



Reading Is Fundamental of Southern California, Inc.

Summer 2005 Issue 8

Inspiring Children to Become Lifelong Readers

RIFSoCal is GROWING...and MOVING...AGAIN!

By Phyllis Shlechter

From 1989 into the 90's, RIFSoCal grew, added sites and volunteers, and *lost homes!*

First we were ousted from our beautiful office in the Science Museum's Armory building. For 3 years we barely existed in a storage facility, rode freight elevators to our "rooms," raced down the hall every 30 minutes to turn on the lights, and depended on Patt Zimbleman and Dektor Films (a GIANT thank you) for our phone contact with the outside world! But, we survived...

And then Accelerated School's Kevin and Jonathan, thankful for our books and help setting up their library, came to our rescue. We were given a beautiful rent free space! However, growing with well deserved success, by 1999 Accelerated needed our space - time to move, again!

For the past 5 years we have been very happy in our offices in Boyle Heights and very thankful for our roll-up door, phones and computers, and more than adequate shelves for our books. But now, I can hardly believe we have outgrown this space, too!

I can't wait for September 2005 to share our new home in Commerce. It will be a fitting way for me to celebrate my 20th anniversary with my wonderful RIFSoCal!

RIFSoCal REACH OUT and READ COLLABORATE

WELCOME to LAC + USC Violence Intervention Program (VIP)



Celebrating collaboration are Carol Henault, RIFSoCal Executive Director, Janet Arnold, M.D., CATC Medical Director and Teresa Norland, MSW, CATC Director of Development

Our innovative collaboration will provide **1000 books/year** for children (6 months-5 years) receiving well child exams in VIP's new foster care clinic, the *Community-Based Assessment and Treatment Center (CATC)*. The CATC is a full service clinic that provides ongoing medical services, case management, developmental assessments and mental health services for children 0-18 under DCFS supervision. Our mutual goal is to encourage early literacy skills so children enter school prepared for success in reading.

Representing two major National children's literacy organizations, Reach Out and Read (ROR) Program

Coordinator, Debbie Mackay and RIFSoCal Executive Director, Carol Henault forged this exciting pilot program. ROR's mission is to make early literacy a standard part of pediatric primary care. Pediatricians encourage parents to read aloud to their young children and give books to their patients to take home at all pediatric check-ups from six months to five years of age. Parents learn that reading aloud is the most important thing they can do to help their children love books and start school ready to learn.

RIFSoCal's New Home
7250 Bandini Boulevard
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SNEAK PREVIEW...

Nikki Grimes to be featured at RIFSoCal's October 7, 2005 **ORIENTATION!**

We are proud to bring you a special presentation by Nikki Grimes. Grimes draws upon scenes from her own childhood in New York City to successfully convey the black experience and universal themes such as friendship, tolerance, family and community relationships, and children surviving adolescence. Every attendee will receive a free copy of her new Coretta Scott King award winning book, *Talkin' About Bessie*.

Mark your calendars now and we'll see you there!

JULIE COOKE'S CORNER

As we wind down this program year, we are already making plans to better serve our sites next year. Our new location will enable us to streamline our process; bringing books from the publisher, to RIFSoCal, to schools and other venues, and finally and most importantly, to children and families.

In program year 1993-1994, only 11 years ago, we served 20,605 children. In the just completed 2004-2005 school year, our program had grown to reach 35,500 children. And, our most exciting news is that in 2005-2006, we have been approved by RIF National to bring over **120,000 books to 41,000 children** – we have doubled our impact in only 11 years!

We look forward to welcoming each and every one of you to our new site in Commerce this fall. Have a great and relaxing summer.

SUZI'S STRIP

Welcome back to my column and hello to everyone I have met during my travels so far. I'm still looking forward to visiting more RIFSoCal sites before the end of the school year, so please call or email me (818 383-1986 or Suzanne@rifsocal.org) to schedule your visit.

I would like to share two exciting events...

Southern California Edison is joining our cadre of site volunteers. Marlon Walker, an Edison employee and RIFSoCal Board Member, wished to personally volunteer at one of our sites. After searching for a "good fit," Marlon adopted Compton's Ralph M. Bunche Elementary School. He was so excited after helping with the children's Third Book Event, that he invited Edison to also become involved. I recently met with Marlon and SCE's Julie Amayo, and they have agreed to "adopt" Marguerita Elementary School. Their first collaboration should take place in

June. We are all looking forward to this venture. Thank you Marlon for all of your help!

