

Reach
Out and
Read®



NewYork-Presbyterian
Ambulatory Care Network

Reach Out and Read In The Heights!

Volume 1, Issue 1

Summer 2010

Dedicated Grandmothers of Washington Heights

Ana Perez, a volunteer recruited by the Foster Grandparent Program at the NYC Department of the Aging joined New York Presbyterian Hospital's Reach Out and Read (ROR) program one year ago. She had just retired from her job, but still felt that she had more to give. Being a foster grandparent has been fulfilling and surprisingly educational. Ms. Perez says that the children are entranced by reading and are very interested in learning new things. "I learn with them," says Ms. Perez, "and they learn with me." She helps them develop a love for books, and reads to them in both English and Spanish.

I asked Ms. Perez how she feels about reading to such young children. She replied by telling me how the children, of all ages, love the books – and how much she enjoys them as well. Even with the youngest children, Ms. Perez gets down to their level and communicates with them. Reading with the children allows Ms. Perez a short return to her own childhood.



Ana Perez reading with 18 month old, Alison Lozano at the Washington Heights Family Health Center

One of the most important things Ms. Perez has learned is how to communicate with children, and better understand them. Upon speaking with Ms. Perez, it is clear that the love of books she is trying to instill in the children has also developed in herself. When I asked what her favorite book to read to the children is, she answered enthusiastically, "All of them!"

Vivian Polanco worked as a dentist in her native country of the Dominican Republic, but came to the United States four years ago to retire and take care of her family. Ms. Polanco became involved in the Time Bank Program where she learned about Reach Out and Read. She decided to become a Foster Grandparent for the program

because she enjoys reading and loves children. She now volunteers at the Broadway Practice and has spent more than a year and a half giving her time to read with children and their families.



Vivian Polanco reading to a mother and son at the Broadway Practice

She has enjoyed the program and it has met all of her expectations. She thinks that reading to very young children is vital, and while ROR's goal is to promote reading to children 6 months to 5 years of age, Ms. Polanco believes that children should be read to even in the womb – she says that reading is important because it is a bonding activity for children and their parents, and the sooner a child can hear their parents' voices, the better.

Although Ms. Polanco has never worked with children before, she says that she gets a lot of satisfaction and feels "useful" when she reads with them. In terms of ROR's impact on the Washington Heights community, Ms. Polanco says that she has heard many positive comments. She feels that being encouraged to read helps children and parents communicate and find a bond and common ground over reading.

Ms. Polanco is soft-spoken and warm, and the children gravitate to her and the many books she shares with them.

Grandmothers Continued

When Ana Lebron reads to children at the Audubon Clinic she engages them with the book at hand. Ms. Lebron also introduces the children to one another and encourages them to read together, and greet one another. Ms. Lebron believes that ROR can change both a child's attitude towards reading and their social behavior.

Ms. Lebron became a foster grandparent to spend time with children and get involved in the community. After months of reading, Ms. Lebron says that although many children are familiar with reading, many are completely unaware of how wonderful books can be. Ms. Lebron says families often take a more active interest in reading with their children after seeing ROR in action.



Ana Lebron reading with two young boys as they wait for their checkup at the Audubon Clinic

Ms. Lebron is full of patience and love, qualities she has further developed through ROR. In return for her service, Ms. Lebron has become a part of the Washington Heights community. She loves recognizing families.

Because Ms. Lebron places an emphasis on establishing good behaviors as a part of reading, she makes sure to read just as thoroughly with children who have behavioral issues. Throughout her time at the Audubon Clinic Ms. Lebron has learned to adapt her reading to each child in order to make sure they get the most out of the experience. She says that reading to children with special needs does not bother her at all- it only requires more patience and love, and she has plenty to give.

Since she started volunteering, Ms. Lebron's personal life has seen some changes. She frequently visits the library - to keep up to date on the children's books. She also often discusses reading with parents she meets in the community, and sees how important reading can be. Ms. Lebron sees a large impact on the Washington Heights community and parents often tell her that they like the program and are reading more to their young children.

