First Lady Laura Bush supported Reach Out and Read

First Lady Laura Bush visited Shreveport for a fundraising event last fall. Mrs. Bush, a supporter of Reach Out and Read at the national level, thanked Dr. Joseph Bocchini and Daisy Kime for their work with Shreveport’s ROR program. Dr. Milton Chapman (not shown) made the arrangements to make this photograph possible.
Shreveport Medical Society Alliance

Pictured above is Lisa Babin, President of the LSUHS Foundation, modeling a spring fashion ensemble during the Shreveport Medical Society Alliance 41st Annual Luncheon and Style Show, held on March 9 at Sam’s Town Casino in Shreveport. Also pictured is Anna Bocchini, ROR volunteer, who attended the event.

The purpose of this luncheon and style show was to raise funds to sponsor selected organizations chosen by the Shreveport Medical Society Alliance. The attendees were also encouraged to bring a children’s book to donate to the Reach Out and Read program.

Other Reach Out and Read supporters attending the luncheon and style show were Drs. Connie Arnold, Marlene Broussard and Terry Davis along with Carol Grafton, Daisy Kime, Carol Marsala, Berte Muslow, Frances O’Callaghan and Mary Ann Van Osdell.

SMSA Donation

On Thursday, May 19, the Shreveport Medical Society Alliance (SMSA) awarded $5,000.00 to the ROR program at a ceremony held in the well-child waiting room at the Women and Children’s Center.

In the above photograph, Mary Pat Morgan, SMSA Style Show Chairman, presented a check on behalf of Lori Allen, SMSA President, to Dr. Joseph Bocchini, M.D., Professor, and Pediatrics Chairman. Also shown are Lisa Babin, LSUHS Foundation President, and Daisy Kime, ROR Coordinator.

The funding for this award came from the money raised at the SMSA luncheon and style show. ROR will use it to purchase books for young patients participating in the program.

Women’s Club Donation

The LSUHSC Women’s Club also made a donation to the ROR program during May. Their $250 donation was approximately one-half of the proceeds from their March Bake Sale. This contribution was the second donation to ROR by the Women’s Club this year. The ROR Advisory Board of Directors are thankful for the ongoing support of the Women’s Club.

Submitted by Carol Grafton
Special Thanks to ...  

The following donors for their monetary support:

★ Dr. Sami L. Bahna
★ Tracy Burch
★ Doris Dowell
★ Harrah’s Operating Company, Inc.
★ Bear Hunter
★ Wannetta Keels
★ Mary K. Li
★ LSUHSC Women’s Club
★ Bettye Meadors
★ Cynthia Pinkney
★ Alice B. & Robert N. Schwendimann in memory of Lyle Hassell
★ Shreveport Medical Society Alliance
★ David Thomas & Mary Ann Van Osdell
★ Dr. Willard and Frances Washburne in memory of Dr. Jeanne Mack Gilley
★ Shenya Williams-Pennywell
★ Patsy Wolfe

The following donors for their book donations:

★ Lydia Circle Women’s Group at Summer Grove United Methodist Church
★ Lydia Davis
★ Kathleen Kaemer
★ Sarah Price
★ Shreveport Medical Society Alliance
★ Carolyn Tanner

Letter-Perfect Partnership

Post Alpha-Bits cereal has partnered with the national Reach Out and Read program to promote reading. The partnership coincides with Alpha-Bits change to zero grams of sugar per serving, making it an ideal finger food for toddlers. Alpha-Bits’ 26 letters provide parents a tool to introduce letter recognition activities during breakfast and snack times.

During the first year, Alpha-Bits will donate 100,000 books.

submitted by Mary Ann Van Osdell

Hosanna Family Workshop Center

Yvonne Mitchell, ROR Advisory Board of Directors, and Daisy Kime, ROR Coordinator, showcased the ROR program at the Hosanna Family Workshop Center on Saturday, May 14. They each had the opportunity to read to a group of children and then distributed books for the children to add to their home libraries.

New ROR Site

On July 1, a new Reach Out and Read site was established at a continuity clinic on the LSUHSC-S campus, where sixteen Internal Medicine/Pediatric residents will see their patients. It is estimated that they will see approximately twenty-five children for their well-child visits each month.

