

## NEWS FOR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

### Reach Out and Read Celebrates 20th Anniversary

In March 1989, Boston City Hospital pediatricians Barry Zuckerman and Robert Needlman began handing out books to their youngest patients, offering advice to parents about the importance of reading aloud. Thus was born Reach Out and Read (ROR), one of the most successful early childhood interventions ever developed. Today, ROR doctors and nurses serve 25 percent of the nation's at-risk infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

In the 20 years since Reach Out and Read was founded, participating doctors and nurses across the nation have distributed more than 20 million books to the children and families that need them the most. Proven to improve school readiness, ROR focuses on those children at greatest risk – children living at or near poverty – during the critical years before they enter kindergarten.

ROR's success is due in part to the simplicity of its model: a brilliant, yet simple strategy to promote early literacy skills and school readiness in young children. Every child who participates in Reach Out and Read starts kindergarten with a home library

### SAVE THE DATE

#### Read and Romp 2010

Sunday, January 31, 2010

1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

The Baldwin School, Bryn Mawr, PA  
For more information and to purchase  
tickets:

215-590-5989 or [info@rorgp.org](mailto:info@rorgp.org)

of up to 10 brand-new, developmentally-appropriate books. Parents and caregivers hear repeatedly from a trusted source – their child's doctor – about the importance of reading aloud. Volunteers in ROR waiting rooms model reading aloud to children, demonstrating to parents just how easy and fun reading aloud can be.

More than a dozen research studies demonstrate ROR's powerful impact, unmatched among other early literacy interventions. Studies show that parents who get books and literacy counseling from their healthcare providers are more

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### RORGP's Benefit Event Raises Funds, Enthusiasm for Early Literacy



Committee members Nancy Phelan, Stacey Brand, Jackie O'Connor and Trude Haecker, M.D., admire raffle items

Reach Out and Read Greater Philadelphia (RORGP) expanded its outreach efforts this fall by holding its inaugural "Girls' Night Out", an evening benefit event that featured 25 unique retailers and artisans, "signature" cocktails, and hors d'oeuvres. Ticket sales and a percentage of retailers' sale proceeds raised money for RORGP Programs.

Perfectly timed in advance of the upcoming holiday season, Girls' Night Out attendees were able to get an early start on their holiday shopping – while supporting RORGP's important work. The event zeroed in on raising awareness and enthusiasm for RORGP's literacy mission among young Philadelphia-area women. Girls' Night Out attendees enjoyed RORGP's signature red cocktail, the "Novel-tini", along with savory hors d'oeuvres created by Overbrook Golf Club chefs.

"Leave it to the savvy friends of RORGP to turn an evening of cocktails and shopping into a literary event," remarked Andrea Bagnell, Narberth resident and RORGP supporter. Thank you to all of the vendors, committee members, attendees, and donors who helped to make the night a success.

## Can I Keep It?

Written by Daniel R. Taylor, D.O., FAAP,  
St. Christopher's Hospital for Children

I cannot count how many times I have heard these four words when handing a Reach Out and Read book to one of my little patients. "Really?", is always the next question they ask, astonished that their doctor is giving them a brand-new book to take home.

I tell my patients that they can take it home, and that it is very important that they share this book with their parent(s) or older sibling whose job it is to read to them every day. The inevitable large toothy smile comes next as the little 2, 3, or 4-year-old starts flipping through the book, wide-eyed at the unfamiliar images and words.

This daily exchange is both heartwarming and heartwrenching. The gift of reading and the advice that we give to our families about reading aloud have been proven time and again to improve early literacy skills in children participating in Reach Out and Read. The grins of dozens of children that receive books, make every day that I practice pediatrics a rewarding one. The astonished looks, the toothy smiles, the sideways glances children give their caregivers as they are promised a new book to take home, belie the literacy poor environments where most of my smallest patients reside.

So I give out books to all my patients, making a small, but meaningful statement of hope and belief.

"Can I keep it?" Yes, you can. Yes, you can

### Special Thanks to the Drexel University Public Relations Student Society of America

This year the Drexel University Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) assisted RORGP with the layout of the 2009 newsletter. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about Drexel PRSSA, please contact Frannie DeFranco at [drexel.prssa@gmail.com](mailto:drexel.prssa@gmail.com).