St. Anne's Maternity Home will be joining us for the 2005-2006 program year. St. Anne's assists young women of any age with their pregnancy and/or a "safe home" to live in, offering tools to help them plan their future. The energy and excitement of the St. Anne's staff is very contagious and will definitely help RIFSoCal implement their new literacy programs. Books will be provided for both the young mothers and their babies, impacting the literacy of two generations! We will plan over the summer and kick off the program in September with a whole week of stimulating literacy events.

See you next time...

RIFSoCal's YOUNGEST VOLUNTEER...

On May 20th, Jennifer De La Cruz celebrated her 8th birthday – and she is already an inspiration to staff and volunteers providing RIFSoCal's innovative early childhood literacy program at the Women Infants and Children center in East Los Angeles!

How were we lucky enough to find Jennifer? RIFSoCal's WIC Program Coordinator Marlene Moreno, a Cal State Los Angeles student, had posted flyers on campus seeking volunteers - and Jennifer, a student at Cal State LA, just happened to read one while attending her children's writing class. Jennifer now volunteers most Wednesdays. She arrives prepared and ready to offer her ideas, bringing her own favorite books to share with the children. She is an absolutely perfect "fit," helping us to fulfill our goal to improve the kindergarten readiness of children by providing WIC families with fun, easy-to-use literacy activities and resources.

Jennifer attends Hamasaki Elementary School in East Los Angeles. She loves to read, as well as to write stories about animals and songs. Jennifer likes to volunteer at WIC because of the projects we do

with the children. And, even though she was very nervous about reading out loud at first, she now does so with great confidence. She hopes to someday be a writer or a teacher.



Jennifer De La Cruz reads to children during RIFSoCal's weekly program at Beverly WIC

RIFSoCal thanks Reboot Networks for donating their time to keep our computers running...

An advertisement for Reboot Networks. The top text reads "To succeed in business you need to network". Below this is a graphic of a stack of five plates balanced on top of a computer mouse. The bottom text says: "When it comes to networking small- and medium-sized businesses, no one delivers like Reboot Networks. Our certified professionals match the right technology to your needs for a custom solution that fits your business to a 1000-base-T. And although we are technical experts, we're not just geeks. Our people skills and understanding of your business set us apart. Let the experts at Reboot Networks keep you connected. Because to succeed in business, you need to network."

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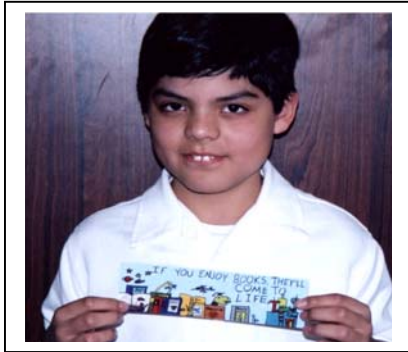
We are honored to thank the following Foundations and Corporations for their generous support, allowing us to provide Motivational Reading Events to support the many resource deprived children of Los Angeles:

Ahmanson Foundation, \$25,000
B.C. McCabe Foundation, \$15,000
Meyer Charitable Foundation, \$5,000
Northrup Grumman Foundation, \$5,000
William H. Hannon Foundation, \$5,000
Boeing Employees Community Fund, \$5,000
Amgen Foundation, \$400
Women's Club of West Covina, \$125

WORKS OF ART

Thanks to the generosity of Rita Henderson, RIFSoCal's President and Manager of Nestlé USA's Education Programs, and Nestlé Graphic Design Department's Christopher Baxter ("I don't get to color very often at work..."), true art has been created from each of the 10 winners of RIFSoCal's 2004-2005 Bookmark Contest.

Many of the children were too shy to say anything but *their faces say it all!*



Kodey Carbajal - 5th Grade
City of Angels-Gardena



Shakeh Aslanyan - 1st Grade
Los Feliz Elementary



Alice Qian - Kindergarten
Ynez Elementary



Natalie Navejas - 2nd Grade
Buchanan Elementary



Julie Cho - 8th Grade
Marlton School



Samantha Gozo - 5th Grade
Richland Elementary



Sophia Saw - 4th Grade
McKinley Elementary-San Gabriel



Jesus Pascual - 3rd Grade
Ann Street Elementary
Madeline Gomez - 4th Grade



City of Angels-Sherman Oaks



Ashley Cortez - 3rd Grade
Richland Elementary

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