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## Is Lafayette going to the dogs?

By Pippa Fisher



Niroop Srivatsa reads to dogs and children at Bel and Bunna's during the Dogtown Downtown event June 1. Photo Pippa Fisher

Every dog has its day - and that day in Lafayette was June 1, when the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce hosted Dogtown Downtown for the benefit of canines big and small. This year the annual event focused on highlighting the dog-friendliness of the downtown area.

Up and down Mt. Diablo Boulevard pooches and their people strolled and visited stores. Businesses handed out treats. Several adoption agencies along with other doggie groups had booths set up.

A highlight of the morning for the better-read pups and two-legged youngsters was a reading of doggie-themed books by Interim City Manager Niroop Srivatsa who, shunning the ages-old advice never to work with animals and children, held both kids and puppies spellbound with her storytelling at Bel and Bunna's Books.

Srivatsa has been volunteering for ARF since 2005.

"Our golden Max had just died and we desperately needed another dog," says Srivatsa. "I immediately fell in love with that place and have been volunteering ever since."

She explains that she is a dog socializer who reads to dogs during adoption hours. "It helps to calm them and make them more adoptable. I truly believe that I have benefited more from this experience than my furry friends," says Srivatsa.

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