## Wiggles Partner with ROR

In a new nationwide partnership, The Wiggles Go Bananas Live! Tour will benefit Read Out and Read. The Wiggles are encouraging families attending The Wiggles Go Bananas Live! to bring a new children's board book to donate to area ROR Programs. In Philadelphia, RORGP staff and volunteers were on hand Sunday, August 23, 2009 at the Wachovia Spectrum to welcome attendees and spread the word about the importance of reading aloud. Many thanks to the families who brought books to share with a ROR child in need. ROR Greater Philadelphia would like to extend a special "thank you" to The Wiggles as well as the dedicated volunteers, donors, and Spectrum staff who helped make the day a success.

## South Philadelphia Pediatrics ROR Program Unplugs Its TV

South Philadelphia Pediatrics has pulled the plug on its television. Up until last year, patients and families in the waiting room at South Philadelphia Pediatrics were greeted by an enormous television console featuring monotonous health information clips geared mainly toward adults.

Christina DiNicola, M.D. and her colleagues felt that their growing ROR Program needed a friendly and approachable reading space designed especially for their young patients. "A TV in the waiting room sets the wrong precedent, especially in a practice that continually educates parents on the many cognitive and social benefits of reading aloud to their children and spending less time in front of the screen," said Dr. DiNicola. After a unanimous vote at a staff meeting, she called the health company who manages the TV and asked for its removal. When a perplexed representative asked why, Dr. DiNicola replied, "We need the space for our new Reach Out and Read corner."

The new corner now boasts a children's play table with six small stools and plenty of gently-used books. The colorful corner is bordered by an informational health bulletin board for parents wishing to learn more about reading aloud, current pediatric issues, or how to donate to the ROR Program. This inner city ROR corner is set off by a colorful, washable children's play rug featuring a city map.

"Now instead of tuning out distracting television chatter from the waiting room, we delight in hearing unpredictable peals of laughter and little voices reading aloud with their parents," said Dr. DiNicola with a big smile.

## Fifth Consecutive 4-Star Rating

On October 2, 2009, Charity Navigator, America's premier charity evaluator, awarded its highest rating of 4 stars to Reach Out and Read, the evidence-based national nonprofit that works with doctors and nurses to promote early literacy. This is the fifth consecutive year that Reach Out and Read has received Charity Navigator's "exceptional" rating – a distinction shared by only 4 percent of charities nationwide.



Friends of RORGP Jane and Nora Koppelman, Stacey Brand, Kristen Kucharzuk, M.D., and Jenny McCloskey take time out from collecting books to enjoy some fun with The Wiggles.

## ROR Cited in Issue Brief

ROR was cited in a June 2009 Issue Brief and corresponding report put out by The Partnership for America's Economic Success as one of 10 parenting programs "strong enough to have a possible economic impact."

The Issue Brief, entitled "Parenting Education is Economic Development," makes the case for parenting programs like ROR because of their potential future economic impact. Specifically: "Reach Out and Read, a national program in which pediatricians encourage parents to read to their kids, improved word recognition and vocabulary among low-income toddlers."

The Issue Brief is a synopsis of a 70-page report compiled by Sharon M. McGroder, Ph.D., M.S., Senior Scientist and Allison Hyra, Ph.D, Senior Associate. The full report is entitled: "Developmental and Economic Effects of Parenting Programs for Expectant Parents and Parents of Preschool-age Children." The Partnership for America's Economic Success is a Coalition of economists, policy experts and advocates mobilizing business leaders to improve tomorrow's economy through smart policy investments in young children today. For more information, log onto [www.partnershipforsuccess.org](http://www.partnershipforsuccess.org).

## ROR 20th Anniversary

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likely to read to their young children and provide more books in the home. Children who participate in ROR score significantly higher on vocabulary tests and show improved language development -- the single strongest predictor of school success. According to Perri Klass, M.D., National Medical Director of Reach Out and Read, "Reach Out and Read helps parents transform children's home environments and bedtime routines, and improve their educational odds—all through books and reading aloud."

One of Reach Out and Read's greatest strengths, especially during challenging economic times like these, continues to be its cost-effectiveness.

The cost of the full, five-year ROR Program is just \$40 per child. Endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, ROR is a model for successful public-private partnership, drawing funding support from the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Defense, 9 state governments, and individuals, corporations, and foundations nationwide.

Reach Out and Read's National Center, 32 Regional Coalitions, and 4,535 Programs are celebrating the Program's 20th Anniversary with a year long campaign aimed at boosting nationwide awareness of the importance of early literacy.

