

**Winter 2007**

**A Coalition of 157 ROR Sites and Satellites**

## A message from the Massachusetts Programs Director

**F**air is fair. We ask you to “progress report”, so it’s probably high time for me to “progress report” to you and toast the accomplishments of the last year:

■ **Funding** First on the list is the good news: We are grateful to Gov. Patrick for restoring much needed funding (\$200,000) to ROR-MA which was jeopardized by former Gov. Romney’s 9-C cuts. With Gov. Patrick’s support, expansion plans remain intact. ROR-MA can continue down the path to reach the goal of adding 50,000 new kids in two years. Twelve programs joined between May and January and account for an additional 14,366 children served.

Currently there are approximately 40 practices in communities ranging from Forestdale to Dartmouth, Easthampton to Ashburnham, and Lowell to New Bedford interested in joining ROR’s mission to make literacy promotion a standard part of primary care provided to children across the Commonwealth.

■ **New ROR MA Medical Director**

Second on the list is equally good news: Marilyn Augustyn, MD, a Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrician at Boston Medical Center (BMC) for the past 15 years, was recently appointed ROR-MA’s Medical Director. Dr. Augustyn has long been affiliated with ROR through her primary care and developmental work at BMC, the founding site of ROR. Dr. Augustyn directs the DBP Clinical Programs at BMC, which include evaluation clinics for children ages 0-18 having a wide variety of developmental and behavioral challenges. Additionally, Dr. Augustyn continues to practice primary care in an inner city practice at BMC.

■ **Six ROR-MA Trainers** This year Dr. Eileen Costello, Dr. Jeannine Audet, and Dr. Joely Edwards joined our existing team of ROR trainers (Holly Oh, MD; Diane DerMarderosian, MD; and Elizabeth Boyle, MD). As new ROR sites come aboard, these physicians lead trainings in the ROR model and focus on the research behind ROR, using the book as an assessment tool, and offering relevant anticipatory guidance. Thanks to each of you for such energetic commitment to Reach Out and Read!

■ **Legislative Visits to ROR Sites** Many thanks to you ROR coordinators and medical providers at health centers, hospitals and private practices across the Commonwealth for opening your doors to highlight the work and the wonder of ROR. This kind of advocacy is important! MA



*Above: Senator Montigny reads to a group of eager children at Greater New Bedford Community Health Center in New Bedford on December 11th.*



*Left: Senator Downing visited the Worthington Health Center on January 22nd.*

representatives at the state and federal level see first hand how their votes directly correlate to constituent services, and in turn, you take part in the vital process of helping to secure funding for ROR programs state wide. In total, there were 10 legislative site visits in 2006. If your program has never hosted a legislative visit, please consider doing so! Contact Abbie Bloom at [abbie.bloom@reachoutandread.org](mailto:abbie.bloom@reachoutandread.org) to find

out how to set one up. It’s easy!

■ **www.myROR.org** This is your portal to all things ROR. It was created specifically to make the role of ROR coordinators simpler by eliminating paper and affording a one click stop for book specials, semi-annual progress reporting, ROR fundraising templates (and other ROR resources), electronic access to newsletters, and for updating ROR with important information such as contact names and training information.

■ **New Infrastructure** The addition of a programs/administrative assistant and two regional coordinators in western and southeastern MA ensures better support for our statewide cadre of ROR coordinators and medical consultants. As regional coordinators, Lee MacKinnon and Alison Corning Clarke, also do outreach to attract new pediatricians and family physicians, without whom we cannot reach our target, while Ellen Rice provides support to them and to the MA Programs Director, as well as

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## A message from the Massachusetts Medical Director

I'm pleased to have this opportunity to further the scope and visibility of the work we do as ROR practitioners. As such, I look forward to working with ROR programs across the Commonwealth, bringing to you my passion for the critical importance, perhaps now even more than at its founding, of Reach Out and Read as one of the first key steps in forming a strong relationship with children and families. I hope to expand the use of the ROR book as a tool to foster the implementation of universal developmental screening and surveillance in primary care. And most importantly, I hope to aid in the expansion of ROR across the state so as to give every child the same opportunity to grow up with a fondness for

books, an essential first step in school preparedness. We all want the same thing: kids growing up healthy and with an even chance to succeed in school and in life.

