FUNDRAISING

Reach Out and Read has extended its scope dramatically over the past 15 years. This accomplishment can be attributed in large part to a simple model, strong programs, committed coordinators and physicians and passionate fundraising efforts. The National Center endeavors to provide new programs with some start-up funding, or with books, but all ROR programs need to find on-going sources of support in their own communities. We all hope for continued federal funding of Reach Out and Read, and the National Center is committed to distributing such funding to qualifying programs—but federally funded programs are required to raise at least 50% of their funding from non-federal sources, and ROR sites meet this challenge.

Health care professionals, ROR coordinators and volunteers, and families across the United States are eager to illustrate how ROR helps children develop a life-long love of reading and prepares them for success in school and beyond. Even so, community members rarely walk into clinics prepared to write a check. You must actively seek relationships with potential funders while simultaneously stewarding your current funder relationships.

This may seem like a daunting task for many ROR coordinators whose backgrounds are primarily in health care, not in fundraising. Fundraising is time consuming, and you are generally competing with other non-profit organizations for limited funds. Many of us find it a little bit embarrassing to ask for money—and, after all that, fundraising often ends in rejection. Despite all of these obstacles, we all understand that the money we raise translates directly into books for the families we serve.

Remember that people give to people. All research examining charitable behavior suggests one inescapable truth: people give because someone asked them. In addition, donating to charity represents an opportunity for those who have prospered to participate in something that reaches beyond their immediate experience. It feels good to give and to see your investment in children grow.

The ROR National Center’s Development Department created this section to outline basic fundraising strategies and guidelines. While we can’t research and pursue funding opportunities for individual programs, we will gladly advise and guide you whenever possible. Feel free to adapt the information and templates in this section to the scale of your program.
Working with Your Hospital or Clinic Development Department

How do ROR sites in or affiliated with hospitals and other large health care organizations work most effectively with their development offices? In the best situations, they encourage development staff to think of the ROR site as a valuable part of the whole fundraising effort. There are distinct advantages to having a ROR site associated with the hospital—it’s an excellent way to introduce younger philanthropists into the hospital’s donor family and it’s an attractive program to spotlight when you organize site visits for hospital public relations efforts. Contact your development office and establish a partnership.

Most foundations and corporations request tax-exempt or 501(c)(3) status for their donations. How do you obtain that? Often there is an existing entity in a clinic or hospital that can be used to accept donations for ROR. Most hospitals probably have a foundation that can accept charitable donations. Many programs have identified a 501(c)(3) organization that will act as their fiscal umbrella, such as a school or Kiwanis Club. The ROR National Center can also provide these services. Please contact the ROR Finance Department for more information and see the fiscal agent section (page 95) in this manual.

Getting Started on Fundraising

Successful fundraising starts with a plan and builds on the strengths of the organization and energies of its people. Reach Out and Read is a program with a proven record of success. A model which is easy to explain, and is concrete and discrete.

No two ROR sites are alike. Your region, your community resources, your established personal connections to businesses, leaders and volunteers make your situation unique. So you need a plan to fit your situation, and you can start by asking two questions:

How much do I need to raise to purchase ROR books?

Sites that are just initiating their fundraising campaigns should start with book funding. Calculate your book budget by multiplying the number of well-child visits at your site per year (number of children served x two books per year) x $2.75 (average cost of book right now) = Annual book budget (or “ABB”). Other line items at your site, once the books are provided for, might include supplies for the waiting room—anything from furniture for a reading corner to book-themed wall decorations—and, especially in larger sites, salary money to support some of the site coordinator’s time.

After assessing your needs, and making a wish list, set your priorities. Book funding must be raised before other expenses, including coordinator salary. Please see the budget template in the section at the end of this chapter.
Who is going to do the fundraising?

As coordinator, you may elect to take on the fundraising yourself, but we would strongly suggest that from the very beginning, you think about enlisting help and delegating some of the work. If your hospital or health center has a development office, you may be able to connect with a development professional, and work out a mutually beneficial relationship in which the institution gleams favorable publicity by drawing attention to the Reach Out and Read program, and the development office uses that publicity to help raise the money needed to keep the ROR program going.

