

Fall 2008

A Coalition of 228 ROR Clinical Locations, Serving More Than 170,000 Children

Reflections from the Road

School buses at every street corner remind us that school is again in session. So, let's consider our ROR ABC's:

Advocates
Books (and more books)
Children

Who are our advocates? All the ROR doctors, nurses, Executive Directors, CEOs, and Operations Managers who know it's important to promote books and reading among their patients. It's the medical assistants, office managers, and secretaries who coordinate their ROR Programs. It's federal and state legislators who vote "yes" to appropriations for ROR, ensuring that families learn how they can prepare their children for success in school and in life. It's myriad volunteers who hold used book drives, read to children as they wait, or hold bake sales to raise funds for ROR programs. It's the philanthropists with their individual private donations and corporate sponsorships.

ROR books are not only important building blocks, they are useful tools in the exam room that help medical providers gauge a baby's manual dexterity or receptive and expressive language skills. They become a bridge for talking about bedtime routines or the importance of transitional objects, and so much more. Importantly, the books delight both children and parents, and become for families another clear choice for entertainment and quality time spent together.

Welcome Aboard, Heather Robinson!

We are pleased to announce Heather Robinson, MPH, as the new Central Massachusetts Regional Coordinator for Reach Out and Read. Heather began work on July 1, and is busy meeting the many ROR coordinators and providers in Worcester County.

Because of the tremendous growth of ROR in Massachusetts during the past three years, part-time regional coordinators have been hired to more effectively support existing programs and to continue outreach efforts throughout Massachusetts.

Heather holds a Masters in Public Health and has been working in health education for over 20 years. In addition to her work with ROR, Heather also is a health and fitness specialist teaching spinning and group exercise classes.



WELCOME TO ROR!

Abington Pediatrics, Abington
Fairview Pediatrics, Chicopee
Children's Medical Services, Dartmouth
Orchard Medical Associates, Indian Orchard
Community Health Center of Cape Cod, Mashpee
Beth Israel Deaconess Family Medicine, Medfield
Pediatric Associates of Hampden County, West Springfield
Pediatric Associates of Hampden County, Westfield

And the children? They are our hope-in-action; they deserve the very best from us. Is your ROR program all it can be? Remember the ROR basics:

- 1) Every visit begins in the waiting room – make it literacy rich!
- 2) Start your exam with the book – by doing so, you're less likely to forget to offer relevant anticipatory guidance OR the book, and you get valuable developmental information as you observe the child using the book.
- 3) Remind parents to read aloud daily – and that they can expand on what they're reading by posing what, when, where, and why questions. Model this interaction when possible.
- 4) Recommend obtaining a library card!

– Gretchen Hunsberger,
ROR-MA Programs Director

ROR advocacy runs in the family. Heather's husband, Ron Adler, is a family physician at Hahnemann Family Health Center and has practiced ROR there for ten years, where he also trains UMass family practice residents in the mission and best practices of ROR. Heather and Ron have two sons and live in Worcester.

In her spare time, Heather still enjoys reading to second graders at her children's former elementary school. Her hands-down favorite

book for that age group? "All About Sam" by Lois Lowry.

Please don't hesitate to call or email Heather at 508-868-6090 or heather.robinson@reachoutandread.org. You should expect to hear from her soon, if you haven't already!



From the ROR-MA Medical Director...

Every September, regardless of our age, most of us still feel a certain pit in our stomach. Whether we are 7 years old and thrilled about the start of “big kid” second grade, 14 years old and nervous about our first day in “really big kid” high school, or 45 years old and dreading the deluge of “emergency” back to school physicals, we all feel it in some way. The crispness of the wind and the excitement in the air of new beginnings is almost more palpable than the official start of the year on January 1. With September comes promise, opportunity, new starts – and perhaps shoes.

With that, I would like to encourage all to consider adding a new subject to the list of topics we discuss with families at routine health care maintenance: specifically, the benefits of the public library in children’s lives. September is “Library Card Sign-Up Month” and is a perfect opportunity to promote this critical “Back to School Item.”

