



**Nationally Acclaimed Children's Reading Foundation
Awarded \$2.87 Million Federal Grant**

October 16, 2012, Kennewick, WA. Trail-blazing early literacy initiatives of the national Children's Reading Foundation recently received a two year federal grant totaling \$2.87 million to serve more children.

National CRF President Nancy Kerr said the grant was awarded by the U.S. Department of Education through the Innovative Approaches to Literacy Program. Total cost of the two year expansion, including the Foundation's contribution, is \$5.4 million.

"Children in 19 high-need school districts in Illinois, Kentucky, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Virginia and Washington will benefit," Kerr said. "The grant will support our community affiliates in offering *READY! for Kindergarten*, which provides trainings, targets and tools to parents of children birth to age five, as well as help us launch *Read Up* with a focus on summer reading and increasing access to books."

Dena Lodahl, CRF Grant Project Director, explained that under the grant, *READY!* will impact 3,000 families. *Read Up* will distribute books to 15,000 children each week for eight weeks in year one and 18,800 children each week during year two. Both programs emphasize oral language development and age-level reading skills while promoting strong parent-child relationships.

"Parents and caregivers of children who attend *READY!* classes leave with materials to use at home to build pre-literacy and school readiness skills," Lodahl said. "Studies show nearly 80 percent of children whose parents take part in *READY!* meet the kindergarten reading readiness standard regardless of family income or ethnicity, compared to 55% of children whose parents do not attend."

The *Read Up* program, typically hosted in parks and community centers, models reading techniques for parents and caregivers and gives books to children in low-income neighborhoods. *Read Up* promotes summer reading and takes aim at reversing the "summer slide", a situation where students lose up to three months of reading skills when school is out.

"Reading is one of the most critical skills in life, and a lifelong love of reading begins in a child's early years," Kerr said. "This grant will enable us to expand our programs to support young readers beginning at birth and through third grade."

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THE CHILDREN’S READING FOUNDATION® & *READY! FOR KINDERGARTEN*™

Founded in 1996, the Children’s Reading Foundation’s mission is

- encourage and educate families about their important role in raising a reader
- support schools in assuring that students read on grade level by the end of the third grade
- facilitate community involvement in helping young readers be successful.

More than 20 chapters throughout the United States motivate families and communities to “Read With a Child. It’s the Most Important 20 Minutes of Your Day.”

READY! for Kindergarten is the CRFs premier school readiness program for families and child care providers. *READY!* fosters early learning that ensures children success in school.

The Children’s Reading Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization headquartered in Kennewick, Washington. To learn more, please visit www.readingfoundation.org and www.readyforkindergarten.org.

For more information or to schedule an interview, contact:

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