For those of you who lack access to a development office (or whose development office is otherwise engaged), this is an opportunity to use volunteers in a context other than the waiting room. Form a committee of energized individuals with skills in grant writing, public relations, marketing and/or event planning to ease the burden on you. Think about including influential people from various segments of your community who would have access to other potential supporters. Make sure these people feel connected to the program—give them a chance to spend time in the clinic, to talk to the doctors, to see the children with their books. And let them help you and guide you in developing a fundraising strategy to meet your program’s needs.

So now you know your goals, and you have your helpers lined up, and you’re planning your strategy. There are two key ways to raise funds: you can hold special events such as bake sales and book drives, or you can make direct appeals to a wide range of donors.

Direct Appeal Fundraising

The vast majority of ROR programs that have grown beyond start-up status look to individuals, foundations and corporations for support.

Individuals

Charitable contributions are important sources of support for non-profit programs like ROR. In fact, after government dollars, individuals give more money to non-profit organizations than any other source, including corporations and foundations combined. Charitable contributions often result from publicizing your program through the media, making presentations at organizations and sending out solicitation letters.

The greater the visibility your program has in your community, the more successful your fundraising will be. Stories in your local media help to get the word out about the program and frequently lead to donors. This manual’s section on publicity focuses on effective ways to publicize your program in your local community. You will find that many individuals in your community are moved by the idea of early literacy and that a wide variety of organizations will want to help. Remember that at $2.75 per book, a $27.50 donation supports an entire “course” of ROR for a child from 6 months to 5 years.
Potential individual donors could be:

- Personal contacts
- Immediate and extended family
- Personal friends
- Former classmates
- Members of your social club
- Parents of your children’s friends

Next, seek out people with shared interests, that is, individuals committed to many of the same goals as your ROR program. While their greatest interest may not be early childhood development and literacy, they may consider contributing to children’s welfare for general reasons. Please see the partnerships and collaborations section for more ideas on how to create lasting relationships with organizations with common interests and goals.

Building a list of friends of your program is like building a Rolodex and you can begin with an index card file. Don’t hesitate to ask current supporters for names of friends and others interested in literacy efforts.

Foundations

As you plan your fundraising, keep in mind that most foundations and corporations are not equipped to make quick decisions. Individuals have more flexibility. Most foundations take three to six months to review a proposal; most corporations six weeks to five months. In other words, start thinking about applying for on-going funding long before your current funding is exhausted.

Private Foundations are tax-exempt organizations formed by an individual, family or group of donors to accept tax-deductible contributions. Most hold these contributions as endowment, invest them, and spend the interest income each year on grants. Each has its own set of rules and fields of interest, but most foundations tend to see themselves as “venture capitalists.” They want to provide start-up funds for new initiatives, but they are often less willing to provide basic on-going operating support for established programs. Foundation Center directories are the best source of information on private foundations.

Foundation resource websites:

- http://www.guidestar.org
- http://foundations.org
- http://grantsmart.org
- http://smallfoundations.org
Community Foundations are the fastest growing segment of organized philanthropy. By law, these special entities must be responsive to the major concerns of their communities. If one exists in your area, it should be your first stop for information.

Corporations do their charitable giving either by establishing foundations, or simply making contributions through a giving program, often through the CEO's office or Community Relations Department. Corporations are generally interested in making contributions in a specific geographic area or to organizations where their employees may be involved as volunteers. Your local catalog is a good place to start researching corporations; the Foundation Center also has a Corporate Foundation directory. Corporations may also be interested in in-kind donations or in supplying volunteer readers for your program.

The National Center compiles a grant prospecting email bi-monthly. To be added to this list, please send an email to: fundraising@reachoutandread.org.

**Direct Appeal Strategies**

Whether you are asking a business for a large contribution or approaching an individual you hope to enlist as a supporter, you’ll use some combination of letters, telephone calls, emails and personal visits. Here are some tips:

**Generate a Solicitation Letter** (See sample templates at the end of this chapter.)

- Start with a specific story or anecdote about your program and your patients.
- Relate it clearly to your city or town or neighborhood—a local program that serves a local need.
- Have the letter come from a doctor who speaks about how much the program means in daily practice.
- Stress the low cost of the books, and the value that a $27.50 “course” of books can have in a child’s life.
- Ask members of your committee to write short personal notes to friends and acquaintances right on the solicitation letter—get the committee together and have everyone “personalize” a small pile of letters.