October Book Drive

The campus librarians will team up with the Pediatric Interest Group, a volunteer group of medical students coordinated by Dr. Marlene Broussard, ROR Advisory Board of Directors, to kick off their annual book drive in October. It is held each October to observe National Medical Librarian’s month. This book drive collects new and gently used children’s books. If you have any spare time this summer, then clean off your shelves and donate the books your children have outgrown to ROR.
Read Across America

Airman Brandon Kusek was one of four Barksdale servicemen who volunteered to read to children in the waiting room at the Women and Children’s Center and in the playroom at the LSUHSC-S Children’s Hospital for Read Across America on March 2. This reading event was part of a nationwide celebration to observe Dr. Seuss’s 100th birthday. The other readers from Barksdale Air Force Base were Master Sergeant Malcolm Ferrell, Senior Master Sergeant Glen Phares and Staff Sergeant Tucker Brelet.

Dr. Seuss’s character Cat-in-the-Hat was also present. Jill Hurd and Zelda Timmons, members of ROR Advisory Board of Directors, served birthday cake and punch to children, parents, and clinic staff during this celebration. Advisory Board of Directors Yvonne Mitchell, Ascension Smith and volunteer reader Carol Marsala also assisted.

Developmental Milestones of Early Literacy

When reading to children ages 6-12 months, expect their motor skills to include the ability to reach for the book, which likely will end up in the child’s mouth. The child will be able to sit in your lap and hold their head steady, and the child may also turn the page with your help. The cognitive skills for this age group include looking at the book’s pictures, patting pictures and vocalizing, and showing a preference for pictures of faces. Suggestions for reading aloud to a child in this age group include holding the child comfortably with a face-to-face gaze, point and name the pictures, and follow the child’s cues for “more” and “stop.”

When reading to children aged 12-18 months, expect their motor skills to include the ability to sit without support, to hold the book with your help, and to turn the board book pages, often several at a time. The cognitive skills for this age group include picking a favorite book for you to read, turning the book right side up, pointing at pictures with one finger, and repeating the same sound for a particular picture. Suggestions for reading aloud to a child in this age group include responding to the child’s prompting to read, letting the child control the book, becoming comfortable with their short attention span, and asking “where’s the ...?” and letting the child point.

When reading to children aged 18-24 months, expect their motor skills to include the ability to turn the pages of a board book once at a time and to carry the book around the house. The cognitive skills for this age group include naming familiar pictures, filling in words in familiar stories, “reading” to dolls or stuffed toys, reciting parts of well-known stories, and having a highly variable attention span. Suggestions for reading aloud to a child in this age group include relating the book to the child’s experiences, incorporating reading in their daily routine such as a bedtime story, pausing to let the child complete the sentence, and asking “what’s that?” and listening to the child’s answer.

When reading to children aged 2-3 years old, expect their motor skills to include competent book handling which is demonstrated by turning paper pages one at a time. The cognitive skills for this age group include reciting whole phrases or even whole stories, coordinating text with picture, recognizing when a reader gets a word wrong in a familiar story, and reading aloud familiar books to themselves. Suggestions for reading aloud to a child in this age group include being willing to read the same story repeatedly and providing crayons and coloring books.

When reading to children 3-5 years old, expect their motor skills to include competent book handling which is demonstrated by turning paper pages one at a time. The cognitive skills of this age group include the ability to listen to longer stories, to retell familiar stories, to understand what text is as demonstrated by moving finger along it, to “write” their name, and to move toward recognition of the letters of the alphabet. Suggestions for reading aloud to a child in this age group include letting the child tell the story, encouraging writing and drawing, and asking “what’s happening?”
Spotlight on the Care Caddy

U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu and Professional Golfer Hal Sutton visited Community Renewal’s Friendship House in Bossier City on February 28, and the Care Caddy was on hand. These dignitaries were in the Shreveport/Bossier area to promote the Care Caddy’s first year of service to our area’s at-risk children.