With the September return to school we can seize the opportunity to promote libraries as a place where kids can come to get homework help and check out books, but they can also check out free music, DVDs, and use the Internet to make after-school life a little more fun.

If you still need “evidence” check out the work of Dorothy Damore, M.D., who examined a group of preschool and school-aged kids in two practices in the New York metropolitan area. (Damore DT. Preschool and school age activities: Comparison of urban and suburban populations. Journal of Community Health. 27(3):203-11, 2002.) Questionnaires were completed for 66 urban preschool children, 70 suburban preschool children, 57 urban school-age children, and 61 suburban school-age children during the school year. Also, questionnaires were completed for 63 suburban school-age children during the summer.

The suburban preschool children spent more time outdoors, were read to more frequently, visited the library more frequently, and more often attended summer camp. The suburban school-age children spent more time outdoors, more frequently participated in a community sport league, and more often attended summer camp. The urban school-age children watched more television or videos. During the summer, suburban school-age children spent more time outdoors, while during the school year, suburban school-age children used the library more frequently.

The results speak for themselves: Pediatricians caring for urban children may have an important opportunity to promote participation in sports and educational activities like using the

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“We LOVE this program! Our patients are very involved and ask for books. The best reward for us is to see patients and parents together reading the books.”

- Cheryl M. Greenfield, M.D., Gleason & Greenfield Pediatrics, Marion, MA

PROGRESS REPORTING Tracking and Reporting Donations

When you receive boxes of used books for your ROR Program, please remember to note the approximate number donated. Then report this number in the next progress report as an in-kind donation. Every progress report pertains only to the previous six-month period.

How do we figure the approximate value of donated books?

We suggest you value each used book at \$.25. A small box of books usually holds about 35-50 books; a large box can hold 75-100. Thus, a box of 50 books can be valued at \$12.50, whereas a large box is valued at \$25.00. **New** books should be valued according to the price on the book.

Why does ROR need this information? You’ll note that we ask for a tally of all your in-kind donations: new or used books, furniture for the reading corner, or someone painting a book-themed mural. These donations are part of the funds you are raising for your Program and help to off-set what ROR-MA Sites need to raise in matching funds.

Should we count our sustainability awards/books? No. Funds or books distributed by ROR-MA to your Program are not in-kind donations.

What about funds we raise? Yes, we also ask for these amounts. If you hold a bake-sale, if your practice supplements the funds ROR awards to you, or if you receive a direct donation, you are asked to note the total of such funds on your progress report, separate from your in-kind donations.

Tip: When folks offer to donate used books, suggest how helpful it will be for them to label each box (on top) with the approximate number of books inside.

SITE VISITS ARE IMPORTANT!

Please call or email your Regional Coordinator to let them know when it would be convenient for them to come for a visit. We like to speak with both your ROR Coordinator and your ROR Medical Champion, even if for 5 minutes! We will be distributing our colorful, new “Reading Tips” posters at these visits. They look great in the waiting room or exam room and feature five little monkeys reading on a tree branch. How cute is that?

Reach Out and Make a Difference

As Communications Intern at the Reach Out and Read National Center, I wrote letters to raise awareness about ROR and thank yous to our donors, drafted op-eds to promote programmatic ideals, and of course, like so many loyal interns, I stuffed envelopes and tinkered with Excel spreadsheets. Yet, because I worked “behind the scenes” and in front of a computer, I only ever developed a theoretical understanding of Reach Out and Read and the children it serves.

On June 30, however, I attended Congresswoman Niki Tsongas’ visit to Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates in Chelmsford. When Congresswoman Tsongas sat on the waiting room floor and read “Is Your Mamma a Llama?” to a group of children in line for their pediatric appointments. The children listened with such focus, delighted not only to hear the story and study the illustrations, but also to receive direct attention from an adult. I glimpsed, then, the reason for Reach Out and Read. In witnessing the Congresswoman’s warmth towards the children, the children’s excitement over story-time, and the pediatric



Congresswoman Niki Tsongas reads to a group of children at the Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates in Chelmsford.

practice’s commitment to implementing the ROR model, my two-dimensional concept of Reach Out and Read grew two arms, two legs, and a book.