**Prepare for a Personal Visit**

- Commit your program’s vital statistics to memory. This includes facts about the children your program serves, the books you provide, your activities, your volunteers and especially your budget. Anticipate possible questions and know the answers. If you’re new to this, practice in front of a mirror and role-play with a fundraising committee member to build your confidence and skill level.
- Condense your information into a brief talk no more than 30 minutes in length.
• If circumstances permit, bring two ROR representatives to the visit. This allows each person to deliver predetermined talking points so that the focus is not only on one person.

• Leave ROR literature and materials behind, such as bookmarks or a book to read to a child in their life.

• Mail a thank-you note immediately following your visit, regardless of the outcome.

Fundraising Events

Special events are one of the most common fundraising vehicles for small non-profit organizations. However, special events are generally more successful for increasing your organization’s visibility and attracting new friends for your mailing list than for raising money, at least initially. As a rule, it takes years of repeating an event to build an audience and turn a profit. Planning for special events is time consuming and requires the support of an active volunteer committee. With each successive event, and in combination with other fundraising and organizing efforts, your program will become known to more and more people. Be cautious in your planning and make certain that your goal is reasonable.

As you consider a special event, make sure you check with your institution—all kinds of considerations come into play once you are entertaining the public. You need to be mindful of everything from short-term liability insurance for entertaining the public on someone else’s property, to health licenses which may apply when serving food, to sales tax rules if you’re selling anything.

Some Ideas for Fundraising Events

Walkathon or read-a-thon—Encourage sponsors to pledge a certain sum of money for miles walked or pages read aloud.

Book fair with celebrity readers—Contact a local bookstore or publisher’s representative to arrange for books to be sold. Publicize the event in your local media. Scholastic, Inc. can help arrange a book fair.

House party at the home of a local supporter—Donated food and drink, raffle, silent auction—and an opportunity for supporters to meet the providers and hear about the program.

Benefit shopping day at a store or stores—Information available about the program, and you get a percentage of the profits.

A dinner with local authors or book illustrators.

A reception at a local bookstore where patrons buy two books and donate one to your program.

“Read and Romp”—A ROR-specific family fundraising event based on a children’s book theme.
Cultivating and Thanking Contributors

You should strive to maintain a good relationship with every donor. Send donors copies of favorable publicity about the program, encourage staff members, providers, patients, and parents, to write individual thank-you notes for special donations. You can never say thank you too many times. Don't take your funders for granted.

Donor cultivation or stewardship is key to keeping individuals interested in ROR.

There are a variety of simple things you can do to keep your donors involved in the program, or to interest new donors in ROR. Suggestions include:

- Site visits—Invite a group of donors to the clinic to see it in operation. You might combine it with a small event involving a celebrity reader, or library card registration day.

- Newspaper articles—Local newspaper coverage increases visibility. Consider creating a photo opportunity, or have your staff prepare an article on the importance of early literacy for the lifestyle section. Additional information is included in the section on Public Relations.

- Create a recognition event to honor volunteers and donors. Perhaps this could coincide with a ROR birthday celebration.

- Schedule a breakfast meeting at the clinic and invite donors, city and/or school officials and legislators.

Solicitation letters can be sent to your mailing list on an annual basis. Holiday appeals are very popular, and many programs mail solicitations several times a year. Your letter should include a clear description of the program; anecdotes and stories about children and the impact that the program is having add a human touch. You should also consider including a remittance envelope with the request.

Make a plan for recording and acknowledging donations. It is essential to thank your donors within one week. The records that you begin to build will form the base for your mailing list and annual appeal. (See template at the end of this chapter.)

Build on your fundraising successes, using each one as a steppingstone for the next effort. Donors like to donate to successful efforts. Don’t hesitate to ask your current donors to introduce you to other potential donors.
Grant-Making Tips and Templates (See sample templates at the end of this chapter, or log into myror.org for downloadable templates and resources.)

The most efficient way to locate information on institutional funders is through the Foundation Center. Complete information is provided on the resource list at the end of this chapter.

Research the funding source to find out if there is a match. Learn more about the funding source and its recent awards. Call for guidelines or check for a website.

