



# Sled Dog School

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## **Sled Dog School** Terry Lynn Johnson

Eleven-year-old Matt is struggling in school and he has to set up his own business to save his failing math grade. But what is he even good at? The only thing he truly loves is his team of dogs, and so Matt's Sled Dog School is born. Teaching dogsledding should be easy, right? But people, just like dogs, can be unpredictable. And sometimes the bravest thing a person can do is admit they need help.

## **Sled Dog School Details**

Date :

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Author : Terry Lynn Johnson

Format :

Genre : Realistic Fiction, Childrens, Middle Grade, Fiction, Animals, Juvenile, Adventure, Science, Mathematics

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## From Reader Review Sled Dog School for online ebook

### Barbara White says

I love Sled Dog School and so do my students. That's the very best review I can give. Getting a book in the hands of youngsters, and they enjoy it, is the best. They're looking for more from Terry Lynn Johnson. The book brought about many discussions about starting a business and running it, friendship, caring for animal, and so much more. Thanks to Goodreads First Reads for my first copy of Sled Dog School. Due to the popularity of this book, I needed to purchase more copies for my classroom.

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### Brenda says

Originally posted at Log Cabin Library

11-year-old Matt's family lives the simpler life, "off the grid." They have an outhouse, don't use gas or electricity, and the only phone is a landline for emergencies. Matt is pretty responsible for his age, helping take care of his younger sister, while his father sells his pottery and his mom is doing research. The family also raises and runs sled dogs, which Matt is pretty adept at. Recently, Matt has been having difficulties with his math at school and with Jacob, a kid who's been bullying him and calling him "smoky" because of his families lifestyle. He's also been reluctant to ask for help from his parents or his teacher and dreads the idea that he might be placed in remedial math. When Matt's teacher, Mr. Moffat assigns an extra-credit project to design a business plan and run it, Matt knows that it's his only hope of raising his grade. From this, the Sled Dog School is born. The first step, advertising the lessons to find at least three customers. The first to apply is Tubbs, who was hoping Matt could train his willy dog Flute to behave like the sled dogs. Then there is Alex, who on her first day exudes confidence but with the skills to back it up. Business seems to be getting off to a great start, now if Matt could only figure out how to keep track of his operating costs, use formulas to show salaries and keep things running for at least six weeks, he just might pass his math class.

The last story I read by Terry Lynn Johnson was Ice Dogs, it was a wonderful action-packed adventure story set during the harsh winter conditions of Alaska where a girl gets lost while out dog sledding and then stumbles upon an injured boy who she tries to rescue, a riveting story you shouldn't miss this one either. In Sled Dog School, Johnson continues to draw from her experiences of running Alaskan huskies and writes a story geared this time toward younger children. There's plenty of action alternating with chapters of Matt's and his classmate's progress on their assignment at school. The dangers the kids face while learning to dog sled seemed to match the age of the intended audience while keeping the action moving, being informative and adding just the right amount of humor. There are these funny scenes where Tubbs is trying to avoid the "poop spray" and Alex is flying through the air when she gets thrown from the sled. Children can easily relate to Matt's struggles over asking for help from his parents or teachers and that in the end, it takes courage to ask for help. Matt also learned how to be a better sled dog teacher and that there is a big difference between doing something he loves like dog sledding using his rote memory skills and needing to break things down into steps in order to be able to teach it to Tubbs and Alex. Matt's parents were also wonderful, I really enjoyed how Matt's mom emphasized with him that it wasn't the grade on his schoolwork that she was most worried about, but what he learned from it. That "education is about much more than going to school. It's about learning from experiences." Included at the back of the book are a glossary of terms, and a detailed picture identifying the different parts of the sled and positioning of the sled dog team. With themes of friendship and overcoming struggles at school, I would recommend Sled Dog School to kids

who enjoy animal stories, reading about sled dogs and mushing.

\*In exchange for an honest review, a review copy was received from the author.\*

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### **Terry Johnson says**

I'm giddy to announce that my quirky little story, Sled Dog School, is a Junior Library Guild Selection for fall 2017!