– Emily Williams, St. Olaf College, 2009
ROR Communications Intern, Summer 2008

Book Review

Reading Magic

Celebrated author of children’s books, Mem Fox, is also the author of “Reading Magic,” recently updated and revised by Harcourt Publishers. In an easy-to-read, informal style, Fox covers (with humor and energy) which books to read to your kids, when to read, and how. Ideally, parents might wish to establish a nightly ritual that includes reading three books each night: one favorite, one familiar, and one new.

As ROR Medical Director Perri Klass, M.D., usually notes, children who are read to learn to love books, and Fox would concur. According to Fox, the benefits of reading aloud to children extend beyond helping them learn to read. She emphasizes the bond which is created between child and parent through these close and happy encounters with books. She also uncovers the three secrets of reading: print (making sense of symbols on a page), language (understanding words), and general knowledge (experiencing the world around us.) Accordingly, “Children who have been read aloud to...know about rhyme and rhythm and repetition”(Fox 93). These are the subtle, intangible benefits of book-sharing that enrich children’s lives immeasurably.

Fox also considers the television vs. books dilemma, making the interesting observation that from a child’s point of view, one of the best things about television is that it isn’t competitive. Indeed, there are no good or bad television watchers; yet in school, everyone can identify the best and worst readers. So the



antidote is to create readers, which Fox says will happen. “...If we continue to read them brilliant stuff from excellent authors whose writing appeals, touches lives, and lingers.” (Fox 144).

This enthusiastic guide is filled with practical advice and activities; yet Fox relies heavily on anecdotal evidence that may leave some readers questioning the validity of her work. While everything she says makes sense, it might be even more compelling with research to support her claims.

Her enthusiasm for reading aloud is contagious – just check out her website, www.memfox.com, and you’ll see! It includes “The Ten Read-Aloud Commandments,” and even samples of her reading aloud to learn from. Perhaps your patients will enjoy knowing about this book?

– Heather Robinson
Central MA Regional Coordinator

“ I just received the box of ‘Global Babies’ books. Thank you for sending them! As the grandmother of two adopted Chinese-born babies, I love the differences and beauty in every culture.”

– Barbara Hawley, Office Manager, Pediatric Specialists of Foxboro and Wrentham

SUSTAINABILITY AWARD REMINDERS

- **This year, sustainability is in the form of books rather than cash.** If you have been a ROR Program for a year or more, you should already have received a shipment of Global Babies. Call Nora at 617-455-0657 if they have not arrived.
- **If you have not yet submitted your progress report, it is overdue!** Please submit!
- **ROR Sites with considerable funds remaining in their accounts were given reduced or no sustainability award.** Spend down those Scholastic account balances! They must be used within approximately one year.
- **Your sustainability award books (from Scholastic) will arrive in November.**
- **Remember that ROR Programs need to supplement ROR funds to the degree they are able.** Begin fundraising, pass the hat at book group, ask for donated used books for the waiting room or for siblings, hold a bake sale, and/or network with local service organizations!
- **Should you run dangerously low on books at any point in the funding cycle, contact your Regional Coordinator.** We'll try to supplement as (and if) extra books become available.

If you have not received our notifications about “books rather than cash” awards for this year’s sustainability, please contact gretchen.hunsberger@reachoutandread.org (617-455-0656). I'll be happy to bring you up to date.

ROR Coordinator Profile

Linda Lajoie

Ten years ago, after dropping off her daughter at Holyoke High School, Linda Lajoie noticed a posting on a corridor bulletin board: “Coordinator needed for start-up of pediatric literacy program at busy pediatrics practice in Holyoke.” As a part-time children’s librarian, she thought, “It’s the perfect job for me.” Holyoke Pediatric Associates agreed. Linda has had great success and fun birthing their ROR baby and watching it grow. As Holyoke Pediatrics ready its celebration of their first decade of Reach Out and Read, we asked Linda to reflect upon the history of their program.