Maintain a filing system that includes key information on each potential donor. Keep track of all contacts.

You may wish to begin this process by sending out a basic letter of inquiry to qualified prospects. A sample which can be adapted to meet the needs of your program is included in the templates at the end of this chapter.

Contact the appropriate program officer and initiate a conversation. Program officers can be extremely helpful in guiding your request and establishing a personal relationship may turn that officer into an advocate for your program.

Respect the organization’s deadlines and make a timeline for yourself that is realistic.

Be prepared. Keep grant related material like staff resumes, project abstracts and research on hand.

Follow the guidelines. Keep it simple. State your case clearly and concisely in the first paragraph. Make sure your goals and your plan to achieve them are understandable and realistic.

Pay special attention to preparing your budget. Include a budget justification for each line item, a narrative that explains and justifies each expenditure.

Prepare a sample letter of support to send to supporters that they can adapt or use. If you need letters of support, make it easy to get them from supporters.

Review the final draft. Have a colleague not connected to the program read it and make suggestions and corrections.

Grant writing can be a time-consuming activity. Look for help to your development office, or look for fundraising committee members with experience in grant writing. The ROR National Center has a wide variety of literature you can adapt for your use. While supplemental materials developed for your program help potential funders appreciate your program on a local level, it is essential for every ROR program to maintain a message that is consistent with the program as a whole, and with the ROR National Center. Please read through the ROR Style Guide for some basic guidance on presenting the program to all of our best advantage.
Fundraising Partnerships and Collaborations

Sometimes the most effective way to raise money—or look for other kinds of support—in your community is to link up with a service organization which is already well-established and active, and which is committed to the welfare of local children and to taking on charitable projects in the area. In the past, ROR programs and coalitions have had particularly strong relationships with chapters of:

- The Junior League: Many chapters volunteer and raise funds for the local ROR program.
- United Way: Ask friends to write Reach Out and Read in on the donation line of their giving form.
- Rotary Club
- Kiwanis

Some of these chapters regularly “adopt” certain local charities and programs, providing them with donations, holding events to benefit them, recruiting volunteers. You may need to apply formally for this help, or at least make a presentation to a committee about your program.

Other service organizations to consider, if they are active in your area:

- American Assoc. of Univ. Women
- Alpha Delta Kappa
- Alpha Phi Alpha
- American Legion
- Boosters Clubs
- Boys & Girls Clubs of America
- Camp Fire Boys and Girls
- Links (Service Clubs)
- Lions Clubs
- Natl. Assoc. of Junior Auxiliaries
- Natl. Congress of Parents & Teachers
- Natl. Council of Negro Women
- Natl. Council of Jewish Women
- Natl. Fed. of Temple Sisterhoods
- Natl. Urban League
- Retired Senior Volunteers Program (RSVP)
- Soroptimist International of the Americas
- United Methodist Women’s Clubs

Find basic contact information through the phone book, the public library, the mayor’s office, the chamber of commerce.

Better yet, start with a contact: survey your volunteers, your finance committee members, the board of directors of your local institution—find someone who is active in the organization to introduce you.
Letter of Inquiry

[Your organization’s letterhead]

[Date]
[Name], [Title]
[Foundation/corporation name]
[Street address]
[City], [State] [Zip]

Dear Mr. / Ms. __________:

On behalf of [Your ROR program name], I respectfully submit this letter of inquiry to the [Foundation/corporation name]. Reach Out and Read (ROR) seeks to make early literacy a standard part of pediatric primary care. Pediatricians encourage parents to read aloud to their young children and give books to their patients to take home at all pediatric check-ups from six months to five years of age. Parents learn that reading aloud is the most important thing they can do to help their children love books and to start school ready to learn.

Reach Out and Read was founded at Boston Medical Center fifteen years ago and is now located at more than [2,200 sites] (located mainly at community health centers and hospitals) in all fifty states, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam. Nationally, the program reaches more than [2 million] children, distributing [3.2 million], age and culturally-appropriate, free books to these children annually. Numbers in bold change frequently, please refer to ROR National Website for most recent updates.

