



Massachusetts

Massachusetts Coalition Newsletter

Reach Out and Read Massachusetts Coalition ■ 29 Mystic Avenue
Somerville, MA 02145 ■ TEL: 617.629.8042 x234

Summer 2006

A Coalition of 153 ROR Sites and Satellites ■ More than 230,000 new books provided to MA children

Reflections from the Road

I love the Georgian and Federalist style homes that line the streets of Newburyport, near where I live. Former sea captains' homes, they are stately evidence of the bustling commerce that long ago first enriched this coastal city. In following eras, Saltboxes and Victorians, Capes and Colonials, 50's housing developments and '90's McMansions sprang up, too. At various times, middle class entrepreneurs, hardworking fishermen and factory workers, alike, converted clam shacks and summer cottages into year round homes for their families. As such, a certain quirky architectural mélange is found throughout the city and lends Newburyport a character so pleasing that tourists flock there.

Children throughout the Commonwealth flock to over 140 different ROR programs. What do these buildings look like that house our programs? Some are spanking new facilities, such as the Greater Roslindale Medical and Dental Center. Others are massive concrete hospitals in the heart of urban centers. Still others are small private practices on busy streets in Lynn, Framingham or Attleboro. The vast majority of ROR programs reside within community health centers comprised of older buildings built-out many times over. East Cambridge Health Center hosts an industrial looking architectural flourish, rising forth in bright yellow from its roof, while Rox Comp bathes its patients in the glow of the beautiful tones painted on the inside walls. And the tiniest ROR venue is so small that nurse practitioner, Ellen Ruell, claims tongue-in-cheek that working there is like "practicing in a boat!" What an apt description, given their galley-like environs within an apartment at Plumley Village in Worcester!

Working in similarly close quarters are the staff of the ROR National Center. Inside our industrial, cinder block building (a veritable cement beehive) can be heard the clicking of computer keys and the intermittent buzz of ROR National Center's busiest bees: those who lend systematic support to thousands of ROR sites across the country, raise funds, handle finance and administration, or work in government affairs. This is what goes on in a second floor walk-up above a metalworking shop literally a stone's throw from Rt. 93!

The buzz word inside ROR National (thanks to last year's boost in Federal funding) has been expansion. According to Webster's, expansion means "an increase in economic and industrial activity," but to ROR'ers, it means something very basic. Expansion of ROR within Massachusetts

and throughout the country means more books in the hands of more children who need them. Expansion means more doctors and nurses encouraging more parents to share the rich language of life, and books, and their native language, during a time when these young brains and imaginations tremendously benefit from stimulation and personal connection. Obviously, though, expansion doesn't just happen.

This year's remarkable expansion effort unfolded because of the diligence and focused attention of state and federal legislators, ROR site coordinators & medical providers, and a few savvy and extraordinarily hard working people at the ROR National Center in Somerville. In this newsletter you'll learn what they do and thereby better understand the process of garnering funds from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, because this is how your ROR site receives its funding for books. Via the type-written word, please meet Matt Venio, Kelly Taranto, and Sarah Holmes, a few very industrious ROR worker bees.

*Gretchen Hunsberger
ROR MA Programs Administrator*

NEW ROR SITES: Welcome!

We are very pleased to be broadening ROR's reach within the Commonwealth. Currently serving over 75% of Massachusetts children growing up in poverty, we are proud to note the addition of the below ROR sites since July 1, 2005:

Pleasant Street Pediatrics, Attleboro
Neponset Health Center, Dorchester
Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, New Bedford
Rehoboth Seekonk Medical Center, Rehoboth
Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates, Chelmsford
Brockton Neighborhood Health Center, Brockton
Mansfield Health Center, Mansfield
Reading Pediatrics Associates, Reading
Primary Care Family Center, Malden
Outer Cape Health Services, Inc., Wellfleet and Provincetown
Revere Family Health Center, Revere
Porter Pediatrics Comprehensive Pediatric Health Care, PC, Boston
Plainville Family Practice, Plainville
CHC Gardner Community Health Center, Gardner
Stanley Street Family Health Care Center, Fall River
Fallon Clinic – Auburn
Fallon Clinic – Leominster
Fallon Clinic – May St., Worcester
Fallon Clinic – Milford
Fallon Clinic – Plantation St., Worcester
Fallon Clinic – Webster
MGH Pediatric Group Practice, Boston
Desmond Callan Community Health Center - Orange

ROR SITE VISITS- ROR Sites in Action!