A personal interest of mine is to unify the residency training experience for all pediatric, med/peds, and family practice residents in Massachusetts. ROR helps meet various Residency Review Committee competencies and furthermore, if we start with physicians in training, we truly can change the culture of medical care for children to one that fosters all aspects of children's development.

**- Marilyn Augustyn, MD**  
ROR-MA Medical Director



## Spotlight on VOLUNTEERS

As Director of Finance and Administration at the Reach Out and Read National Center, I know the world of books...as in keeping the books. Budgeting, accounting, tax returns, fiscal sponsorships...that's my universe; and although I've worked at ROR National for over 5 years now, it wasn't until recently that I ventured into one of our 157 ROR-MA program sites.

Our office recently "adopted" a ROR program in Somerville. We thought it would be a great way for ROR staff to get to know the program, to better understand the ROR mission and meet the families that we serve.

Obviously, I'd known that having volunteer readers in the waiting room is a special part of what makes the ROR model work. But never having seen it in action, when I got to the site in December to volunteer, I have to admit I was a little nervous. I put on my ROR apron and was handed a pile of books - some titles unknown to me, others very large (Big Books, for use on the floor) -- and I was momentarily flooded with memories from school...lugging all those heavy accounting books! So, I confess: I started out feeling awkward, and I was the only one in the room with a book bag!

I asked the first little boy I saw if he'd like to read with me, but he told me he didn't like books. "Ok," I thought, "he doesn't like books." I soldiered on. The second little boy said he didn't read yet. When I explained that I would read to him and he could even pick out the book, he ran to his parent! So far, 0 for two! The third little boy to enter the room was sound asleep in his mother's arms. And that was the first 10 minutes.....

Then, much to my astonishment and joy entered two little girls who were totally into the idea. Soon, two sisters joined us, and we quickly had a little reading circle going, with kids getting called in

for their check ups and new kids joining me every few minutes. To engage some of the older children, I suggested to two older girls that they might like to read to the younger children. They were thrilled to show off their reading skills! It was heartwarming to watch how they patiently took turns, each reading every other page, a natural solution to sharing the coveted task.

And then I read aloud from a book unfamiliar to me. *A Chair for My Mother*, by Vera B. Williams, is about a family living in poverty that can't afford a new chair. The mother, a waitress, saves every night's tip money to afford the cozy chair they want to own. (I'll never tip less than 18%!)

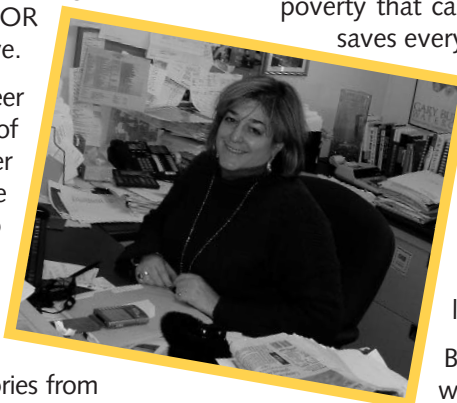
So, volunteer reading was a lot of fun. There were a variety of languages spoken in the waiting room, and it provided me the opportunity to interact with the families who are touched by ROR. The kids all left the office with new books in their hands and made a point of smiling at me upon leaving and showing me their new book.

But it was also eye opening. Many folks came in with no appointment, others on the wrong date, and one came in 2 hours late. Yet, the receptionist always remained calm and kind. She was thrilled that I was there to interact with the children, as she was finally able to turn the TV off. And, it was rewarding for me to leave my desk and be touched by these kids. Who knew I could read with such inflection and end up with a group sitting around me?

