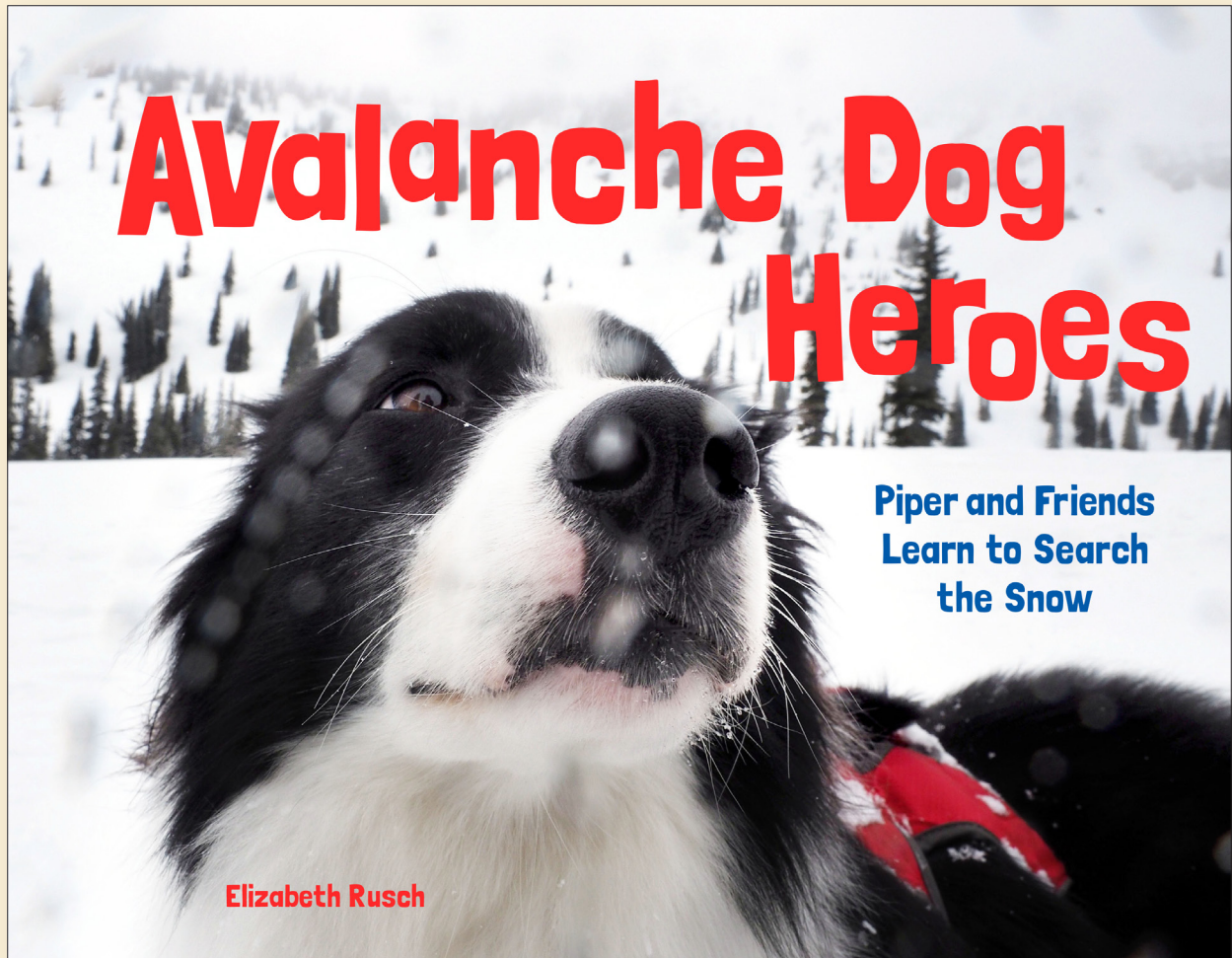# EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



## AVALANCHE DOG HEROES
### Piper and Friends Learn to Search the Snow

Written by Elizabeth Rusch

little bigfoot
**an imprint of sasquatch books**
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# GET MORE OUT OF THIS BOOK

## GROUP DISCUSSION

- Discuss with children what they might already know about avalanches.

- Locate Crystal Mountain Resort on a digital map. Talk about this being the setting of the book.

- After reading the book, discuss the ways dogs and people rely on each other. Ask, "What are some other ways dogs help people?" Teach the protocol of never approaching a service dog without the owner's permission because the dog is "working" for the human and needs to stay focused.

- Discuss why dog handlers use one-word or two-word commands. What might the reasoning be behind that choice? Why might a K9 handler use a foreign language, such as German, with their dog?

- After reading the book, discuss something new that children learned about either avalanches or rescue dogs.

- Encourage children to make a personal connection to the story by discussing how their school day might be the same or different from Piper and Darwin's.

- Discuss why time was an important criterion during Piper's training.

In reference to the diagram showing the two main types of avalanches, think about how you could explain how avalanches occur by using the Next Generation Science Standards crosscutting concept of cause and effect. Consider the sentence stems of:

1. __(cause)__ causes __(effect)__.

2. An effect of __(cause)__ is_____.

3. Avalanches (effect) can happen when __(cause)__.

## INDEPENDENT ACTIVITIES

- Ask children to think of ways technology could help save lives and/or locate people caught in an avalanche. Have children research avalanche beacons and airbags using the internet and then design a device of their own for either dogs or humans. Think about the limitations of testing such devices as well as the cost of materials.

- Write a résumé for the ideal rescue dog. Discuss the implications of training dogs from the Humane Society to become rescue dogs. What qualities do Sara and her colleagues look for in dogs?

- If you have a pet dog at home, think about how you could train it to do a task or "trick" for you. What steps would you take to make it happen? Think about how Sara trained Piper. What did she use as rewards for Piper? Consider writing a protocol using the adverbs *first*, *next*, *then*, and *last*. Stay dedicated to your protocol for a month and see what happens!