By Sarah Holmes and Kelly Taranto, ROR National Center

Over the past several months, ROR programs across the Commonwealth have played a pivotal role in helping ROR maintain its federal and state funding. How? By hosting their federal and local legislators at site visits. In the course of just 30-45 minutes, lasting and powerful impressions of the impact of ROR are created. When the time then comes to support funding for ROR, these legislators draw upon personal experience rather than just dry facts and figures as they decide which way to cast their vote.



U.S. Senator John Kerry reads at Boston Medical Center

Jessica Goldberg, ROR Coordinator at Boston Medical Center, was a gracious host to U.S. Senator John Kerry who read *Five Little Monkeys* to a lively group of children who joined in (quite loudly!) on the appropriate verses. The Greater Lawrence Family Health Center was host to U.S.

Rep. Marty Meehan, who got right down on the floor with the kids to read from his own copy of *Five Little Monkeys*, borrowed from his children's bookshelf! Other site visits include U.S. Rep. John Olver reading at Community Health Connections in Fitchburg, State Sen. Ed Augustus at the Family Health Center of Worcester, and State Rep. Jen Flanagan at Pediatric Associates of Leominster. Special thanks go out to all those who helped coordinate these important visits that serve to benefit all ROR programs in Massachusetts.



US Rep. Marty Meehan reads at Greater Lawrence Family Health Center.

How easy is it to host a legislative visit? Very easy... and the government affairs team is here to help make your visit a success. Site visits are short, fun, and a great way to show off your health center. And remember, these legislators make decisions not only about ROR funding but also on many other health center related matters. Keep in mind that such a tour can also include your dental clinic, your behavioral health clinic, or other key services you provide. It's a win-win.

You simply need to:

- Round up some children to be read to (local day care centers, children of staff and/or patients, etc.)
- Have your Medical Director, ROR Medical Consultant, and ROR Coordinator available to walk the legislator through your clinic or office to show how ROR works at your site.

We do the rest, from scheduling to sending you everything you need: posters, banners, stickers, books, and press kits for any press that attends. Articles in the local paper typically highlight the good work of your pediatricians as well as Reach Out and Read. Another win-win.

ROR held its third Capitol Hill Day on March 8, in Washington, DC. This day of personal advocacy by ROR coalitions from across the country resulted in 177 meetings with staff and Members of Congress to talk about Reach Out and Read and our \$10 Million federal funding request. The MA coalition was well represented by Gretchen Hunsberger, Mass. Programs Director, who met with staffers from six Massachusetts Representatives in a delegation meeting. Her meetings on Capitol Hill, along with all of your hard work on our "Dear Appropriators" letter campaigns, resulted in full support of our FY07 budget request from the entire MA delegation.

Kelly Taranto- *Manages all of ROR's major fundraising events and grassroots events, including Read and Romp, Read Romp + Rock, Capitol Hill Day and site visits with federal officials. She also manages our grassroots campaigns to secure ROR's federal funding.*

Sarah Holmes- *Sarah works with both the Government Affairs and Development Departments. She works with Kelly and Matt on ROR's grassroots campaigns to secure federal funding, ROR's Hill Day, and this year will coordinate ROR's annual August Campaign to invite elected officials to visit ROR programs during the August recess. In addition, she works with the development department on fundraising events.*



Kelly Taranto and Sarah Holmes

Attention ROR Medical Providers!

Do you know families who love ROR or who've especially benefitted from ROR? If so, please email ROR Director of Communications: nancy.berman@reachoutandread.org. She would like to present some faces of ROR and highlight their individual stories. In this way, grantors and legislators better understand the impact of putting books into the hands of those who need them. Please contact Nancy!

INSIDE ROR's Efforts on Beacon Hill

by Matt Veno, ROR National Center

As Reach Out and Read has grown from a pilot project at Boston City Hospital to a pioneering national model for health-based early literacy promotion, Massachusetts has served as a laboratory to test new and different ways to support doctors and nurses in encouraging parents to read to their children.

For example, in the late 1990s, even before there was a ROR National Center at BMC, we were building and supporting a city-wide and then statewide outreach and support capacity that later became a model for "coalitions," which now number more than 20 and play a central role in the program's success.

At the same time that federal funding first became a reality for ROR, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts included \$500,000 in matching state funding to spur broad implementation of this promising initiative. Today there are many exciting statewide partnerships that include public support, and many more are in the pipeline.