Pediatricians give children a new book to take home at every check-up from six months to five years. These books are carefully chosen based on developmental and cultural appropriateness. Children participating in the ROR program will start school with a library of at least ten books in their homes. It is important to note that for many of the children we serve, English is not their first language. ROR has translated a number of books into 12 languages, including [Spanish? and Portuguese?]. Both of these languages are widely used in [Insert your program location] neighborhoods.

The ______ Foundation/Corporation’s emphasis on ______ compliments Reach Out Read’s focus on ______. We feel that ROR could assist the foundation in reaching its mission by ______. [Insert local program information here, including # of children served, pediatricians trained, etc.]

A body of medical research has now accumulated which shows that the ROR model of literacy-promoting intervention, by the pediatrician, coupled with a book for the child to take home, have a significant effect on parental behavior—thereby helping children to embrace early reading concepts upon entering school. Prevention of school failure and increased parental involvement in early childhood development are strengths of the ROR model, which we hope you will find favor in funding.

This proposal specifically requests assistance for book purchasing dollars for [Insert your ROR program] and for funds to ensure the quality of training, which ROR providers require. These dollars would provide ______ books to disadvantaged children in [Insert your city, state].
Thank you for your consideration of this request. I would be happy to host anyone from the [foundation/corporation], on a site visit at [your ROR program location], at your convenience. I have enclosed a general information packet on the program and its impact and I look forward to discussing Reach Out and Read with a program officer in the near future. Please contact me if you have any questions, I can be reached at [insert your phone number or email].

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Title]

Enclosures

**REMEMBER that you should be adding local information to each section as it applies. Text enclosed in brackets needs to be reviewed and modified to describe your program. Additionally, feel free to modify or elaborate on any part of the narrative as necessary. **
Dear [Name],

On behalf of the [foundation/corporation name], I respectfully submit this proposal to you. Reach Out and Read (ROR) seeks to make early literacy a standard part of pediatric primary care. Physicians encourage parents to read aloud to their young children and give books to their patients to take home at all pediatric check-ups from six months to five years of age. Parents learn that reading aloud is the most important thing they can do to help their children love books and to start school ready to learn. This proposal respectfully requests $______ to support our ROR program’s efforts to continue to reach the [insert number] children we serve each year and to help us expand that influence throughout [your state or region].

Reach Out and Read was founded at Boston Medical Center in 1989, and now reaches 2 million children—ages six months to five years—and their families annually, at more than 2,200 sites, in all fifty states, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam. Nationally, ROR programs distribute more 3 million free books to these children, at their pediatric appointments, each year.

This proposal specifically requests assistance for book purchasing dollars for our ROR program.

A body of medical research has now accumulated which shows that the ROR model of literacy-promoting intervention, by the primary care provider, coupled with a book for the child to take home, have a significant effect on parental behavior—thereby helping children to embrace early reading concepts upon entering school. Prevention of school failure and increased parental involvement in early childhood development are strengths of the ROR model, which we hope you will find favor in funding.

I would be happy to host anyone from [name of foundation/corporation] on a site visit to help further support this proposal.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Title]

Note: Please check the ROR website, www.reachoutandread.org, for updated statistics.
### XXXX Foundation
#### Reach Out and Read XXXX Site Project
#### Draft Budget

**PROGRAM EXPENSES**

<table>
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<th>(organization budget)</th>
<th>TOTAL PROGRAM BUDGET</th>
<th>TOTAL PROJECT REQUEST</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assumption = # of children served 2500</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Books</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td># of children x 2 visits annually x $2.75 per book</td>
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<td><strong>Coordinator Salary</strong></td>
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<td>10% of FTE Salary of $40,000</td>
<td>$ 4,000</td>
<td>$ 2,000</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<td><strong>Literacy Materials</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>bookmarks, stickers etc.</td>
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<td>$ 500</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td><strong>Administrative</strong></td>
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<td>10% of book costs</td>
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<td>$ 625</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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Amount remaining to be funded $ 9,375

**OTHER FUNDING SOURCES**

| | |
| ROR National Center | $ 2,500 |
| Foundation X | $ 5,000 |
| Hospital Auxiliary | $ 1,000 |
| Plant Sale | $ 900 |
| **TOTAL** | $ 9,400 |
**BACKGROUND**