What is Reach Out and Read?

Reach Out and Read is a national program that promotes early childhood literacy, focusing on children from 6 months to 5 years of age. It started at Boston Medical Center in 1989 and now operates more than 4,500 sites, involves more than 26,500 doctors, nurses and volunteers, and has distributed more than 20 million books.

ROR's model consists of three parts. First, doctors give new books to children during their visits. Second, the doctors share tips about reading with children with family members. Lastly, volunteers are placed in clinic waiting rooms to read aloud to the children and model reading techniques.

The program has been found to be extremely effective. An early study showed that those who are exposed to the ROR Program are four times as likely to report reading to their children than those who are not exposed to the

program. A later investigation found that families who took part in ROR were ten times as likely as those who did not participate to read aloud to their children at least three times a week. Another study found that children who have been a part of ROR score well above their peers on language production and understanding assessments.

How you can help:

The best thing you can do to help ROR achieve its goal of promoting early childhood literacy is simple - read to your children several times a week! Not only will it help your child when they enter school, but reading aloud can provide moments for you and your child to bond and discover the connection that reading can provide.

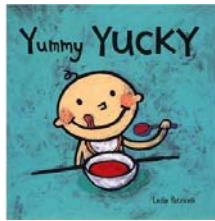
All information was found on reachoutandread.org and additional information can be found there as well.

Four Reading Tips - How to Get the Most out of Reading with Your Child

- Think aloud - voice your thoughts by using phrases such as "I think/ wonder..." By hearing your thoughts modeled aloud, your child will start actively participating in the reading.
- Make funny sounds or use funny voices - children love to hear animal noises or distinct voices for each character. Making noises (like animal sounds) together is a great way to get your child involved in the book.
- If your child starts asking questions about the story or pointing out parts of the illustrations, don't worry about staying on track. If your child starts asking questions, this only shows that they're learning and thinking about the story.
- Read a book that you enjoy! Find a book that you like and is also age-appropriate for your child. You and your child will both get more out of the experience if you are having fun reading to them.

Summer Volunteer Experience

Book of The Summer



Yummy Yucky by Leslie Patricelli is a favorite book among all age groups. The younger children love the repetition of “yummy” and “yucky,” and children of all age groups love to hear about the very yummy and yucky things Ms. Patricelli shows babies eating. The illustrations are excellent for allowing the children to guess what it is that might be yummy or yucky and parents will find that children get surprisingly invested in this book and love to read it over and over.

Books allow the children to run away from reality into a land full of imagination. Reach Out and Read has allowed me to spread the joy of reading to future generations. Each time I visit the clinic, I look forward to the energy and enthusiasm of the young boys and girls as they gather around the table full of colorful, vibrant books. During the visits, I have come to realize a number of factors. Primarily, I understand now that not all children are as forthcoming as others. However, when a couple of forthcoming children do come forth to read with me, this contagious feeling of happiness slowly spreads to the rest of the individuals in the clinic - both children and adults. Secondly, I have realized that books put a smile upon the faces of these children, almost hiding the fact that they have yet to see a doctor; these books are an escape route for children. Sometimes, these young ones relate to the characters in the books — the way their hair is curly, or their favorite food, or their pet. Other times, they find themselves wishing greatly to meet the famous Corduroy. Reading “Corduroy” is a great way to fulfill their wish. My hope for children across the world is that they fall in love with reading just as I did at their age. It is with great pleasure to say that Reach Out and Read has embarked on a wonderful mission to help achieve this goal! - Princy Koshy

Doctor's Prescription for Reading

Dr. Mary McCord brought the Reach Out and Read program to New York Presbyterian (NYP) Hospital in 1997. She still stands by the program not only as the Director of the program, but as a pediatrician who follows the program's model in her daily practice. After 13 years and more than 100,000 books, the program only continues to grow and much of the credit is due to the physicians who implement ROR in their well child visits.