Lt. Gov. Kerry Healey reads to children at Boston Medical Center site visit.

Last summer, continuing the Massachusetts laboratory approach, we launched a comprehensive advocacy effort focused on Beacon Hill lawmakers to increase ROR's state appropriations to \$1.3m. We developed an innovative statewide expansion and quality-improvement plan, and after seven years of level-funding vigorously sought to grow the Commonwealth's investment to support it.

As the budget process begins with the Governor's budget proposal, we initiated our advocacy efforts by cultivating key administration officials, including Lt. Governor Kerry Healey, and making our case. Dr. Perri Klass, ROR's Medical Director, met with the Lt. Governor at the State House, and followed up by having her see a demonstration of ROR at Boston Medical Center and speak with us in detail about our plans. Ultimately this effort was successful, and Governor Romney included \$800,000 for ROR in his budget proposal for the first time, which while less than our request, represented significant movement in the right direction.

In February we quickly turned to the legislature, and began cultivating House and Senate champions to promote our request to their colleagues and guide it through the legislative process. Working with our local programs in key districts, we

educated legislators about the uniquely powerful and cost-effective ROR model, the program's impact and importance for constituents in their district, and our ambitious plans for the coming year. We met personally with legislators and their staff, encouraged ROR sites in their districts to contact them, invited them to see ROR in action in their districts, and secured timely news articles and editorials about ROR and our effort on Beacon Hill.

In the spring, these combined efforts began paying off. In April, the House of Representatives passed a budget that included \$800,000 for ROR, a \$300,000 increase over last year, and in late May the Senate included \$1m. While these outcomes represent significant progress, the effort is not yet over. Over the next several weeks, House and Senate negotiators will hammer out differences in the two bills and agree on a final amount to be allocated to Reach Out and Read.

Despite the efforts of ROR National Staff and consultants, this progress would not have been possible without the participation of local ROR advocates – doctors, nurses and coordinators at clinics, hospitals and practices across the state who also played their part by contacting elected officials to urge action, or hosting them for a visit to see ROR in their district. As we all work together to bring this proven, innovative program to more children and families across the Commonwealth, we will continue to rely on you to see that key decision makers are familiar with ROR, our impact and our plans. Please join us!

Matt Veno- *Matt has worked with Reach Out and Read for nine years in a number of different capacities. He currently coordinates our public funding efforts in Washington, DC and in Massachusetts, increasing awareness for the program among elected officials. Matt is also working on a special project to expand ROR on military bases.*



Matt Veno

Special Thanks to the LINDE FAMILY FOUNDATION!

As a result of Linde's continuing support of Reach Out and Read, 29 ROR programs in Massachusetts received NEW BOOKS published in Portuguese, Vietnamese, and Chinese, and published by Starbright Books (NYC). For additional information on their wide array of books offered in many languages, check out www.starbrightbooks.com

A Random Act of Kindness

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Jaclyn Donovan, a 2004 graduate of Worcester State College (who has her eye on one day becoming a children's librarian), single-handedly enlisted the support of her community to amass an enormous collection of new and used books to send to those displaced by Katrina. She collected over 50 boxes of books.

Jackie's connection to Reach Out and Read began while in high school in Salem, working on her local ROR program's fundraisers, and it continued during her years at Worcester State by volunteering at UMass Memorial. Involvement in ROR combines her interest in literature with her desire to give back. "I just found the program's preventive strategy something that dovetailed with my interests. ROR has also always encouraged my desire to collect literature for communities. Sharon Lindgren (ROR coordinator at UMass Memorial) and those at UMass have been more than just facilitators, they've been great friends; they are exceedingly strong and encouraging people."

At the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, where Jackie now works in the readers' services department, the donated books "were piled from the floor to the ceiling and drop boxes everywhere were spilling over with books!" She adds, "most were brand new, and those that weren't, had a very loved, previously read feel to them." Those that arrived on or before the shipment date — the pallet weighed close to 1,200 pounds! — went to the University of Texas Medical Center, home to a very large ROR program, where they were then dispersed to pediatricians, teachers and nurses to give to the children. Donations arriving after that date were given to UMass Memorial in Worcester — Massachusetts' largest affiliated group of ROR programs.