The Care Caddy is a cooperative community health initiative of the Hal Sutton Foundation, CHRISTUS Schumpert Health System and LSUHSC-S. The Care Caddy began providing services on February 26, 2004, and was designated a Reach Out and Read site in September 2004.

The Care Caddy staff includes Registered Nurse Shontasha Leftridge and Medical Assistant and Telemetry Technician Sharon Wright. In addition to providing primary preventative healthcare in the form of physical exams, screenings, and immunizations for children and youth, the Care Caddy staff provides health and wellness education through activities and exercises and also promotes daily reading by distributing culturally sensitive and age-appropriate books to area at-risk children for their home libraries.

The Care Caddy is the only mobile pediatric clinic in our area and it serves the citizens on both sides of the Red River. It stops at area neighborhood locations such as churches, pre-schools, public schools, neighborhood centers and housing authorities.

Recent stops include the Eddie Jones Early Childhood Education Center, where a dental hygiene presentation was made and books were distributed to 94 children. Vision and hearing screenings were conducted along with book distributions at Shreveport and Bossier City Boys and Girls Clubs, Shreveport and Bossier City Lighthouses and the Highland Center.

Submitted by David Duggar
Capitol Hill Day by Mary Ann Van Osdell

I had the privilege to attend the sixth National Reach Out and Read convention in Washington, D.C. in May. Capitol Hill Day held on May 12, resulted in 129 scheduled meetings and another 57 impromptu meetings between legislators and ROR convention attendees.

We were asking congressmen to sign the letter to the Labor HHS/Education Subcommittee to support the Bush administration’s ongoing commitment of $10 million in fiscal year 2006 to ROR. ROR has received federal funding for the last six years. These public dollars leverage private sector support. Fourteen million non-federal dollars were raised for ROR last year.

One hundred fifty-three members of the House were apparently aware of the need for ROR and had already sent a letter to the appropriations committee supporting level funding. In the Senate, an additional 29 signers were obtained to achieve 49 signers during our lobbying at the convention.

Louisianans Ellen Beyer, Elizabeth Tamor and I personally thanked Senator Mary Landrieu, Representatives William Jefferson and Jim McCrery as the latter briefly stepped out of a Ways and Means Committee meeting.

We three Louisiana attendees also met with Senator David Vitter, who promised support for the letter, and with staffers for Representatives Bobby Jindal, Rodney Alexander, Richard Baker, Charlie Melancon and Dr. Charles Boustany.

We were briefed earlier that morning on how to communicate to congressional members by Stephanie Vance, “the Advocacy Guru” who has 15 years of experience as a lobbyist and congressional aide.
Balentine Ambulance Service Delivered New Books Donated to ROR by First Book

Balentine Ambulance Service transported 4000 new children’s books, donated by First Book, from New Orleans to Reach Out and Read sites at LSUHSC-S on Friday, June 17.

First Book is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to give children from low-income families the opportunity to read and own their first new books. All books distributed by First Book are provided at no cost to community-based literacy programs. They are delivered to centrally located large cities, and receiving programs must arrange transportation to their individual sites.

Books for all ROR sites in Louisiana were delivered to Ellen Beyer, Louisiana ROR Coalition administrator, and stored in a warehouse at the Medical Center of Louisiana, New Orleans.

Balentine Ambulance Service makes frequent trips with patients to the Children’s Hospital in New Orleans, and for the second time, volunteered to bring the donated books on their empty ambulance’s return trip to Shreveport.

Crews on the Balentine ambulance unloaded the books at LSUHSC-S Chevyland warehouse on Linwood Avenue. The Care Caddy mobile pediatric clinic received 2000 books and another 2000 books were stored in the warehouse for the Pediatric Residents Continuity Clinic.

Both ROR sites will distribute these books to children participating in the ROR program. At an approximate value of $2.50 per book, these 4000 books would have cost the ROR program $10,000 if purchased. More than 6000 children participated in the ROR program at LSUHSC-S in 2004, and additional children have been added this year.

Submitted by Daisy Kime, ROR Coordinator

ROR Supplemental Sustainability Award

In a letter dated June 24, 2005, Ron Bailey, ROR National Programs Director, wrote that the Pediatric Residents Continuity Clinic ROR program has been awarded a supplemental sustainability award in the amount of $3,000.00. The award will be deposited in a prepaid Scholastic account for the purchase of books from their ROR catalog. These funds were awarded from a FY04 Federal grant to the National ROR Center.