The mission of Reach Out and Read (ROR) is to make literacy promotion a standard part of pediatric primary care, so that children grow up with books and a love of reading. Pediatricians and early childhood specialists founded ROR in 1989, at Boston City Hospital, now a part of Boston Medical Center. In its fifteenth year, ROR has grown and is now located at more than **2,200 sites** (located mainly at community health centers and hospitals) in all fifty states, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam. Nationally, the program reaches more than **2 million** children, distributing **3.2 million**, age and culturally-appropriate, free books to these children annually. *Numbers in bold change frequently, please refer to ROR National Website for most recent updates.*

ROR is designed to take advantage of the existing structure of pediatric primary care, in which parents of young children have regular, one-to-one, developmentally focused visits with pediatricians during the first years of a child’s life. Children routinely see their doctors for “well-child” visits ten times between the ages of six months through five years. For many families, especially for families living in poverty, these are the earliest, and often the only, regular contacts with a child development professional.

By integrating literacy into standard well-child pediatric visits, pediatricians promote the acquisition of spoken and written language skills in young children, thereby increasing the likelihood of eventual school success. Emergent literacy skills are the precursors of formal reading, which ultimately help children succeed in school, and thereby lower the risk of numerous negative outcomes connected to school failure and the attendant low self-esteem—school truancy and dropping out, substance abuse, and teen pregnancy, among others.

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

Reach Out and Read builds upon the special relationship between pediatricians and parents of young children (ages six months to five years), to encourage parents to read aloud to their children daily. Pediatricians convey to parents the importance of books and reading in their children's lives. Research shows that being read to early and often creates a strong foundation for later learning and ultimate success in school. Being read to also promotes a love of books and reading in young children. The ROR model facilitates this important developmental activity in several ways.
The Reach Out and Read model includes three components:

- Pediatricians are trained in the theories of early literacy development and specific strategies to promote literacy in children. During well-child visits they use this knowledge to give parents “anticipatory guidance” about the importance of reading aloud. The single most important thing parents can do to increase a child’s success in learning to read is to read to that child. Even parents who themselves cannot read can teach their child a love of books by linking the books to parental love and attention. Parents are given concrete and age-appropriate advice about books and reading, and pediatricians suggest frequent reading at home.

- Pediatricians give children a new book to take home at every check-up from six months to five years. These books are carefully chosen based on developmental and cultural appropriateness. Children participating in the ROR program will start school with a library of at least ten books in their homes.

- Trained volunteers read stories to children while they wait for their appointments. These readers show parents by example that their children enjoy listening to books read aloud.

A COMPELLING NEED

Throughout the country, an effort is currently under way to support children better in their early reading efforts, hoping to ensure that all children read at grade level by the third grade. One problem common to all such initiatives, however, is that by the time children reach school and encounter formal instruction in reading, many of them are already behind. The National Academy of Education estimates that 35% of American children enter kindergarten unprepared to learn, most lacking the language skills that are the prerequisite of literacy acquisition. This percentage may be even higher among children growing up in poverty. These children often lack basic language abilities, have no book handling skills, no experience with the printed word, and no positive associations with books and reading.

Reach Out and Read is the only medically based literacy model in the country. Unlike traditional childhood literacy programs, ROR is designed to take advantage of the existing structure of pediatric primary care, in which parents of young children have regular one-to-one, developmentally focused visits with pediatricians during the first years of their child’s life. Children routinely see their doctors for “well-child” visits ten times between the ages of six months through five years. Sadly, for many families, especially for families living in poverty, these are the earliest, and often only, regular contacts with a child development professional. By reaching children at this age and their parents, ROR delivers a full dose of early literacy support. Books are new, carefully chosen and deve-
velopmentally appropriate—starting with chewable board books for babies and moving up to more complex storybooks for preschoolers. ROR reinforces the parent’s role as the first and most important teacher, and gives parents the tools needed to help their children succeed.