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### **Melanie Dulaney says**

Terry Johnson's "Sled Dog School" is full of action, friendship, challenges and fun. Readers in grades 3-6 will connect to Matt as he struggles to pass Math, has trouble making friends, and isn't quite sure how he feels about his off-the-grid and fairly unusual family. Dog lovers and those who enjoy outdoor winter sports will love reading about the unique sport of dog-sledding. And while students are reading, they might learn a little bit about taking what you love and turning it into a business. And how it doesn't matter if your family is unique, it only matters that you are a family. And maybe even a little about being a friend and making a friend. With the glossary and the diagram at the end, Johnson even throws some great non-fiction text features into a thoroughly enjoyable realistic fiction book. I will be adding this to my first book order of the year for both of my libraries and will likely purchase her first book, Ice Dogs, as well. (Review of digital ARC from Edelweiss Above the Treeline)

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### **Lynn says**

While I appreciate fantasy, this was a refreshing read with real characters, faults and all. Our readers need fantasy, but they also need real issues, characters, and situations they can relate to!

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### **Kathie says**

What I enjoy most about Terry Lynn Johnson's books is the information I learn about a subject while thoroughly enjoying a story. This book was no exception. There are a lot interesting facts about dog sledding and mushing, but they quietly take a backseat to the entertaining story of Matt and the dog school he creates for a math class project. Friendship, teamwork, perseverance, and resilience are themes in the book, and it would be excellent to read and use in the classroom.

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### **Martha says**

Mixing business, sled dogs, bullies, and an eleven year old boy who is struggling in school, sounds like a lot to cover in one book, yet this high action adventure story accomplishes just that. Living in the country in

Michigan, Matt's family raises sled dogs, doesn't use electricity, and his father is a potter. This proves to be very unconventional when it comes to fitting in to Matt's school environment, so he keeps his home life as private as possible. When he begins to fail his math tests, his teacher gives him a way to improve his grades. Along with other students in the class, Matt must come up with a business plan. The project includes finding at least three clients, using formulas to track their expenses and salary, run an actual business for 6 weeks, and make weekly reports. This assignment proves daunting for Matt until he comes up with a subject he loves, and realizes he has the knowledge to take a chance with it. Matt starts a sled dog training school, his supportive nature loving parents let him take full responsibility for the project, offering just a minimum of guidance. This turns into a suspenseful adventure tale, as Matt attempts dangerous tasks for his new pupil. All of the background information about sled dog racing is skillfully intertwined in the story. This is a suspenseful adventure tale with plenty of dangerous moments that keep the pages flying. I highly recommend it but have a couple of suggestions. The cover looks too cute and young, I think the age range could easily span 8-12 years old.

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### **Debra Slonek says**

I was attracted to the title and cover of this book. It did not disappoint! I have a husky. They are exuberant, joyful dogs who are smart and so much fun to be around. The unique personalities of the dogs were so well described as the dogs became major characters in this fun to read book.

Matt and his younger sister are being raised by atypical but very loving parents. They live simply and off the grid. Matt had some struggles in school, especially in math. The math teacher offered an extra credit assignment. Matt needed the extra points, so he started his own sled dog school.

Matt's first two customers were strangers, but not for very long. I loved how the kids, who came from such different styles of parenting, formed unlikely, but authentic and tight bonds of friendship. As the friendships grew, the kids became creative problem solvers and developed excellent teamwork skills.

By taking on his unusual math assignment, Matt learned that being different was problematic at times, but was also a reason to celebrate and be thankful. This book was filled with humor and tender moments. A worthwhile and enjoyable read!

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### **Leah says**

a boy, his dogs, his friends

Set in Copper Creek, Michigan that I couldn't find on a map (though I found many retailers and other entities with Copper Creek in their name), Sled Dog School engages anyone who loves animals, kids, adventure, and a touch of how will this resolve (or will it?) in a story that includes Matt, his younger sister Lily, a math class assignment, and a heartening outcome. At least in the past, Michigan was major Copper Country, and it feels as if Copper Creek may be in the northern part of the state, possibly in the Upper Peninsula. We get sled dogs teams in a rural residential area, parents raising free range kids, a family living off the grid. An outhouse, no electric, no central heating, and enough snow for dog teams? Yes!