I highly recommend volunteer reading to any one, but especially to administrators and staff at any ROR location. Become part of the ROR team!

I can't wait to do it again and already signed up for February!

**- Ellen J. Berlin**  
Director of Finance and Administration, ROR National



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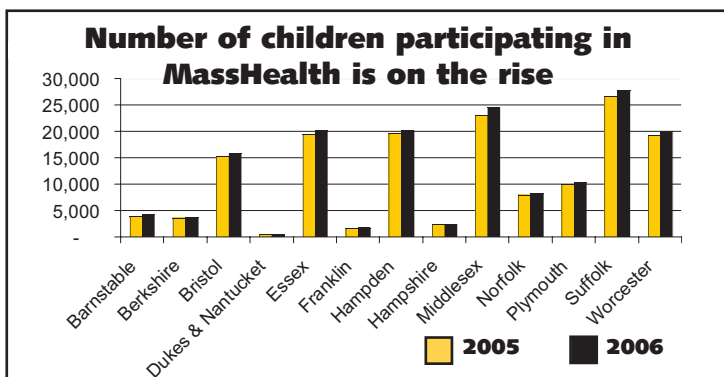
handling inquiries from volunteers and used book donors.

■ **Literacy Rich Waiting Rooms** Rather than require each ROR site to utilize volunteer readers, ROR National now encourages the development of literacy rich waiting room environments (which certainly may still include volunteer readers) as reinforcement of the anticipatory guidance received in the exam room. Having gently used books available for families to share while they wait and/or information on the local library, literacy themed posters or murals, etc., reminds families that turning off the TV is very good, and that replacing that action with a loving parent/child interaction over a book, is even better!

The endearing bilingual READ TO ME videotape was sent to sites to visually demonstrate to parents and caregivers the joys (and realities!) of reading to children two and under. This tape can be shown in waiting rooms, as it is on a continuous loop. Need a copy? Contact Ellen Rice.

■ **State Wide Gently Used Book Initiative** Ellen Rice is busy connecting donors to ROR programs. Reaching out to scouting troops, service organizations, faith based groups and other volunteers, Ellen hopes to ensure sites have all the used picture books they need for waiting rooms, sick visits, and/or siblings tagging along to the well child check. If you need a donation or know of potential donors, email [ellen.rice@reachoutandread.org](mailto:ellen.rice@reachoutandread.org).

■ **The On-Going Need** ROR-MA is now a coalition of 157 programs, annually serving approximately 125,000 children through the distribution of almost a quarter million books. Yet, there's more work to be done. According to Kids Count (2005), 22% of Bay State 4th graders score below basic reading levels. Other statistics: 17.4% of 18-24 year olds in Berkshire County, 19.7% in Worcester County, 14.9% in Suffolk County, 23.9% in Barnstable County, 24% in Essex County, and 31% in Dukes County don't have a high school degree (Kids Count, 2000).



Now that I've submitted my progress report to you, good luck submitting yours to ROR! Deadline is March 4th, 2007.

My continued thanks for all you do to promote the literacy development of the most vulnerable children in the Commonwealth.

– **Gretchen Hunsberger**  
Massachusetts Programs Director

## Welcome, Alison!

**A**lison Corning Clarke joined the Massachusetts coalition in November as the new Southeast Regional Coordinator. Like Lee MacKinnon in western Massachusetts, Alison provides support to existing ROR programs and reaches out to possible new sites in her region – Norfolk, Plymouth, Bristol, and Barnstable counties.



Alison has recently been traveling to ROR sites throughout the region, putting names to faces of coordinators and medical consultants, trouble shooting for new sites, and is looking forward to making springtime visits to those she hasn't yet visited. Her efficiency and energy is a real boon to our programs in the southeast.

