Reach Out and Read®
National Center

SPRING 2005

# From the Medical Director

**Perri Klass, MD**

By now we all know the exciting news about our increased Federal funding—a real opportunity to reach new children and to help you all do as much as possible for the children we already serve. In other words, we are facing a very exciting time of expansion to new programs, and also a very exciting time of strengthening and improving (and celebrating!) the programs already doing the job. Both pieces of this effort are truly important and deserve our best energies, thought, and investment. We will be asking for your advice every step of the way. We'll ask you what the major barriers and problems are that we should address. We'll ask you to help us figure out strategies for quality improvement and ways to deepen and strengthen the providers' training and their understanding of literacy guidance. And we'll also ask you to refer us to clinics and practices which should have Reach Out and Read but don't, so that we can reach out to them as part of our expansion efforts.

A major piece of this expansion—and a major piece of our quality improvement efforts—will happen through our coalitions, who will have the chance this year to build on the great work they have already done, using their connections and their expertise to expand further in their states and cities. We look to them, as always, for a very special mix of on-the-ground expertise and vision, and we hope to see them grow stronger even as they strengthen their constituent programs.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce—at least on the page—Martha Gershun, our new Director of National Expansion (that's Martha's column next to mine—over on your right, the patient's left). She has been involved with Reach Out and Read on both the Coalition and National levels, serving on the Board of Directors of the Reach Out and Reach National Center

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# National Expansion

**Martha Gershun, Director of National Expansion**

This is an exciting time for Reach Out and Read! With the help of our increased federal support and additional private fundraising, we are embarking on an ambitious two-year plan to reach an additional 1 million at-risk children around the country. As we begin our activities to get many more books into the hands of many more children, we hope that you—who know and love our program best—will help with ideas, energy, and referrals.

While ROR has grown steadily over the past 15 years, we still only reach 20% of the 9.7 million children who live at or near poverty in America. Over the next two years, we plan to serve an additional 1 million at-risk children by adding over 1,000 new ROR sites. At the same time, we plan to improve the quality and consistency of the program we are currently delivering to help you ensure that all of our families receive the maximum benefit of the proven ROR literacy promotion model.

ROR plans to grow in two ways—by helping existing Coalitions recruit new sites within their city/state areas and by recruiting new sites in geographic areas without significant ROR presence today.

ROR currently has 20 Coalitions, providing fundraising, volunteer coordination, book distribution support, site recruitment and training, quality assurance, and community awareness for ROR sites in large cities and states. ROR's national expansion will leverage these existing Coalitions, providing funds to enable local staff to more aggressively

Dr. Nader Ajluni with patient at Blank Hospital in Des Moines, Iowa

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# Keep ROR in the Mix in FY06! Round 2….Onto the Senate.

**Kelly Taranto, Advocacy and Development Manager**

As many of you know, the Reach Out and Read National Center is seeking level federal funding, $10 million, in FY06. As we learned in the recently completed House campaign, this is a very difficult funding year on Capitol Hill and a large showing of support from Members of Congress is critical. At press time, we were just finishing up our work on the House letter and now need to turn our efforts to the Senate letter, co-authored again by Senators Charles Grassley (IA) and Ted Kennedy (MA).

Last year 54 Senators signed the Grassley-Kennedy letter, and our goal this year is at least 50. We need your help to reach this goal! Participating in our Senate campaign this year could not be easier, with our new Legislative Action Center. Check it out: http://capwiz.com/ror/home and click on Action Alert for more information.

The deadline for the Senate letter is May 13th—two days after our first Capitol Hill Day. We also hope you will join us in Washington DC for an exciting day on Capitol Hill where you get to meet face to face with your legislators and staff! For more information on Capitol Hill Day, please call 617-629-8042, ext 224.

# Statewide Book Drive Sponsored by Barnes & Noble

**Anne-Marie La Porte, Seattle, WA**

October was Reach Out and Read (ROR) month at Barnes & Noble stores across the state of Washington. The partnership, initiated by Kendra Jones, MD, was carried out by Anne-Marie La Porte, Governance Consultant, Group Health Cooperative and Martin Maimon, MD, ROR medical director at Tulalip Health Clinic. Lloyd Adalist, Barnes & Noble Community Relations Manager Downtown Seattle helped to get the project off the ground, "We were very pleased to be approached by representatives of Reach Out and Read, and were impressed with the innovative approach ROR takes in getting families to read together." Barnes & Noble committed to posting signage in their stores, coaching staff to solicit book donations, and creating in-store displays.

ROR sites in Washington were polled to determine their interest in participating in the project; almost half expressed interest. Each participating site was asked to promote the book drive at their local clinic and in their community.

