



# Reach Out and Read

## A Report from the Second Annual Reach Out and Read National Conference

**Perri Klass, MD, ROR Medical Director**

The second national Reach Out and Read conference was a pretty heady event all around. Over 300 of us gathered in Cambridge, Massachusetts for two days of education, inspiration, conversation, two days of connecting with colleagues and friends. The conference got off to a remarkable

start at a reception Friday night at which First Lady Laura Bush spoke eloquently of her commitment to early literacy. We continue to be grateful to the First Lady for the many ways in which she is spotlighting our program as part of her *Ready to Read, Ready to Learn* initiative, and, certainly, her presence and

her clear commitment to the program started the conference off with enthusiasm and inspiration.

Dr. T. Berry Brazelton and Dr. Barry Zuckerman held an informal, wide-ranging, and altogether delightful public conversation about their careers, their beliefs, and their work in child development. The crowd – full of pediatricians and others

who work in pediatric settings – had many questions and clearly enjoyed the opportunity to watch the two old friends and colleagues in action together.

The conference itself was full of high points. I would like to thank our speakers, who brought expertise and information from a variety of fields, and somehow made it all both relevant and inspiring to a room full of Reach Out and Read supporters. Judith Viorst, author of many books for children and adults, including the catalogue favorite, *Alexander and the Terrible Horrible No Good Very Bad Day*, talked about writing about important subjects for her different audiences. She read from her poetry, from her adult books, such as *Necessary Losses*, and from her children's books, showing us how subjects like friendship, loss, growing up, and even death, can be discussed in different ways for different audiences – but still address the same important themes. She made us laugh and she certainly made us think, and many people came away with copies of her new book *Super Completely and Totally the Messiest*. (continued on page 2)



*First Lady Laura Bush is joined by ROR supporters from Pfizer Pediatric Health, Mellon New England and Scholastic.*



*T. Berry Brazelton, MD and Barry Zuckerman, MD engage in lively conversation at the opening reception.*



*Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) shares a story at East Bay Family Health Care in East Providence, RI.*

## Introduce Your Legislator to ROR!

**Kelly Place, External Affairs Associate**

Hello ROR folks! Having recently moved from Washington, D.C. to Boston, I have joined Matt Veno to help Reach Out and Read grow and expand as a national program. ROR is currently present in two-thirds of all U.S. congressional districts and in all 50 states. I will be working to strategically expand ROR programs to reach all congressional districts and to ensure that ROR continues

to receive national and state recognition. This cannot be done, of course, without the help of those that implement the ROR model – you!

The U.S. Congress will adjourn for its Summer District Work Period at the end of July and will be in recess through Labor Day. This is the perfect opportunity to invite your legislators to your ROR site to see what ROR is all about! (continued on page 5)

# Highlights from Around the Country

## First Lady Laura Bush Shines a Spotlight on the Program

Reach Out and Read programs throughout the country have been enjoying the attention that First Lady Laura Bush's spotlight on the program has generated. In addition to delivering opening remarks at the ROR National Conference, Mrs. Bush also appeared at the University of Illinois at Chicago ROR site in May. At UIC she had the opportunity to read to children, sit in on a patient visit and then speak to the hospital community on the importance of the Reach Out and Read program. At Mrs. Bush's request, the National Federation of Republican Women's Clubs are now lending their support to the ROR program, by fundraising and volunteering for sites in their local areas.

Most recently, Barry Zuckerman, MD, ROR Founding Director and Perri Klass, MD, ROR Medical Director spoke at the White House Summit on Early Childhood Cognitive Development.

## California Coalition Announces Conference

The First California Reach Out and Read Statewide Conference will be held on September 8, 2001 at the State Capitol Building in Sacramento. The daylong program includes a keynote address by Robert Needlman, MD, ROR founder and Senior Advisor, a plenary session on Legislative Advocacy, and workshops, including "Training the Trainer," "Volunteer Ideas and Strategies," and "Nuts and Bolts of Book Ordering". For further information, please contact Suzanne Flint or Pamela Bilz at 650-736-1357.