In its youth, ROR did not enjoy the generous legislative support it currently garners. Thus, back in the late 1990s, under the leadership of Dr. Ann Nugent, Holyoke Pediatrics applied to become a ROR Program, but needed a way to ensure their ROR Program’s long-term viability because of limited ROR funding. Since they were a private practice, they’d either have to form their own nonprofit organization or partner with an umbrella organization that already had 501(c)3 nonprofit status. Holyoke Pediatrics decided to form its own.

Complete with a Board of Directors comprised of members from the Holyoke community and Linda as its coordinator, they could now apply for grants to help purchase books and also receive tax-deductible donations. The entire process fostered community buy-in and support. “Everyone – providers, patients, staff, community members – was so enthusiastic, right from the start,” explains Linda. “That, for me, is what still makes this program so successful.”

During the formative years, Linda’s primary role was that of fundraiser. Grants from the Eric Carle Foundation, Rosie O’Donnell Fund, the Beveridge Foundation, and others bolstered donations from their own staff. Today, to supplement their ROR funding, they still hold an annual staff raffle and holiday craft fair. An annual appeal letter generates financial gifts from individuals on staff, as well as from the larger community. Linda likens fundraising for ROR to selling Girl Scout cookies. “Everyone loves them and they are easy to sell.”

Obviously, book ordering is second nature to her; but, she has also used her experience with library story hours to recruit, orient, and supervise volunteer readers in the waiting room. In fact, she hopes libraries across the state will work with their local ROR Programs to share information and generate activities: book drives, story hours, handouts on child development, and read-aloud tips. One very important activity that could happen statewide, she feels, is organizing library card sign-ups in the waiting rooms at ROR Programs.

And Holyoke Pediatrics has a record to beat! Several years ago, they signed up over 200 patients in one week. During the drive, everyone who signed up for a library card received a new book. And in the spirit of friendly competition, the medical assistants and administrative staff simultaneously held their own competition. Whoever signed up the most patients received a prize, too. But of course, the families were the biggest winners because they now

Linda Lajoie continued on page 5

Odds & Ends

2008-2009 ROR Book Catalog

ROR National Center and Scholastic Inc. have worked hard to keep book prices at the same level while adding more collections. Scholastic will mail the catalog in late October.

WBUR (90.9 FM) & Charlesbridge Books

This now famous collaboration to benefit ROR Sites in MA will run from September 23 – October 3. Now's a good time to pledge to public radio! Thank you WBUR and thank you Charlesbridge Books!

November is Family Literacy Month

Plan now for how your clinic/office may want to celebrate. Find out what libraries or others in your area are doing and pass the word to your patients. In Boston, there will be a special event at the Children's Museum on Nov. 9 from 11 a.m – 3 p.m.

New Training DVD

The highly anticipated roll out of our shiny, new training tool has been moved up. Deciding which video clips to use proved more difficult than imagined, since all footage was so excellent! We now have 11 video clips which will be embedded right into a revised set of training slides. All programs should receive a copy before the new year!

Remember to Fundraise

It's not so hard to do and is an important supplement to the funds we provide. How do some folks do this? Great Brook Valley Health Center in Worcester reports that staff members donated \$300 for the purchase of books; and, they have also received hundreds of used books donated by the Millbury (MA) Women's Club. Let us know how YOU raise money and books!

Need Used Books?

We have about 25 boxes of used books sitting in our ROR Storage Bunker in Charlestown. Anyone willing to come there to pick up what they need can arrange to do so by emailing nora.murphy@reachoutandread.org.

Thanks for Volunteering!

Much appreciation goes to Ezekiel Wheeler of Intelligent Labor and Moving, for donating his time (and muscles!) to picking up Borders Books donations that our ROR Programs could not.