Basics are about Matt's school assignment to start and keep books for his own business that per the book

title, is a Sled Dog School. You'll need to read for yourself how Matt and his parents, Matt and his classmates, Matt and his teachers make their ways through the narrative, but I can assure you the plot fascinated me and Terry Lynn Johnson brought everything to life as a reader would expect from an experienced author.

I chose Sled Dog School the book... because I've been loving middle school novels, and especially because Northern Dogs / Siberian Huskies / Sled Dogs intrigue me. My southern Arizona friend Carla introduced me to those fabulous dogs; she learned about and became smitten with them when she lived and worked in Alaska, later on owned several of her own northern dogs, and even later than that, ran a northern dog rescue and adoption agency. Tamara, a Facebook friend I first met on Best Friends Animal Society's now defunct forums, lives in Yukon Territory and until recently had teams of huskies; I could not get enough of the frequent photographs and occasional videos of her teams in harness running across the snow!

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### **SundayAtDusk says**

Matt is not the most popular kid in school. His back-to-the-land parents think it's great to live without indoor plumbing and electricity; and the wood stove at home has led to him being called "Smokey" at school. His worst school problem, though, is math. Matt is athletic and likes to work with his hands, the type of skills his school tends to ignore. If he can't bring up his math grade with an extra-credit project, he may end up in the remedial math class, something he dreads.

It's that extra-credit project that finally allows Matt to show the type of things he's good at, such as dog sledding. Moreover, it's that extra-credit project that shows Matt there are friends out in the world to be made outside of school, and successfully doing what one loves is what creates confidence and happiness. This children's book is a wonderful read that quietly teaches life lessons, as well as educates young readers about the many fascinating facets of dog sledding.

P.S. In the back of the book is a 27-word glossary of dog sledding terms, as well as a labeled diagram of a dog sled team. Keep in mind, too, that the sled dogs apparently are penned or chained when not running, something that may disturb some readers.

(Note: I received a free ARC of this book from Amazon Vine.)

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### **Courtney says**

This book helps kids to see that if they need help with something they should ask instead of hiding it. Matt isn't very good at math so in order for him not to fail the class he must do an extra credit project.

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### **Wendy says**

"Sled Dog School" which I won through Goodreads Giveaways is an entertaining and intriguing look at how eleven -year-old Matthew Misco handles his troubles at school not only with the bully who continually taunts him, but with his failing math grade. Assigned an extra credit math project which he needs to pass, Matt has to set up a business with three customers, provide weekly reports and determine its profit or loss.

With Tubbs (Tyler White) as his first student, Matt's Sled Dog School gets underway but his problems continue when his posters don't draw any further customers and his difficulty with math inhibits him giving positive weekly reports like his fellow students. But all is not lost in a story where the themes revolve around friendship, triumphing over adversity, persistence, and following your dream.

Terry Lynn Johnson fills the story with tension and suspense when Matt faces his insecurity and doubts about math class, reluctant to take a remedial option while coping with the boys at school who taunt him with insults about his family's lifestyle. Yet, there's sense of victory in his determination and persistence as he overcomes obstacles like Tubbs' awkwardness in learning to be a musher, Alex's arrogance and self-assertiveness, his sister's disappearance on sled run and even Flute and Bandit's playfulness. Skilfully the author blends pertinent lessons into a story filled with the incredible personalities of sled dogs like Foo, Grover, Bandit and even the aggressive Atlas as well as with the warmth of family and new friends.

Matthew Misco is a capable, resourceful and intuitive grade-schooler who loves whittling and his team of dogs. Taking his love of dog sledding he ingeniously creates Matt's Sled Dog School not only making new friends, but gaining an appreciation of his six-year-old energetic sister Lily, as well as the parents who love him. In a tale filled with characters who add the strength of their own unique qualities Matt learns to be patient, to value his friends and his unpredictable sled dogs as well as to show bravery in admitting he needs help at school.

