



## KELLY'S TIPS

**W**ait to see if it looks friendly.  
**A**sk permission before petting.  
**I**nvite the dog to sniff your hand, which should be in a fist.  
**T**ouch the dog on its back.

Kelly (with kids in Lake Zurich, Ill.) teaches with therapy dog Casey, who helps with demonstrations and Casey's owner, a school psychologist.

# DOGGIE DECORUM

Bitten by a dog at age 7, Kelly Voigt was physically and emotionally scarred. Today, the teen teaches kids how to stay safe around pooches

**P**ulling her twin sister in a wagon near her Palatine, Ill., home in April 1999, 7-year-old Kelly Voigt saw a neighborhood Siberian husky and tried to pet him as she had in the past. This time the dog lunged, sinking teeth into her face and neck. "I squeezed his stomach and he jumped off," recalls Kel-

ly, now 14. "Then I saw blood."

One hundred stitches closed Kelly's wounds, but post-traumatic stress disorder lingered for months. "I wouldn't go outside," she says. "I was scared." Her worried mom, Kathy Voigt, 47, says, "It clicked that she could use her survival to help others." Kelly's

response? "Yes!" After researching animal safety tips, they founded Prevent the Bite with school psychologist Nancy Skeffington in 2000.

Since then Kelly has shared her story with thousands of children at schools, kennel clubs and Scout meetings. With an estimated 2.4 million kids likely to suffer dog bites each year, Kelly hopes to take Prevent the Bite national someday. As for her own trauma, she's put it in perspective. "Sometimes bad things have to happen," she says, "for something good to happen." ●