## New York Coalition Inaugural Benefit Event

On April 25, 2001, over 200 people came out to support Reach Out and Read and pay tribute to the recipients of the 2001 ROR Hero Awards, Dr. Alan Mendelsohn and Ina Devonish-Biggs. Over \$92,000 was raised that evening to purchase books for the 68 ROR programs in the Greater New York Coalition. Attendees representing corporations, publishers, foundations and coalition members and their guests had the opportunity to place a bookplate on one of the 350 books donated by Barnes and Noble Booksellers, a lead sponsor of the event. O. Aldon James, President of the National Arts Club, hosted the program, Rosemary Wells presented the Hero Awards, and Vera B. Williams autographed copies of her books.

## Second Annual Conference Report

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Professor William Teale, Director of the Reading Clinic at the University of Illinois at Chicago, spoke on "Reading, Writing and Developing in Early Childhood," and helped us all look at children's books with new appreciation and understanding of the specific ways that picture books can help young children as they grow. Dr. Teale, whose work on emergent literacy has been a foundation of Reach Out and Read's approach from the very beginning, mentioned his initial surprise and delight at finding pediatricians who were interested in his ideas. He showed us the importance of all different kinds of words and language on the page, delighted us with wonderful examples of picture book art, and suggested that picture books can serve young children as both "mirrors and windows."

Eden Ross Lipson, children's book editor of the *New York Times Book Review*, evoked the magic of children's books and their importance in the lives and imaginations of children growing up. She helped us understand a little about how children's books are perceived and treated in the larger world of books, in which she has worked for many years to make sure that children's literature gets the attention it deserves. She reminded us of the many other forms of entertainment ("screens") which compete for children's attention these days, and urged us to make sure that children get the chance to learn the delights of books.

Throughout this issue of the newsletter and again in the next edition, you will find information on some of the plenary sessions and workshops of the conference. It was a very varied and yet very directed two days – the speakers were excellent, and the audience had a tremendous amount to say as well – which was very much worth listening to! I think it sent us all out feeling that we are well connected to people all around the country with a strong sense of mission and a wide variety of skills, all of which can help us make this program work in many very different settings. We are looking forward to next year!




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Reach Out and Read  
is supported by:

- ❖ Around New England Book Fair
- ❖ Joan and Steve Belkin
- ❖ Boise Cascade Office Products
- ❖ Dorothy Jordan Chadwick Fund
- ❖ Cordelia Corporation
- ❖ CVS/pharmacy
- ❖ The Charles Hotel
- ❖ Dolphin Trust
- ❖ Sandra and Paul Edgerley
- ❖ Fraser Family Foundation
- ❖ Friends of Reach Out and Read
- ❖ The Gillette Company
- ❖ Beth and Lawrence Greenberg
- ❖ Barbara and Steven Grossman
- ❖ Henry Bear's Park
- ❖ The Highland Street Connection
- ❖ Karen and Andy Hirschberg
- ❖ Houghton Mifflin
- ❖ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- ❖ John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
- ❖ Lorna and Stephen Kogon
- ❖ John P. Laucus Foundation
- ❖ Lisa and Stephen Lebovitz
- ❖ Carol and Douglas Linde
- ❖ Mellon New England
- ❖ Pfizer Pediatric Health
- ❖ Pritchard Family Charitable Foundation
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- ❖ Penny and Jeffrey Vinick
- ❖ The Weezie Foundation
  
- ❖ Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education
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# Development Update

**Anne-Marie Fitzgerald, Director of Development**

## Borders Bookstores Partners with Reach Out and Read Sites

We are very excited about a new initiative between Borders Bookstores and the Reach Out and Read National Center. Each time Borders opens a new store anywhere in the United States this year (more than 30 are planned), a local ROR site will be the recipient of a portion of the opening day sales. Some of our sites have been the lucky recipients of not only significant monetary contributions, but brand new books as well. We hope that this first-year relationship will continue to grow and benefit many more sites over the coming years and we are grateful to Borders for this ongoing support.