Per an existing contract with the ROR National Center, the funds awarded are restricted to the purchase of new, developmentally appropriate books for children ages six months to five years and must be distributed by a healthcare provider (pediatrician or nurse) in the examination room during a well-child visit or health supervision visit.

Books purchased from Scholastic’s ROR catalog are deeply discounted, and the $3,000 award to the Pediatric Residents Continuity ROR program will purchase approximately 1200 children’s books.

National ROR Sustainability Awards are based on information furnished in bi-annual progress reports from individual ROR sites showing the number of children seen for well-child visits and the number of books distributed. The progress report for the period of 7/1/2004-11/31/2004 showed that healthcare providers in the Pediatric Residents Continuity Clinic at LSUHSC-S saw 3,908 children between the ages of six months and five years, and distributed 2,815 books.

Submitted by Daisy Kime, ROR Coordinator
On Thursday, June 2, Dr. Terry Davis’ presented a lecture entitled “Health Literacy: Hidden Barriers and Practical Strategies in Pediatrics” for pediatric residents. It took place at noon in the fourth floor lecture hall of the LSU School of Medicine. Dr. Joseph Bocchini, Chairman of the Department of Pediatrics, introduced Dr. Davis. He also gave a brief history of the Reach Out and Read program at LSUHSC-S, which was Dr. Davis’ topic.

The topic was selected because some parents of the children receiving books through the Reach Out and Read program during the pediatrician visits exhibited inadequate reading skills. The ROR waiting room volunteers who read to the children and the nurses and physicians wanted to know how to identify the parents with inadequate literacy skills to assist them.

Dr. Davis first spoke about barriers to doctor-patient communication. Physicians, nurses, and patients have their own agendas, communication styles and knowledge levels. Patients may not understand what their physician is trying to communicate due to a difference in education, literacy or language.

The Institute of Medicine released a report in April 2004 entitled Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion, which recommended that:

- The Department of Health and Human Services and other government and private funders should support the development, testing, and use of culturally appropriate new measures of health literacy.

- The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Indian Health Service, the Health Resources and Services Administration, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration should develop and test approaches to improve health communication “that foster healing relationships” across culturally diverse populations.

- Healthcare systems (including Medicare, Medicaid, and the Department of Veterans Affairs) should develop and support demonstration programs to establish the most effective approaches to reduce the negative effects of limited health literacy.

- Professional schools and continuing education programs in medicine, health, and related fields should incorporate health literacy into their curriculums.1

Continued on page 9
The AHRQ conducted a broad review of 684 articles and a narrower review of 73 articles. The AHRQ found that “approximately 90 million adults with lower literacy skills were more likely to have difficulty understanding informed consent forms and comprehending their children’s diagnoses and medication instructions. They also were less likely to know the health effects of smoking, diabetes, asthma, AIDS, and postoperative care.”

Other facts presented by Dr. Davis were that the high school drop-out rate in the United States is 29% and that one-quarter of all births are to mothers who did not graduate from high school. Only 14% of today’s ninth graders will finish college; however, it will take them six years after beginning college.

A National Adult Literacy Survey was conducted using functional literacy (using reading to do actual day-to-day activities). It was graded in five levels. Level 1, the lowest scoring level, includes 21% of the U.S. population. Level 2 includes 27% of the population and consists of high school graduates. Level 5, the highest level, includes physicians. This survey shows that there is a big difference between the physician’s level of literacy and communication style and the low-literacy patient or adult.

Several short videos were then presented. The first showed that health information is often complex and unfamiliar to people at all education levels. The second showed that it is easy to make a mistake, especially in taking medications. There may be a mismatch in communication. What the physician is saying is not what the patient needs to know or understands. The third video presented what the patient wants others to know about low-literacy.