Alison has an MSW, as well as an MA in Children's Literature from Simmons College, and has worked with children's books in many capacities, most recently volunteering to coordinate the book donations at Cradles to Crayons in Quincy. Alison and her husband have two older children and a son still at home; when she isn't driving or reading, she is unpacking boxes in their new home in Dedham. She can be reached at [alison.clarke@reachoutandread.org](mailto:alison.clarke@reachoutandread.org)

## Western Mass Update

The state legislature, in creating the new Dept. of Early Education and Care, expressed a strong desire to see the many individual early childhood programs funded by the state collaborate in ways that benefit children. In western Massachusetts, ROR is teaming up with local Community Partnerships for Children and Mass. Family Networks to do just that. Excited about the impact ROR could have on the development of young children in their communities, CPCs and Family Networks in Easthampton, Ware, Palmer, and Monson have helped introduce ROR to local medical practices that don't yet offer ROR. From placing phone calls to organizing used book drives to convening meetings of key community players, these early childhood programs have joined forces to support the development of ROR in these more rural areas.

As a result of this collaboration, new medical providers have applied to offer ROR in towns identified by the Mass. Dept. of Education as communities in need of extra support for early literacy. Additional applications are anticipated. Through frequent and early exposure to books, young minds are stimulated and young lives enhanced; they can enter school better prepared to learn. Making that happen is a vision we all can share. By building collaboration we make it happen.

– **Lee MacKinnon**  
Western Massachusetts Regional Coordinator

## Expanding upon the ROR model in the exam room

“...We are taking active steps toward putting the power of the library card in their hands.”  
– Dr. Patricia Prince, Pediatrician

The Library Card Initiative, a joint effort of ROR at Boston Medical Center (BMC) and the South End branch of the Boston Public Library (BPL), was launched just this past November. Its aim is to encourage BMC-ROR families to access the local library, and as such, reflects both organizations' commitment to addressing the literacy needs of the communities they serve. This initiative is something other ROR programs might wish to consider implementing.

ROR at BMC has a long history of making literacy referrals. But the Library Card Initiative takes this idea one step further. In addition to receiving a book at each well-child check, patients now also receive an information packet from their doctor about the library. The packet includes a library card application, a list of local branch hours and locations, and information regarding free, family-oriented offerings, such as the Homework Assistance Program.

BMC families now leave the clinic with all the information they need to begin accessing their local library. According to Dr. Patricia Prince, BMC's ROR Medical Consultant, “the Library Card Initiative has been wonderful for our patients. For so many of our families, there is some kind of barrier to taking advantage of the public library, whether it be due to language, apprehension, or a simple lack of understanding. Having the library card applications available at our fingertips has allowed us to engage in more than hypothetical conversation about obtaining a library card; we are actually taking active steps toward putting the power of the library cards in their hands.”

On the launch date and after informing staff at a provider meeting, Dr. Prince and ROR Coordinator, Jessica Goldberg, unveiled a colorful display highlighting the library's attractions by simply hanging it on one side of the rolling ROR book cart that sits in the pediatric exam hallway. Dr. Prince then brought out home made cookies to stir up a bit more excitement among the providers. The display serves as daily reminder to docs, and Jessica replenishes the packets as needed. The patient response has been great.

“One family of mine,” noted Dr. Prince, “brought their kids to the children's room at their local branch for the first time after a recent visit, and told me that the girls were so incredibly excited it was if they had walked into Disneyland. They had never before seen so many bright, colorful books in one place. They will definitely be going back... I can practically feel the language acquisition they will be gaining from the exposure to all of those rich, valuable books! It does wonders to reinforce the message of Reach Out and Read that we share with our patients every day.”

## Could You Use...

### Gently Used Books?

Cradles to Crayons (C2C) in Quincy has most recently been in the news for “Stepping Into the Future”, a partnership with the Deval Patrick Inauguration to provide footwear for needy children in the Bay State. But C2C provides far more than shoes. It provides to low income, poor, and homeless children the everyday supplies essential for their health, education and well-being...and that includes books.