I love "Sled Dog School" a wonderfully heart-warming, often humorous story that everyone but especially middle-graders will enjoy.

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### **Yapha says**

Matt and his family live off the grid in Michigan. His father is a potter, they raise sled dogs, and have no electricity. His family's lifestyle didn't use to bother him until the kids school started teasing him about it. Combined with that, he is having a really tough time in math, but doesn't feel that he can ask his parents for help since they are raising him and his sister to be self-sufficient. When an extra credit opportunity arises, Matt jumps at it. He has to create a business with at least three clients and run it for five weeks. Matt starts a school to teach other kids to be mushers. While it doesn't go exactly as planned, Matt learns a lot about himself, friendship, and working as a team. This is a fun romp through the snow! Recommended for grades 3 & up.

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### **Ms. Yingling says**

E ARC from Edelweiss Above the Treeline

Matt's family is a bit quirky-- they live "off the grid" in Michigan, where his mother is a researcher and his father makes and sells pottery from their home, which also has an outhouse! Matt is struggling in school, especially with his math. When the teacher gives them the option of work up a business plan for extra credit, Matt hopes that this will be enough to keep him out of remedial math so Jacob, who gives him a hard time on the bus and in class, doesn't make fun of him. Matt comes up with the idea of a Sled Dog School, where he will give lessons using the equipment and dogs that his family has. His teacher requires the students to have three clients who are not family, and Matt starts out small, with Tubbs and his dog, Flute, who is very ill-

behaved. Tubbs thinks that Matt's lifestyle is fascinating, and after a rough start, the two have some success with the dog sledding, if not with training Flute. They are soon joined by Alex, whose newscaster mother thinks that this will be a good activity for her college resume. Alex is good at everything, and also is okay with hanging around Matt's little sister, Lily, whom Matt is supposed to watch because his father is finishing up a big project. While the experience with the sled dogs is rocky, Matt enjoys making new friends. He continues to have problems with the math, but when the project is over, enlists the help of Tubbs and Alex to keep the school going.

Strengths: There are lots of interesting details on how to care for and work with sled dogs. I especially appreciated how Matt and his family treated the dogs as working dogs but gave allowances for special connections with certain dogs. Books about children running businesses are always interesting to me, and the way the teacher ran the project was great. The fact that Matt eventually concluded that taking a remedial course would be helpful was good to hear-- the best academic decision I've made for my daughters was having one repeat algebra II with the same teacher. It wasn't a comfortable decision at the time, but it strengthened her math skills considerably! Seeking help is a good message, and one children need to hear about more.

Weaknesses: I could have done without Jacob bullying Matt, especially since his issues with Matt don't really seem to be resolved.

What I really think: Move over, Gary Paulsen. There is a new top sled dog in town, and her name is Terry Lynn Johnson! This book, along with *Ice Dogs*, are much more appealing to middle grade readers who don't have any practical experience with the sport. (Johnson also just came out with the fantastic *Falcon Wild* as well as two *Survivor!* books. She is on fire!)

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## **Jo says**

Matt is failing math, so for extra credit he decides to offer dog sledding lessons, the only thing he knows how to do well, since his family already owns several sleds and 22 sledding dogs. After putting up posters, he gains first one student, Tubby, who comes with his out-of-control dog, and then another, Alex, who thinks she knows everything. Matt learns in a hurry that just because you know how to do something doesn't mean it's easy to teach it. It's even harder to puzzle out the magic numbers that his teacher is bugging him for every week!

Johnson delivers several messages neatly: it's OK for girls to be smart; a bully may be picking on you because he's jealous; it's brave to ask for help; and my personal favorite, all kids think their family is weird.

This would be perfect to read to middle school age children a chapter at a time. They'll love it! 5 stars

\*ARC via netgalley\*

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