The book drive exceeded all expectations. Fourteen stores collected more than 3,200 new books which were shared by local

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# Corporate Update—New for 2005

**Lea Walsh, Foundation and Corporate Relations Officer**

The Mellon Charitable Giving Program, through the generosity of the Arthur Blanchard Trust, has awarded ROR $40,000 to create a new training video. The video will incorporate more footage of doctors with children and parents in the exam room and strategies for using the book as a developmental assessment tool.

The Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation again awarded ROR a generous Relationship Grant. This $40,000 grant will support books for Reach Out and Read programs in four cities: Boston, Providence, Hartford and New York, where the law firm Brown, Rudnick Berlack & Israels are located. Employees will be involved with corporate book drives and volunteer reading at local ROR programs.

Verizon Foundation has granted $185,000 to the ROR National Center. This grant will continue to support 22 ROR programs throughout the country, a marketing initiative in Verizon Plus stores, and the ongoing relationship with the Women's Association of Verizon Employees (WAVE). WAVE members across the country support local sites through book fairs, book drives and volunteering. A check presentation will take place at the National WAVE conference in Baltimore in April.

Rep. Rick Renzi (R-AZ-1) reads aloud to children at the Sun Life Family Health Center in Case Grande, AZ on October 21, 2004.

# Read and Romp! Beth Krueger, Development Assistant

**The very first Read and Romp was created in Texas by Hailey Etheridge Bechtol, President of Friends of ROR-TX, in 2004. Read and Romp is a unique family event which allows children to travel through the pages of some of their favorite storybooks. Activity booths, games, and arts and crafts based on such family favorites as *Where the Wild Things Are, Harry Potter*, and *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* are designed to provide hours of fun for children and their families. This event is an excellent way to raise awareness about ROR, and also a successful fundraiser. The Read and Romp concept is a model for ROR coalitions and programs, and can be re-created in many shapes and sizes. Here are a few examples of what Read and Romp looked like this year…**

Read and Romp Texas brought together over 350 children, parents, and grandparents, "romping" through storybook stations. Stations featured children's authors and celebrity readers, and the children's band, "Trout Fishing in America," led a songwriting workshop for older children followed by a children's concer—turning the entire room into a dancing Conga Line. The event was very successful; it increased awareness of ROR and raised $50,000.

Read and Romp Midlands included a toddler station called Barnyard Dance—where children stamped farm animals on a large paper backdrop—and a Target Reading Corner for parents to sit and share books with their little ones. Five creative story stations were set up including, Wild About Books (reading inside a tent!) and Cool of the Pool (reading inside an inflated pool!). The event also included a balloon maker, mystery book auction, library card sign up for the Omaha Public Library, and book sales from a local bookstore with 30% of the proceeds donated to ROR-Midlands. New this year was an opportunity for donors to sponsor children to come through Girls, Inc. Read and Romp raised $13,000 and brought 250 people to the event.

The first ever Read and Romp Boston included nine interactive storybook stations, a visit from Clifford, the Big Red Dog, and book signing by his creator, Norman Bridwell. Among the stations, the most popular was Pat the Bunny which featured a group called Barn Babies, where children were able to hold and play with live baby bunnies. The event introduced 200 new people to the program and raised $50,000 for ROR. The most exciting feedback we received was one child who exclaimed, "This is the best day of my life!"

# Developmental Tools Workshop

**ROR providers have a unique opportunity to make a real difference in the life of a child by giving a book and discussing literacy with the parent. We encourage you to share these suggestions with your colleagues. If you have a favorite book and tips about how you talk about it with families, please send your suggestions to** training@reachoutandread.org

## Why We Like This Book

**Jackie Miller, MLS, National Programs Coordinator**

Books are chosen for the ROR Catalog not only for their potential as developmental tools but also for the quality of the writing and illustration. ***¡Fiesta!*** has:

- Simple, bilingual text with a repeated question that teaches counting skills
- Interesting details that fill the illustrations allowing for broader questions between parent and child about what is happening in the pictures
- Soft pastel artwork that complements the story of children preparing for a party
- Illustrations that help build the story up to its big bang of an ending