After 20 years, Reach Out and Read's goal remains the same: that every child grow up with books and a love of reading. Thank you for all you do to support this noble mission.

## ROR Storms Capitol Hill

On March 5, 2009, over 80 Reach Out and Read supporters from across the country headed to Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. to advocate for increased funding and support from the federal government. This was ROR's largest turnout in six years of Hill Day meetings – by the end of the day, more than 300 visits had taken place with Senators, Representatives, and staff members – a record high! Trude Haecker, M.D. and Kirsten Rogers of ROR Greater Philadelphia met with legislative staff from various Pennsylvania Congressional Districts.

The ROR Government Affairs team, ROR Regions and Coalitions, and dedicated Site Providers and Coordinators continue to work together with elected officials to ensure that ROR receives necessary support and recognition.

## Students Raise \$7,400

The Philadelphia School ([www.tpschool.org](http://www.tpschool.org)) first and second grade students raised \$7,400 to help RORGP doctors give books and literacy advice to young children and families in need. "The students are making a big impact on the lives of young children throughout the region," said Dr. Kristen Kucharczuk, RORGP's Associate Medical Director. "Their commitment and success are inspiring." The students recruited sponsors and committed to reading during a month-long period. Many thanks to all involved!!

## Give the Ultimate Luxury: The Gift of Reading

Looking for a unique yet affordable gift for family and friends this winter? Consider making a gift in their honor to Reach Out and Read Greater Philadelphia.

"The love of reading is the ultimate luxury gift," said Dr. Kristen Kucharczuk, Associate Medical Director of ROR Greater Philadelphia. "It's a gift that will please any reading enthusiast on your list, from family and book club members, to teachers and colleagues."

This year, ROR Greater Philadelphia offers three compelling gift packages for shoppers looking for quick, affordable, and thoughtful gift-giving ideas:

- \$40 provides a 10-book library and five years of Reach Out and Read literacy guidance to a local child in need.
- \$120 provides 30 books and age-appropriate literacy guidance to a family with three young children.
- \$1,000 provides 25 children with their own 10-book libraries (250 books) and literacy guidance from ages 6 months through 5 years.

Reach Out and Read Greater Philadelphia completes the gift package with a beautiful card to acknowledge the gift. Shoppers can purchase their gifts at [www.rorgp.org](http://www.rorgp.org), by email at [info@rorgp.org](mailto:info@rorgp.org), or by phone at 215-590-5989.

# ROR Greater Philadelphia Supporters

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## Earl Martin Phalen Named New CEO of ROR

On September 14, 2009 Reach Out and Read named Earl Martin Phalen its new Chief Executive Officer. Phalen, who has more than 16 years of experience in nonprofit leadership, will lead Reach Out and Read from the organization's national headquarters in Boston.

Phalen, a graduate of Yale University and Harvard Law School, has dedicated his career to strengthening low-income families and communities. As a student at Harvard Law in 1992, Earl founded Building Educated Leaders for Life (BELL), a nonprofit organization that tutors and mentors schoolchildren who have fallen behind their peers and keeps them focused on the goal of attending and graduating from college. As CEO for 15 years, Earl increased annual revenues from \$12,000 to \$25.5 million and grew BELL from a local community service project serving 20 students to a national nonprofit that educates more than 12,000 scholars annually.

Phalen served on the education policy group for Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign and as co-chair of Massachusetts Governor Deval Partrick's education task force. President Bill Clinton named him as a recipient of the President's Service Award in 1997. Phalen is also the Founder and Chair of Summer Advantage USA, a nonprofit that provides scientifically-proven learning opportunities for students during summer months to combat summer learning loss.

"I am honored by the opportunity to become the CEO of Reach Out and Read," said Phalen. "I have learned a great deal about ROR, and I can say without reservation that this is one of the best nonprofit organizations in America. Few nonprofits have the same evidence base (11 research studies), scale (3.8 million children served at 4,535 locations), and impact (significant developmental gains and higher test scores). Because of ROR's extraordinary team of 19,000 volunteer doctors, nurses, and caring adults, all of this is achieved at an extremely low cost. Today, 35% of American children show up to kindergarten unprepared to learn. We will work tirelessly in the years ahead to ensure that all children enter school prepared for success."