THANK YOU, BORDERS BOOKS!

For the entire month of August, Borders stores throughout the state were part of a campaign to collect new books for ROR. Thanks to all their customers, too, who donated 14,715 books to programs from Cape Cod to Western MA!

Inside the Exam Room

I have a 5-year-old Cape Verdean patient whom I've known since birth. She's a little girl who has always been very quiet. At her 5-year checkup, I was even considering referring her for speech evaluation. I gave her a book to look at while I was getting something from my office next door... and I heard her speak to her mom for the first time while in the clinic, "Read to me!" So I held off on the referral. Then last week she was here with her mother for her little sister's appointment. When I walked in she immediately said, "I want a book about a frog!" It was the first complete sentence she has ever said to me.

It turns out that Mom, an immigrant who has just completed her GED, had been taking the girls to story time at the library all summer long, and she'd developed a love for books about frogs. It was such a great experience; having the books helped me to clinically assess the child and also clearly helped this family develop a love of reading at all levels.

– Elise Henricks, M.D.

Uphams Corner Health Center, Dorchester

From the Medical Director

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library. Especially for practices that participate in ROR, this is a great opportunity to continue the message of literacy beyond the 5 year old visit into the school-aged years. This year with our patients, let's really celebrate "Library Card Sign Up Month!"

– Marilyn Augustyn, M.D.
ROR-MA Medical Director

Linda Lajoie

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had access to unlimited supplies of books. As supervisor of the children's room at the Springfield Library, Linda sees daily "how books impact children's lives and how excited they get about books."

Linda is a big fan of books by Rosemary Wells and a number of western Massachusetts authors – Leslea Newman, Mordicai Gerstein, and of course, Eric Carle. The highlight of all her years' work? Meeting Eric Carle. The year she sat on the panel of judges for the Mass Book Awards, he was one of the winners.

Linda has seen changes in ROR over her long tenure, but one thing has remained constant: both patients and providers love ROR. In October, their ROR board is planning a celebration to thank staff for 10 years of dedication to their program. Happy birthday, ROR at Holyoke Pediatric Associates, and congratulations on entering double digits!



Massachusetts

Reach Out and Read

56 Roland Street

Suite 100D

Boston, MA 02129

PLEASE PLACE
POSTAGE
HERE

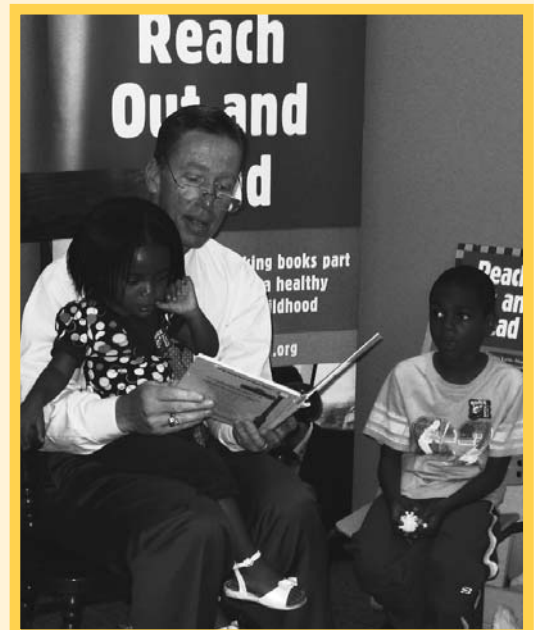
Massachusetts Legislators who Reach Out and Read



Left: U.S. Congressman and ROR Champion Jim McGovern reads at the ROR program in Fall River at St. Anne's Hospital, and again (bottom right) at Great Brook Valley Health Center in Worcester.



Left: Dr. Kimberly Tresch, Claudia Scott, Gretchen Hunsberger, Congresswoman Niki Tsongas, and Dr. Laura Lee at Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates-Chelmsford in June.



Above: Congressman Stephen F. Lynch keeps the kids engrossed at the Brockton Neighborhood Health Center in September.