## Knight Foundation Makes One Million Dollar Gift!

Reach Out and Read has received our first million-dollar grant from a foundation. The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation has renewed its commitment to the program with a one million dollar grant to assist Knight communities around the country and Reach Out and Read with site expansion and long-term sustainability planning. This year's grant focuses on Philadelphia, PA; Charlotte, NC; Palm Beach County, Miami; and Broward Counties in Florida.

## CVS/pharmacy Continues Their Commitment

CVS/pharmacy has chosen an exciting focus for their support of ROR programming this year. Recognizing the need for growing and strengthening the coalition structures around the U.S., CVS has invested \$170K in coalitions in: Washington, DC; Chicago, IL; New York, NY; Tampa Bay, FL; and their corporate home state of Rhode Island. These awards will go toward site expansion, book funding and infrastructure growth.

CVS has also helped to broker a relationship with Warner Lambert Consumer Healthcare, a division of Pfizer, which will provide ROR sites with a gift of \$80,000 worth of beautiful new books in the coming months.

## Joan and Steve Belkin Renew Their Five-Year Pledge

We are grateful to longtime supporters, Joan and Steve Belkin, for their commitment to Reach Out and Read. The Belkins' new gift of \$100,000 was announced by Dr. Barry Zuckerman at the ROR National Conference.

## Wyeth Lederle Donates Books to ROR Programs

Through an ambitious partnership involving Scholastic, Reach Out and Read and Einson Health, 200,000 copies of "Take A Look and See...Every Inch of Me" were donated by Wyeth Lederle Vaccines and distributed to ROR sites throughout the country.

## Reach Out and Read National Board Update

We would like to thank Joan Belkin, a member of the original ROR National Board, who is stepping down at this time, and welcome three new members to the Board:

**Helen Benham** is a Corporate Vice President at Scholastic where she founded the company's Early Childhood Division. The division publishes *Early Childhood Today*

magazine, *Parent & Child* magazine, *The Early Childhood Workshop* (a national bilingual curriculum), and a variety of books for teachers, parents, and children. Benham has also been instrumental in founding the Early Child Care Professional Gold Medal Awards, the first national awards program honoring early childcare professionals. Benham serves on the board  
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# from the National Conference

The Research Plenary was designed to provide an overview of significant research, both published and in process. We were fortunate to have five dedicated ROR researchers, Susan Berry, MD; Pamela High, MD; Alan Mendelsohn, MD; Robert Needlman, MD; and Lee Sanders, MD, present their work. In upcoming newsletters we will complete the summaries of the research presented at the conference. Also, please continue to check the ROR website for research updates.

**Pamela High, MD**  
**Hasbro Children's Hospital/  
 Rhode Island Hospital**

"Making a Difference: Literacy Promotion in Pediatric Primary Care" was presented by Pamela High (and co-authored by Natalia Golova), both from Brown Medical School. This study combined data from two previous studies (Golova et al, Pediatrics, 1999 and High et al, Pediatrics, 2000). A total of 340 healthy infants from primarily low-income, minority families were enrolled and randomized to a ROR-like intervention group and a control group. Of these 225 were re-interviewed after 3.2 well-child visits when the children were between 16 and 25 months old. At the follow-up interview, a modified version of the MacArthur Communication & Development Inventory was administered. Parents were asked if their toddler "understood" or "said" each of 100 words, half of which were taken from the intervention books. This generated receptive and expressive vocabulary scores, respectively. At follow-up, toddlers were 19.1 months old. Half of these parents had high school degrees, a quarter were born in the continental USA, and 72% were Hispanic. Intervention and control families were well matched on demographic and baseline literacy characteristics.