## 42 RORGP Programs

Abbottsford/Falls Family Practice & Counseling  
ChesPenn Health Services  
The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia  
Family Care Center  
Pediatric & Adolescent Care, Cobbs Creek  
Pediatric & Adolescent Care, Market Street  
Pediatric & Adolescent Care, South Philadelphia  
Pediatric & Adolescent Care, University City  
Delaware Valley Community Health  
Fairmount Primary Care Center  
Maria de los Santos Health Center  
Norristown Regional Health Center  
Drueding Center/Project Rainbow  
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Esperanza Health Center  
Esperanza Health Center Fifth Street  
The Health Annex  
Mercy Suburban Hospital Family Practice Center  
Montgomery Family Medicine Residency Program  
Nemours Pediatrics, Philadelphia  
Penn Family Care, Penn-Presbyterian Medical Center, University of Pennsylvania Health System  
Penn Family Care, St. Leonard's Court, University of Pennsylvania Health System  
Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine  
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Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine  
Healthcare Center -- Lancaster Division  
PHMC Health Connection  
City of Philadelphia Dept. of Public Health  
Health Care Center #2  
Health Care Center #3  
Health Care Center #4  
Health Care Center #5  
Health Care Center #6  
Health Care Center #9  
Health Care Center #10  
Strawberry Mansion Health Center  
Pottstown Regional Healthcare Network Coventry Pediatrics  
Spectrum Health Services Broad Street Health Center  
Spectrum Health Services Haddington Health Center  
St. Chris Care at Northeast Pediatrics  
St. Christopher's Hospital for Children Pediatric & Adolescent HIV/AIDS Program  
St. Christopher's Pediatric Associates Division of Ambulatory Pediatrics  
St. Christopher's Pediatric Associates Primary Pediatrics  
South Philadelphia Pediatrics, PCC  
Temple Pediatric Care at Temple University Children's Medical Center  
Thomas Jefferson University Department of Family and Community Medicine  
Whitman Pediatrics

## Borders Teams with RORGP

This past August, some Philadelphia-area Borders, Borders Express and Waldenbooks stores hosted a month-long book drive to benefit Reach Out and Read Greater Philadelphia (RORGP).

Shoppers at participating Borders stores purchased 3,200 new books to be given by ROR doctors to their young, at-risk patients when they come for checkups.

"The goal of Reach Out and Read," says Dr. Kristen Kucharczuk,

Associate Medical Director of RORGP, "is to introduce a love of books and reading to children during their most formative years. Early exposure to books and reading can be crucial to educational success. ROR uses the power of the doctor's office to introduce parents to the importance – and joy -- of reading aloud to their children."

Many thanks to the managers, staff and customers at the participating stores in Bryn Mawr, Philadelphia (Chestnut Hill), Langhorne, Willow Grove and Wynnewood.



**Greater  
Philadelphia**

**Reach Out and Read  
Greater Philadelphia**

**34th Street and Civic Center Blvd.**

**3535 Market, Suite 1108**

**Philadelphia, PA 19104-4399**

**TEL: 215-590-5989**

**FAX: 276-426-2455**

**WEB: [www.rorgp.org](http://www.rorgp.org)**

If you would like to be removed from the mailing list or have a change in name/address, please call 215-590-5989 or email [info@rorgp.org](mailto:info@rorgp.org). Thank you.

## How Reach Out and Read Works

Since 1989, Reach Out and Read (ROR) Programs across the nation have been making literacy promotion a standard part of pediatric primary care. Following the ROR model, pediatricians, osteopathic physicians, family physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants give books to their young patients and advise parents that reading aloud is the most important thing they can do to help their children love books and start school ready to learn. Recognizing that children from low-income families are at particular risk for literacy problems, ROR focuses on children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years who are growing up in poverty.

To date, there are over 4,535 ROR Programs throughout the nation. ROR Greater Philadelphia currently includes:

- 42 ROR Programs affiliated with 18 healthcare organizations
- 600 doctors and nurse practitioners
- 36,000 young children in need
- 67,000 new developmentally and culturally-appropriate books prescribed annually
- enthusiastic waiting room volunteer readers

ROR Greater Philadelphia is committed to reaching more children and training additional medical providers in pediatric literacy intervention but to do so we need your help.

## How to Support ROR Greater Philadelphia

ROR Greater Philadelphia relies solely on donations and funding support from schools, community groups, corporations, foundations, and individuals to maintain and expand our programs. To learn more about how you can help set a child on the path to reading success, log onto [www.rorgp.org](http://www.rorgp.org), call 215-590-5989 or email [info@rorgp.org](mailto:info@rorgp.org).