The target group for ROR is children living in poverty between the ages of six months and five years—critical years for acquiring early literacy skills. Studies find that there is limited time spent reading aloud in lower income families, indicating multiple potential barriers to book use. These barriers may include the lack of discretionary income, low parental literacy, cultural beliefs, and family stresses that do not allow time for reading aloud. Research findings point to a dire need for literacy support for poor families:

- “Children in families with incomes below the poverty line were less likely to be read to every day than were children in families with incomes at or above the poverty line. Forty-eight percent of children in families in poverty were read to every day in 2001.” (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001);
- A typical middle-class child enters first grade with approximately 1,000 hours of being read to, while the corresponding child from a low-income family averages just 25 hours (Neuman, Temple University, 1997);
- Almost one in four low-income children have less than 10 books of any kind in their homes (High, Hopmann, et al 1999);

Insert LOCAL statistics here, including # of children living in poverty in your local state and/or city. A resource for this data is the Kids Count Data Book (http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/), an online database that allows you to generate custom graphs, maps, ranked lists, and state-by-state profiles.

FUNDING REQUEST

The______Foundation/Corporation’s emphasis on [Insert funder’s areas of giving] compliments Reach Out Read’s focus on __________.

It is our hope that the _____ Foundation will provide us with _____ to purchase books for new Reach Out and Read programs in need. These dollars would provide _____ books to disadvantaged children in [insert your city, state], and would enable us to provide children in need with the key building blocks needed to enter school ready to learn. [Insert local program information here, including # of children served, pediatricians trained, volunteers, etc.]
ROR and 23 children’s book publishers have partnered so that ROR programs receive a discount of at least 50% on all books purchased through the ROR Book Catalog. These low book prices ensure that we are able to put [3.2 million] books into the hands of over [2 million] children each year. It is important to note that for many of the children we serve, English is not their first language. ROR has translated a number of books into 12 languages, including [Spanish? and Portuguese?]. Both of these languages are widely used in [Insert your program location] neighborhoods.

PROJECT EVALUATION

Reach Out and Read (ROR) is a pediatric early literacy promotion intervention supported by a rapidly increasing number of peer-reviewed research studies. These studies indicate that with participation in ROR programs, there is a significant increase in child-centered literacy orientation (CCLO) at home, as indicated by increased numbers of parents who report reading aloud as a favorite family activity. Research studies conducted by Pamela High, M.D. and Alan Mendelsohn, M.D. have reported increases in receptive and expressive language scores in preschoolers after they receive books, and their parents receive anticipatory guidance from ROR providers as compared with similar children who do not participate in ROR. The outcomes reported are consistent and very encouraging (see attached research summary).

Each ROR program submits bi-annual progress reports to the National Center (see attached progress report sample). In these reports, programs must demonstrate that they are implementing the ROR model studied in the academic research. The information requested includes: number of books distributed in the program, number of children served by the program, amount of money raised independently by the program, and number of family literacy referrals by participating doctors. Programs also report how many providers have been trained in the ROR model and how many are actively participating. Also, an annual quality assurance survey of on-site ROR medical providers is conducted. This survey asks them to assess their programs, especially in relation to the quality and frequency of the anticipatory guidance given by medical providers in the exam room.

The Reach Out and Read program is dependent upon book funding for our programs to ensure the longevity and quality of providers of the model. More importantly, this funding enables us to strengthen families by reaching out to parents and encouraging them to read to their children, and by providing children in need with the key building blocks needed to enter school ready to learn.
Date
Name
Address 1
Address 2
City, State Zip

Dear ______,
Thank you for your generous donation of ______ to Reach Out and Read.

Through your generosity, we will be able to supply books to young children growing up in poverty. With beautiful new books in the home, parents will have the tools they need to help their children learn to love books and learning.

Early exposure to books and the satisfaction that results when parent and child read together form the basis for future learning. Evidence continues to build showing that intervention by pediatricians can dramatically affect parents’ reading practices at home. Recent studies have shown that giving books to infants and toddlers changes parental attitudes and behaviors toward reading aloud and improves child language outcomes.

On behalf of all the children who are growing up with books and a love of reading, all the parents who are sharing the closeness of reading with their children, and all the clinicians who are supporting the healthy development of their patients, we are most grateful for your support.

Sincerely,

No goods or services were provided in consideration for this contribution. Your entire gift is tax deductible. Please retain this document for your records. Federal law requires that you may need to keep this receipt to substantiate any available Federal Income Tax charitable deduction; as your canceled check or credit card statement is not sufficient for contributions of $250 or more.