At follow-up, intervention families were more likely to have a Child Centered Literacy Orientation (57% vs. 34%,  $p < 0.001$ ), to read to their toddlers at least three days per week (71% vs. 30%,  $p < 0.001$ ), to read more at bedtime (2.7 vs. 1.5 nights/week,  $p < 0.001$ ) and to have at least five books at home (70% vs. 42%,  $p < 0.001$ ). The intervention appeared to be more effective for higher risk families, those reading less to their infants initially and those with fewer than 10 books at home at intake. For all receptive and expressive vocabulary (total, 50 words in the book and 50 words not in the books) scores, the intervention toddlers were significantly

higher. Hierarchical regressions of total receptive and expressive vocabulary scores were performed. In both cases, demographic variables (child age, parent education, foreign birth and Spanish as only language in the home) predicted at least 15% of the variance in vocabulary scores. Controlling for these factors, the intervention predicted an additional 2-3% of the variance in vocabulary scores. Numbers of days of reading aloud were even stronger predictors of vocabulary scores, suggesting that the effects of the intervention were mediated by increased frequency of parents reading aloud to their toddlers.

In this multicultural group of low-income families, this intervention increased the frequency of parents and children reading together and their enjoyment of this activity. This is important because parental involvement in a child's education is an important factor in school achievement. We believe that this effect was mediated through an increased emphasis on, and enjoyment of, shared reading experiences in intervention families. We concluded from this work that pediatricians may have a real and unique opportunity to counsel high-risk families about the joys, pleasures and ultimate benefits of reading aloud with their young children and that the effects of this intervention may be greatest for those families at highest risk.

**Presenter: Lee Sanders, MD**  
**University of Miami School of Medicine**

The first study, already published, was a cross-sectional survey of the impact of ROR among 122 Latin-American families in Northern California. Our main outcome measure was parents' reports of sharing books with their children more than three times per week. The major conclusion of this study were that ROR seemed to have the greatest impact among (1) families who immigrated from Mexico, when compared with those who had immigrated from elsewhere, and (2) among children aged 12 to 36 months, when compared with younger and older children. The effect of ROR was significant, even after controlling for parent level of education, parental literacy level, and child enrollment in preschool. (Sanders LM, et al. Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine 2000; 154(8): 771-7.)

The second study, not yet submitted for publication, was a controlled study of ROR among *(continued on page 5)*

## Research Summary from the National Conference

(continued from page 4)

36 Latino families, their children and their pediatricians. The primary outcome measure was child performance on the Test of Early Reading Ability (TERA-2). Secondary outcome measures included beliefs and attitudes of parents and physicians. The small sample size was inadequate to detect significant group differences in TERA-2 scores. However, the intensive interview process did show that parents and physicians in ROR clinics were more likely to share expectations about developmental guidance than those in non-ROR clinics.



### HEALTH LITERACY VIDEO INFORMATION

Many people have asked how to get the health literacy video and teaching kit referred to by Terry Davis and Ruth Parker in their conference presentation. You can contact Joanne Schwartzberg at the AMA at 312-464-5355. Cost is \$25.

## Reach Out and Read National Board Update

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of the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, the non-profit organization that administers the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, and on Scholastic Corporation's Board of Directors.

**Martha Gershun** is President and CEO of BizSpace Inc., a Kansas City-based company that has become a major player in Internet publishing. Under Ms. Gershun's leadership, BizSpace has raised over \$5.7 million in venture capital and tripled annual revenue to \$3.4 million. Ms. Gershun has over 20 years of experience in strategic planning, marketing, advertising, and public relations.

Ms. Gershun volunteers with a local Reach Out and Read coalition, KC Reads. She also serves on the Board of the Center for Management Assistance and chairs the Publicity Committee for Congregation Beth Torah. Ms. Gershun holds an MBA from Harvard Business School, where she earned First Year Honors, and a BA cum laude from Harvard University, where she majored in Government. She also earned a graduate diploma in Economics from the University of Stirling in Scotland, where she was a Rotary International Fellow.

**Patrice M. Kozlowski** serves as senior vice president of corporate communication of The Dreyfus Corporation. She is also a member of the firm's Senior Management Committee.

Ms. Kozlowski, who has 17 years experience in financial public relations and communications, joined Dreyfus in 1991 as associate director of corporate communications. She was named director of corporate communications in 1994, promoted to vice president in 1996 and named senior vice president in 2000.

