, and decision-making. Each lesson has a dual focus on children and shelter animals. The lessons include educational objectives and engaging hands-on activities designed to promote academic success, cooperation, social responsibility, resiliency and compassion.

Ms. Endress successfully implemented the Mutt-i-grees curriculum initially with two second grade classrooms during the 2017-2018 school year and a 2018 summer school course. For the 2018-2019 school year, Desi and Ms. Endress will have their plates full as many teachers have already signed up for the Mutt-i-gree curriculum.