Like most of us, Jackie was overcome with a sense of helplessness after Katrina, but unlike most, she mobilized others and followed through. She wished to provide something personal but useful once the families' immediate and urgent health needs had been met. Because of her love of ROR she immediately thought of books, which make perfect (and permanent) gifts.

It was a yeoman effort, involving companies such as American Printing and Envelope in Auburn, which provided the shipping supplies and cost of sending the pallet to the Gulf Coast, many Worcester colleges (professors offered their offices as drop off spots), local schools and children, Tatnuck Bookseller, which offered discounts on book purchases, and hundreds of friends, co-workers and relatives who responded and forwarded her email blast. Life being the way it is, her efforts mushroomed into a community wide display of support to address the needs stemming from, as Jackie puts it, "the terrifying triangle of health, literacy and income" disparities in New Orleans.

Thank you, Jackie. Kudos on your stunning act of kindness!! Such dedication to Reach Out and Read makes us all proud.

Children's books are not just loved by kids!

Senator Therese Murray (*represents the Plymouth and Barnstable district*)

1st Book Remembered: *Child's Garden of Verses*, Robert Louis Stevenson

Favorite Children's Book: *The Little House* series, Laura Ingalls Wilder

Representative Alice Wolf (*represents the twenty-fifth Middlesex district*)

1st Book Remembered: Since Alice came to the U.S. from Austria

at age 5, speaking no English, she first remembers a song sung at school, *Good Bye Little Yellow Bird*

Favorite Children's Book: *Make Way for Ducklings*, Robert McCloskey

Representative Jennifer Flanagan (*represents the Fourth Worcester district*)

1st book Remembered: *Raggedy Ann and Andy*, Johnny Gruell

Favorite Children's Book: *Winnie the Pooh*, A.A. Milne

Senator Edward M. Augustus (*represents the Second Worcester district*)

1st Book Remembered: *Make Way for Ducklings*, Robert McCloskey

Favorite Children's book: *James and the Giant Peach*, Roald Dahl

Barb Ducharme, ROR National

1st book she remembers: *The Dutch Twins*, Lucy Fitch Perkins

Favorite Children's book: *Gwendolyn the Miracle Hen*, Nancy Sherman

Martha Gershun, ROR National

1st book she remembers: *The Big Jump*, Benjamin Elkin

Favorite children's book: *A Chair for My Mother*, Vera B. Williams

Gretchen Hunsberger, ROR-MA Programs Director

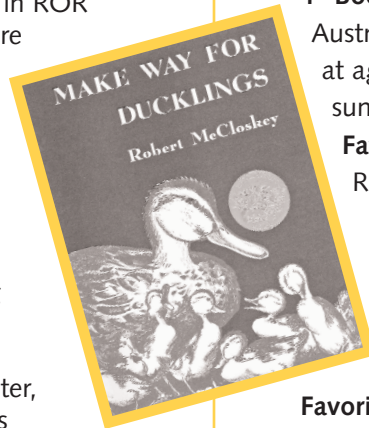
1st book she remembers: *A Child's Garden of Verses*, Robert Louis Stevenson

Favorite children's book: *Miss Rumphius*, Barbara Cooney

Sarah Holmes, ROR National

1st book she remembers: *Blueberries for Sal*, Robert McCloskey

Favorite children's book: *The Jolly Postman*, Janet & Allan Ahlberg



Kelly Taranto, ROR National

1st book she remembers: *Never Tease a Weasel*, Jean Conder Soule

Favorite children's book: *Charlotte's Web*, E.B. White

Matt Venio, ROR National

1st book he remembers: *The Hobbit*, J.R.R. Tolkein

Favorite children's book: *Caps for Sale*, Esphyr Slobodkina

Perri Klass, MD, ROR Medical Director and President

1st book she remembers: *The Wizard of Oz*, L. Frank Baum

Favorite children's book: *The Piggy in the Puddle*, Charlotte Pomerantz

ROR Massachusetts SPRING WORKSHOPS

In March, approximately 40 ROR-MA coordinators and providers attended regional workshops aimed at offering information about adult and family literacy resources available to local community members. Panelists included representatives from the Dept. of Early Education and Care, Boston and Worcester public libraries, Even Start, Literacy Volunteers, etc. Each participant left with a better understanding of the array of literacy services available to their patients and received a binder filled with specific program information and contact numbers. The binders are for use as a reference by providers and/or their patients who may need such services. **To receive a binder** for your pediatric or family practice office, please contact: gretchen.hunsberger@reachoutandread.org.