One of Dr. McCord's favorite aspects of the program is its emphasis on age appropriate well written and beautifully illustrated books. Although it may seem

that a six month old or three year old has no connection to high quality literature, Dr. McCord believes that exposing young children to high quality books gives them an introduction to literature that will grab their interest early and serve them well later in life. Children are drawn to great children's books-old classics such as “Good Night Moon” and new ones like “Brown Bear, Brown Bear” and “Chika Chika Boom, Boom” Dr. McCord thinks that that this is because even at an early age, interesting language and great pictures appeal to children, often tapping into universal themes. Rather than just giving children

books based on TV shows and movies, Dr. McCord appreciates the stress ROR puts on high quality reading material.

Dr. McCord says that the most important thing ROR has done is highlight the importance of reading to children even before they are able to understand a story. From the physician's perspective, reading aloud should be about more than teaching children to read; it also involves developing cognitive abilities and motor skills. Another bonus of ROR is that of all of the intervention programs in place, it is one of the few that have been shown to have drastic positive effects. Study after study has shown that ROR positively changes reading behaviors at

home and helps children once they enter school. Although not all school-age children have had access to ROR, Dr. McCord believes that a “cross-cultural” exchange can take place in the classroom, where children who come from a reading culture or who have been involved in ROR share their experiences with those who have not come from a culture of reading. This cross-cultural exchange will be beneficial for all of the children involved, and should become more and more effective as ROR grows.



Summer Volunteers: Sharing Their Experience



Elana Peck reading with eight-year-old Jaswel Abrev

I'm Elana, a summer volunteer for ROR, and here are some things I've learned throughout the summer:

Seeing the world from a child's perspective can open up the way you think. Children pay special attention to facial features to tell how characters in a book are feeling. They also look at small details in books that most adults skip. After reading to children, it has become easier to see the world through a new, more thoughtful, innocent and honest lens.

Although a child may only be able to speak one language, they are often able to understand whatever is read to them based solely on expression and pictures. It's amazing how fluent a "Spanish-speaking" child can be in English, and vice versa.

Surprisingly, children don't always pick toys or electronics over books, but often kids will put down electronics in order to hear a story and interact with the reader and other children.

I decided to volunteer so that I would have more experience with children, especially in a clinic setting. I thought this would help prepare me to become a pediatrician. After spending my summer with reading, I can say with confidence that this experience has helped me understand how children interact with the world, and will help me to help them in the future.

Reach out and Read is what I always look forward to every Friday of my summer. Not only do I love to read to the children, but I also love to watch the kids enjoy the wonderful books. It is interesting to watch children as young as two slowly slide off their parent's lap and quickly climb onto the small chairs

eager to listen to me make funny noises, watch the squeaky puppets and feel the furry pages! Moreover, it is so exciting how fast the toddlers open up to me when I promise them that I will read their next favorite book. Even when asked to read the same book over and over, I always read with

enthusiasm! The main reason that I have cherished this opportunity is because I love seeing the children's huge gleaming smiles. Reach out and Read is an extraordinary, interactive program that I will always be happy to dedicate my time and energy to!

-Priya Koshy

One of my favorite books to read to children is "The Escape of Marvin the Ape" by Caralyn and Mark Buehner. The primary reason why I love reading this book to children is because it allows them to not only engage in the reading, but also become entranced with the characters and illustrations. All of the children look forward to the next page so much that it makes the adventure of reading more enjoyable for them. Another book which I look forward to reading to the children is "Pigsty" by Mark Teague. This book invites the children to an imaginary world where pigs live in the main character's room. It makes the children laugh and allows them to experience the entertainment of living with animals.



Alejandra Astorga reading with 2 and half year old, Gary German

"The more that you read, the more things you'll know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."

-Dr. Seuss

"Oh, The Places You'll Go"