At the Chicago Children’s Hospital, 75% of the patients are Hispanic. At the end of the visits, their pediatricians ask parents receiving Reach Out and Read books for their children, two questions. The first is, “Have you ever had difficulty reading?” The second is, “Would you like to improve your reading?” From this it was found that of those struggling with reading the Reach Out and Read books to their children, one in four wants to improve. The important points to take away from this example are for physicians to ask these questions directly and to use a tone of voice showing respect for the patient or adult.

Dr. Davis suggested seven tips for physicians in communicating with low-literacy adults. The most important was “Teach Back”, in which the patient or adult repeats back to the physician what he or she has been told. This is a way of confirming understanding of the information given to the patient or adult.

Dr. Davis is known nationally for her work in patient education. She spoke about a Health Resources and Services Administration contract which she was awarded. The award funded research that has resulted in two articles that are currently in press in Pediatrics. Specifically, this contract was awarded to look at health pamphlets, determine their reading level, redesign it for a lower reading level and present the information in a clear and apparent manner.

Patients and adults want most to be told what they need to know and what they need to do. Bullet points are great. Images are good so long as they are current and relevant. For example, the current generation of adults does not identify a picture of a stork with pregnancy. Instead, they expect to see a picture of a person with a baby to convey pregnancy.

A question and answer session concluded this grand round presentation. The main topic of the questions was what to do when the parent or adult said they wanted help to improve their reading ability. Organizations for referral and how to make the referral were discussed.


2Ibid.

Submitted by David Duggar
Editors note: The following article, Reach Out and Read, was reprinted with permission from the author, Karen Vargas. It appeared in the January/February 2005 issue of Network News: Newsletter for the South Central Region, which is a region in the National Network of Libraries of Medicine.

Reach Out and Read

On February 1, I attended a presentation on the Reach Out and Read (ROR) program, held at the Medical School of the University of Texas Health Science Center, Houston, TX. The speaker was Dr. Perri Klass, Medical Director and President of Reach Out and Read, and Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Boston University School of Medicine and Boston Medical Center, Boston, MA. Dr. Klass was an impressive speaker, but the program which she presented was even more impressive.

Reach Out and Read has been in existence for 15 years. In 1989, the program was set up to supply waiting rooms with books. However, it soon grew to make “literacy promotion a standard part of pediatric primary care, so that children grow up with books and a love of reading.” ROR trains pediatricians and nurses:

- to advise parents about the importance of reading to children
- to give age-appropriate books to children at each of their “well-child” exams from six months to five years of age
- to use the books as an integral part of the examination process

With a special focus on children growing up in poverty, the goal of ROR is to encourage early literacy so that children are prepared to enter school and be successful at reading.

Dr. Klass noted that approximately 30% of children do not begin kindergarten with the skills to learn to read. By fourth grade, approximately 30% are not reading up to grade level. Children who are read to as they are growing up are much more likely to come to kindergarten with the tools necessary to learn to read.

Research has shown the effectiveness of the Reach Out and Read program. These studies show that ROR has had a significant impact in changing parents’ attitudes about reading aloud, making reading aloud a favorite activity for children, and making bedtime stories a regular part of more children’s lives. Additional research shows that ROR participation is affecting early literacy development by improving children’s verbal self-expression and increasing children’s vocabularies. More information about this research can be found at: http://www.reachoutandread.org/about_research.html.

ROR Louisiana Coalition

Established in 2000, ROR Louisiana Coalition has as its goal to expand throughout Louisiana to provide training and the necessary resources to put books into the hands and homes of at-risk, impoverished children when they are seen for their well-child visits. ROR helps families encourage early literacy skills so that children enter school prepared for success in reading. Ellen Beyer, ROR Louisiana Coalition administrator, has led this coalition with site visits, quarterly videoconference meetings and an e-mail listserv.

The statewide coalition has expanded to 33 clinical locations affiliated with 25 healthcare organizations. Every year, 48,130 new children’s books are distributed and 37,079 children and their families are served. Five hundred thirty-five medical providers have been trained.