Prior to joining Dreyfus, Ms. Kozlowski was a senior account supervisor with Manning, Selvage & Lee, managing the corporate and financial public relations efforts for a division representing approximately one-third of the New York office's revenue. Previously, she was assistant vice president with Georgeson & Company, Inc. where she developed and managed investor and financial public relations programs for NYSE-listed companies. She began her career as a communications specialist with Philadelphia Life Insurance Company.

Ms. Kozlowski is also a member of the Investment Company Institute Public Information Committee. She received her BA in journalism from Temple University.

## ROR and Legislation

(continued from page 1)

One of the best ways to gain the support of policymakers is to get them out of the offices and into a site. It is important for your legislators to learn about ROR directly from you, their constituent, not just the ROR National Center. You can show your legislators firsthand why the program is so vital to your community and the incredible impact ROR has made locally by reaching so many children and families in need.

This year ROR National is encouraging all of its sites to get involved in an "August campaign." We need to reach all the U.S. legislators we can during this summer congressional recess!

The Congress is expected to consider the Labor, HHS, Education appropriations bill when it resumes in September, so this August recess is critical in timing. Your U.S. legislators, Senators in particular, can play a key role in ensuring that federal support for ROR continues. The best way to gain your legislators' support and to make Reach Out and Read a recognizable program among Members of Congress is to invite them to visit one of your sites. Keep in mind site visits can occur any time that your legislators are home, so if your legislator is not able to visit your site during the month of August, extend the invitation for a future date.

Organizing a site visit is fairly simple and just requires a few steps. For a successful visit, work with your legislator's scheduler in his/her district office and invite key staff from your institution, and others such as representatives from local businesses or foundations, state and local officials, local literacy groups, ROR volunteers, parents and children. For a step-by-step guide on organizing a site visit, and more, visit our website: [www.reachoutandread.org](http://www.reachoutandread.org) and click on the Grassroots Advocacy Center on the left sidebar. Also, let us know how we can help! The National Center has helped plan a number of successful site visits and we can help you develop a winning strategy for yours.



Reach Out and Read  
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## ROR Advocacy Center Now Online

The ROR National Center is encouraging all of its sites to get more involved in advocacy both on the federal and state level. To make your involvement easier, we have created a link on our website called "Grassroots Advocacy Center" that can be found on the left-hand sidebar. This link will provide general advocacy information and tools, more specific advocacy information related to an action alert you received from our office, and policy updates on federal and state legislation related to Reach Out and Read.

So go and check it out! And get ready to take action for Reach Out and Read!

## The ROR ListServ

The Reach Out and Read ListServ (our group e-mail list) – is still the fastest and most efficient way for National Center staff to communicate with our sites on important matters. Please consider joining the ListServ group – we promise not to fill your mailbox with messages! All you need to do to join is e-mail Carolyn Fuller at Fuller@MITVMA.MIT.EDU. She will take care of the rest.



Please check the Reach Out and Read website at [www.reachoutandread.org](http://www.reachoutandread.org) for future training opportunities.

## Contacting the Reach Out and Read National Center

To assist you in navigating our telephone system, attached is a list of people to contact with questions about your ROR program:

**General Program Information** – Jennifer McNamee, Programs Assistant, Ext. 235

**Applications** – Helen Roberson, Program Support Coordinator, Ext. 236

**Progress Reports and Training** – Jackie Miller, National Programs Coordinator, Ext. 232

**Coalitions** – Ron Bailey, National Programs Director, Ext. 230

**Book Ordering** – Jennifer McNamee, Programs Assistant, Ext. 235

**Fundraising** – Anne-Marie Fitzgerald, Director of Development, Ext. 226

**Materials and Public Relations** – Nancy Berman, Communications Coordinator, Ext. 225

**Legislative Advocacy** – Matt Veno, Director of Government and External Affairs, Ext. 227 and Kelly Place, External Affairs Associate, Ext. 224

The  
 Reach Out  
 and Read Program  
 is endorsed by the

American  
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