Dr. Kridelbaugh reads with Raquel and Omar Cerda in the exam

## Using the Book *¡Fiesta!* as a Developmental Tool

**LeAnn Kridelbaugh, MD, East Dallas Health Center**

- I favor ***¡Fiesta!*** with Latino 3 to 4 year olds because it fits their culture very well, yet is bilingual.
- The text focuses on counting, which I like to bring up at the three year visit with the parents. I want them to start counting things with their child in books and around the house.
- There are few words, but lots of illustrations to prompt questions and discussion. I find this type of book ideal for a family where the parents may have limited literacy skills.
- When I come in the room and hand the child the book, I begin asking the child questions about what the children in the story are doing, in this case preparing for a party. The illustrations in the book are easy for the child to understand, and I can assess his language skills as he answers questions about what he sees.
- The book is very colorful. At the three year well visit, I may point out the red tomatoes and the yellow bananas at the market as I model reading for the parent while looking at the book with the child. Often, I ask the child "what color are these tomatoes?" It is amazing how often the parent will answer "he doesn't know his colors, he's not in school yet." This brings up the opportunity for me to encourage the parent to be the "pre-school" teacher and talk about colors, numbers, and letters in books and everyday life.
- ***¡Fiesta!*** asks on each page "what else?" (is needed for the fiesta) and gives the child a chance to begin "telling the story" for himself.
- When I've finished looking at ***¡Fiesta!*** with my patient, I have completed my developmental assessment of his language and cognitive skills and given quite a bit of formal and informal anticipatory guidance to the parent, as well.

# ROR Parent Survey Pilot Project

**Barbara Ducharme, National Program Project Manager**

**Intro:** The National Center recently completed a pilot survey of parents of ROR-age children in three ROR programs in the greater Boston area. Funded through the generosity of the Linde Family Foundation, the pilot project consisted of waiting-room interviews with 72 adults accompanying young children at well-child checkups; ten of the interviews were conducted in Spanish, the remainder in English. We wanted to find out how well we were reaching these parents and their children.

**Results:** Seventy-two percent (52) of the interviewees reported that the child had received a book; of these, 47 had received the book from a medical care provider. Half of the adults said that the book was given at the beginning of the visit and an additional fourteen recalled the child's receiving the book at some point during the visit; only ten of the adults said that the child had received the book at the end of the visit.

Two-thirds of the interviewees recalled having discussed the importance of reading with the medical provider during the child's visit. Sixty percent named reading as one of the child's favorite activities; just as many reported reading aloud with the child three or more times per week. Half of all the adults recalled having seen volunteers reading in the waiting room and many of them expressed appreciation for the program at the end of their interview.

**Next Steps:** The survey tool is being revised and will be re-tested at one more program site. Once finalized, the tool and brief instructions for its use will be translated into Spanish and place on the ROR website so that any program can use it as part of its own quality improvement efforts.

**Questions?** Please direct questions to Barbara Ducharme at the ROR National Center, (617) 629-8042 x243 or barbara.ducharme@reachoutandread.org.

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for the past 5 years and on the Community Council for the Reach Out and Read Coalition in Kansas City for the past 3 years. Martha has over 25 years of experience in strategic planning, operations, marketing, new product development, training, public relations, and financial management. Her recent career path has taken her through H&R Block, where she was Assistant Vice President for Knowledge Development, and her team managed training programs for more than 80,000 seasonal tax professionals and 600 field managers.

Martha is based in Kansas City, though she has been traveling regularly to Boston to work with us here at the National Center. She is already out and about, beating the bushes, looking for ways to build partnerships and connect with potential medical champions in areas of the country where there are many at-risk children, and few ROR programs. Read her article and you will get a sense of her goals and her strategies—and also of her energy and her commitment to Reach Out and Read.

It's going to be a very exciting time for Reach Out and Read. As always, we thank you for the great work you do, and we ask for your help and support in building and strengthening the program around the country.

NATIONAL EXPANSION CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

raise private funds in their local areas and recruit additional ROR sites.

We are also planning significant growth in areas not yet assisted by Coalitions. We are busy identifying cities and states where ROR is under-represented, and we would value your suggestions. While we intend to add sites in all 50 states, there are already larger expansion activities underway in Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, and St. Louis, MO. We are eager to hear from you about new opportunity areas to add to the list.

ROR needs your help with these expansion plans. We strongly believe that the best advocates for our model are those who know first-hand how families benefit from ROR, and that the best outreach is direct referral and word-of-mouth promotion from our own practitioners. So, in addition to advising us about underserved areas, we're asking each of you to look around your own town—or think about friends and colleagues who do primary care for children—and make at least one specific referral on behalf of ROR.

If you know of other health care providers serving low-income children who might be interested in ROR, please send their names and contact information to us at Growth@Reachoutandread.org. We'll be sure to get them information about ROR and how to apply for funding to get started.

With your help, we are looking forward to reaching an additional 1 million children in the years ahead.

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STATEWIDE BOOK DRIVE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

programs. Barnes & Noble was thrilled with the success of the event. "The response was overwhelming; booksellers and customers really got behind this program. We've already started planning for the 2005 book drive," commented Laura Streckenbach, Barnes & Noble Community Relations Manager at University Village in Seattle. This year's book drive is tentatively scheduled for June.

## Don't Forget

## The ROR National Conference,

May 12-14, 2005, Washington, DC

For complete information please go to the ROR home page:

www.reachoutandread.org

## Did You Know?

Prospective ROR programs can now complete their applications on-line.

For complete information please go to: **www.reachoutandread.org/program.html**