For ROR-MA sites this means C2C is a ready source of gently used, books for waiting rooms. Books are available, sorted by age, and may be requested at [www.cradlestocrayons.org/account/login/asp](http://www.cradlestocrayons.org/account/login/asp). Books can be picked up at the Quincy warehouse or, with advance notification, may be delivered to a site.

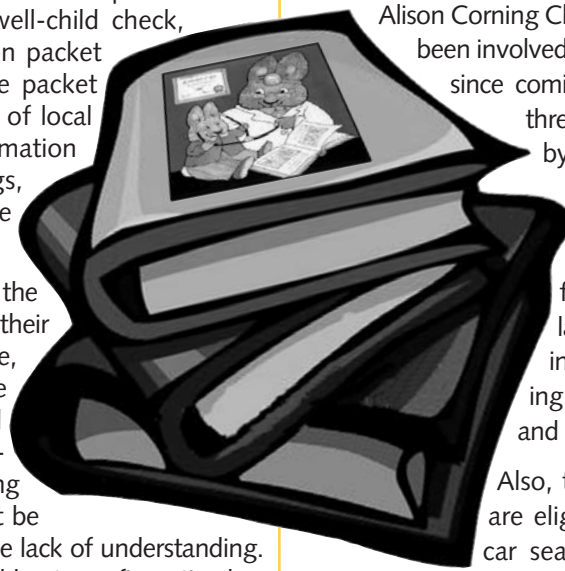
Alison Corning Clarke, Southeast Regional Coordinator, has been involved with organizing the book donations there since coming as a volunteer with her son's school three years ago. “I am incredibly impressed by the efficiency and logic of their model,” she says. “The supplies are donated in a targeted, focused way that ensures they reach the best possible recipient. And further, beyond all this distribution, C2C's larger aim is to enlist families and children in a life-long habit of giving back by engaging volunteers of all ages to help sort, wash, and package the supplies.”

Also, the youngest patients at ROR-MA sites are eligible to receive such essentials as cribs, car seats, strollers, and safety supplies; older children may request clothes, books, backpacks or toys. Anyone interested in books or baby items can contact [Alison.clarke@reachoutandread.org](mailto:Alison.clarke@reachoutandread.org)

### Need temporary help with ROR coordination or book ordering?

“One of the perks of being ROR-MA programs assistant,” says Ellen Rice, “is that I occasionally visit sites, thus furthering my understanding of how ROR works in health centers, hospitals, and private practices.” So what that means for both new ROR sites and old ones going through periods of transition, is that Ellen can personally assist a site with ROR administrative tasks ranging from selecting and ordering books, to showing you how to track them, to organizing your system so they are more easily distributed at well child check-ups.

If your ROR program might benefit from this type of assistance, please contact [ellen.rice@reachoutandread.org](mailto:ellen.rice@reachoutandread.org) or 617-629-8042 x255, or in western or southeastern Mass, please contact your regional coordinators, Lee MacKinnon (west) or Alison Corning Clarke (southeast).



## ROR PROVIDER PROFILE:

### Lisa Lane, PA-C

Fallon-Clinic, Plantation Street Pediatrics, has been participating in ROR for four months now. At a recent site visit there, when asked how things were going, the on-site ROR medical consultant, Lisa Lane, PA-C, was so enthusiastic in her appraisal, I asked her to tell you why.

"These days, with an emphasis on paperwork and productivity, it's hard to sit back and just smile at our patients. Implementing the Reach Out and Read program has brought just that to our work day...smiles. It's hard not to smile at a 6 month-old eagerly chewing her new board book, or an 18 month-old who demonstrates his developmental prowess by hurling his book at you with the accuracy of a Tom Brady pass. It's hard not to share the joy of a 3 year-old rendering a theatrical performance turning the pages of her new book. These are just a few examples of what we've seen with our patients.