In Louisiana, many families need Reach Out and Read:

- 26.6% of the children under 18 live below the federal poverty level. (Kids Count Data Book on Louisiana Children, 2003).
- 28% of adults read at the lowest level of literacy (level 1). 43% of adults reading at level 1 live in poverty. (National Institute for Literacy, 1998).
- Many of the parents of children living in poverty lack the money to buy children’s books and may not have been read to as children.
- Reading problems may mean school failure, which increases the risk of absenteeism, dropping out, juvenile delinquency, substance abuse and teenage pregnancy, which perpetuates the cycle of poverty.

As the Louisiana Coalition continues to expand and add new sites, sustainability is a key objective for the ongoing success of operating ROR programs. ROR relies solely on support from individuals, foundations, corporations and government agencies for appropriate new children’s books and to fund staff and other resources.
Read Across America Celebration

**Jill Hurd**, ROR Advisory Board of Directors member, serves cake in observance of Dr. Seuss’ 100th birthday.

Barksdale Airman **Brandon Kusek** reads to a child in the Women and Children’s Center waiting room.

Barksdale Airman Senior Master Sargeant **Glen Phares** reads to a child in the playroom at LSUHSC-S Children’s Hospital.

**Patty McAllister** posing as “Cat-in-the-Hat” holds Tiffany Austin in the Women and Children’s Center waiting room.
Other Volunteer Opportunities

If you’d rather not read aloud to children in the clinic waiting room, but you’d like to support the Reach Out and Read program, here are some ways to get involved:

- **Conduct a book drive.** Reach Out and Read programs can always use beautiful, brand new, age-appropriate books for children age 6 months to 5 years old. Many children have collected books from guests as part of their birthday or bar/bat mitzvah celebrations.

- **Collect gently used books for siblings or for reading by families and volunteers in the waiting room.** Libraries, bookstores, churches, other families and even the local post office may be able to provide books!

- **Contribute your skills.** Reach Out and Read coordinators can always use a hand with unpacking, inventorying and ordering books for the program. Ask Daisy Kime for suggestions about how your unique skills can contribute to Reach Out and Read’s success.

- **Raise funds to support your local Reach Out and Read program.** Beautiful new books cost money, and each Reach Out and Read program is responsible for raising 75% or more of its annual book budget. There are lots of creative and fun ways to raise money for books—or to arrange a donation of appropriate new books directly—for your local Reach Out and Read program. Donations are always appreciated!

- **Make a tax-deductible contribution to Reach Out and Read’s Adopt-a-Child program.** Contributions to Reach Out and Read’s Adopt-a-Child program purchase new books for one or more children. Each $25.00 donation provides for ten new books to be given at the well-child visits from age six months to five years.
Form to Volunteer to Read to Children in the Clinic Waiting Room

**Name** ____________________________________________

**Address** __________________________________________

**City, ST, Zip** _______________________________________

**Phone** ___________________________________________  **Email** ___________________________________________

Please mail completed form: Reach Out and Read, Department of Pediatrics, LSU Health Sciences Center, 1501 Kings Highway, P.O. Box 33932, Shreveport, LA  71130-3932

Gift Form

If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation to Reach Out and Read, you may do so at any time.

- Please credit my/our gift of $_________ to the Reach Out and Read (ROR) program.
- Please credit my/our gift of $_________ to ROR’s Adopt-a-Child program.
- My/Our employer(s) will match my/our gift. The appropriate form is enclosed.
- Please charge $_________ to  _____ Visa  ______ Mastercard  ______American Express

**Credit Card Account Number:** ________________  **Signature** ________________  **Exp. Date** ______

**Name:** __________________________________________

**Address:** _________________________________________

This is /a memorial/an honorarium/ in memory of /in honor of ________________________________

**Notify:** __________________________________________

Please make checks payable to LSUHS Foundation and include a notation that the gift is for Reach Out and Read. Mail completed form to: Reach Out and Read, Department of Pediatrics, LSU Health Sciences Center, 1501 Kings Highway, P.O. Box 33932, Shreveport, LA  71130-3932
ROR Happenings is a newsletter that is published three times a year. Issues appear in March, August, and December. Please send any news submissions to one of the volunteers listed below by February 1, July 1 or November 1 to have your news item included in the next issue of the newsletter.

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Method of preference for submissions: email message with attachment directly to editor. Fax, mail or telephone call submissions will be accepted, but some type of electronic format is preferred.