The winners of the workshop raffles were: Dr. Barbara Sisson, pediatrician at Southern Jamaica Plain Health Center and Alexandra Avedisian, Pediatric Social Worker at Brockton Neighborhood Health Center, who each won a free trip to the April, 2006 ROR National Conference in San Francisco!

ROR Awards!

In November, Perri Klass, M.D., President of Reach Out and Read, accepted the 2005 Massachusetts Book Medal on behalf of ROR for "taking care to build the next generation of readers" from the Massachusetts Center for the Book. Pictured are Dr. Perri Klass, Nicole Roy, ROR Coordinator at Lowell Community Health Center, and Gretchen Hunsberger, ROR-MA Programs Director.



In March, Gretchen Hunsberger, Mass. Programs Director, accepted on behalf of Reach Out and Read, the Massachusetts Assoc. of College and University Reading Educators 2006 literacy award for ROR's work in promoting literacy in the Commonwealth.

Further Introductions from the ROR National Center. . .

Martha Gershun, Executive Director

Martha's 20-year career in multi-site management, leadership of an internet publishing company, and management of a 50-person training dept. for H&R Block makes her the perfect person to shepherd ROR through its current national expansion efforts. Her previous work on the Board of Reach Out and Read speaks of her well established interest in the goals of ROR and her commitment to shaping ROR's strategic vision. Through the creation of this position, our President and Medical Director, Perri Klass, MD, can better concentrate on the important task of training, writing, and speaking about ROR on a national level.



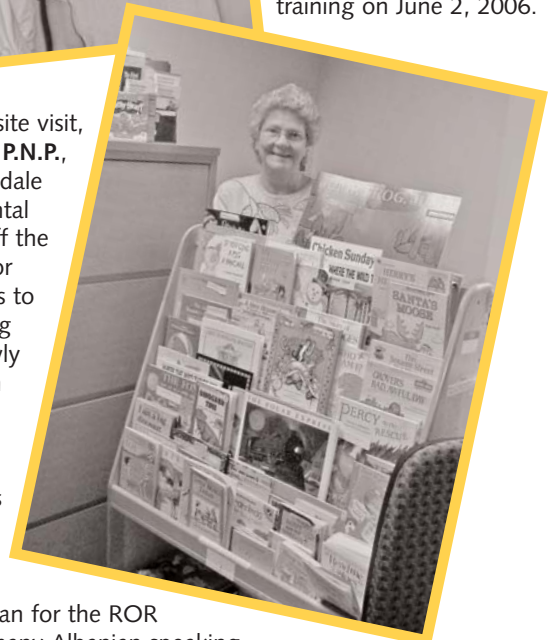
Barbara Ducharme, Director Of National Programs

Upon Ron Bailey's retirement, Barb moved into the position of Director of National Programs after joining the National Center two years ago. Previously the liaison to ROR coalitions throughout the U.S., Barb also worked on developing ROR's program assessment tools. Having earned both an MBA and an EdM, Barb's career has focused on continuing medical education and health care quality improvement, a perfect background for her work at ROR National.



Dr. Andrea Arena (left), Medical Director at Stanley Street Family Health Center (SSTAR), Fall River and **Dr. Jeannine Audet** (right), Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrician at St. Anne's Hospital, Fall River, and ROR-MA's **newest trainer**, at SSTAR's ROR training on June 2, 2006.

During a recent site visit, **Grace McMann, P.N.P.**, at Greater Roslindale Medical and Dental Center, shows off the new book cart for volunteer readers to use in the waiting area at their newly renovated health center. Some of Grace's patients occasionally return from visits back home to Albania with children's books written in Albanian for the ROR program, since many Albanian speaking patients are seen by providers at GRMDC.





Massachusetts

Reach Out and Read
29 Mystic Avenue
Somerville, MA 02145

PLEASE PLACE
POSTAGE
HERE

In Fiscal Year 2006

24 New ROR Programs



13,600 more children served throughout
the Commonwealth



Over 121 new providers handing out books



126,000 children served annually



230,000 books distributed annually

Please Pass The Word!
Prospective ROR programs
can now complete their applications
on-line. For complete information
please go to:
www.reachoutandread.org/program.html

ROR grows through word of mouth...
Please forward this to a family practice or pediatric
provider who may be interested in starting a
ROR program anywhere in the Commonwealth.