Most of us grew up with books. We had the opportunity to make reading a part of our daily lives from an early age. It seems like such a simple thing to do. It's not always that simple. Many of the patients from our Worcester neighborhoods come from single parent families, and often at the end of the day, their priority is putting a meal on the table and getting everyone to bed so that the parent can catch some much needed sleep. Sharing a book with their children may seem like a lot of effort to a tired parent.

Spending a few extra minutes with parents to discuss the joy of sharing a book as a part of a bedtime ritual may improve bedtime and sleep habits. Explaining to parents that early literacy can improve school readiness may improve school success, and this may lead to career success. Children will develop a love for reading and providing a book and a few words of encouragement may be all it takes to add reading to their daily lives.

In our office, a few simple changes made to emphasize and encourage reading have made a difference. Adding a few books to our waiting area gives a harried parent the chance to interest and entertain her children by engrossing them with a story. They enter our exam rooms with a sense of calmness and are often easier to interact with during the exam. This subtle change is so simple and very beneficial.

Reach Out and Read has been an all around positive influence for our practice. Adding a reading area to our waiting room has changed the atmosphere to a happier, calmer space. We have the opportunity to change our patient's lives with literacy, and we also get a few extra smiles in our work day!"

**“ We have the opportunity to change our patient's lives with literacy, and we also get a few extra smiles in our work day!”**

**– Lisa Lane, PA-C**

**– Lisa Lane, PA-C**

*Lisa is a graduate of the Physician Assistant program at Northeastern University. She has practiced at Fallon Clinic for 15 years, and at Plantation Street Pediatrics for the past 5 years. She and her family live in Townsend, MA, and she loves to read...*

## Sovereign's holiday book drive a success



Left to Right: Joseph P. Campinelli, Sovereign CEO; Ellen Zane, Tufts-NEMC President and CEO; and Dr. Barry Zuckerman at the Sovereign check presentation ceremony in January.

For the second consecutive year, Sovereign Bank sponsored a holiday book drive to benefit ROR. This year, each \$2 donation made at a Sovereign location helped purchase a new copy of one of five classic children's titles – Clifford, the Big Red Dog, Where the Wild Things Are, Tales of Peter Rabbit, Goodnight Moon, or Buenos Noches Luna. Donations totaled \$45,000, and the funds raised will help purchase more than 20,000 books for Massachusetts and New England ROR sites.



The ceremony took place at Tufts-New England Medical Center. Dr. Barry Zuckerman accepted the donations on behalf of ROR, saying, "Through the support of Sovereign Bank and their generous customers, thousands of families throughout the region will return home from their doctor visits with a beautiful new book. And the power of that book is enhanced by the message from their doctor about the importance of reading."

Many thanks to Sovereign for its commitment to childhood literacy!



**Massachusetts**

**Reach Out and Read**

**29 Mystic Avenue  
Somerville, MA 02145**

PLEASE PLACE  
POSTAGE  
HERE

# Register ONLINE

**ROR National Conference**

**May 4 – 5, 2007**

**Westin Harbour Castle Hotel  
Toronto, Canada**

Register online at [myROR.org](http://myROR.org)!

Click on the National Conference info box in the  
Announcements column to submit your registration.

Passports are required for travel to Canada.  
Please be aware that passport applications may  
take up to six weeks to process.

For details visit <http://www.travel.state.gov/>

## **NEW ROR MA SITES:**

We are pleased to welcome  
the following practices to the  
Massachusetts coalition of  
ROR programs:

**Briarpatch Pediatrics,  
Yarmouth Port**

**Dr. Sang Chung and  
Dr. Barbara Rugo-Focht,  
Whitinsville**

**Greater Lowell Pediatrics,  
Lowell**

**Meetinghouse Family Practice,  
Westminster**

**Winchendon Health Center,  
Winchendon**