

Press Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Sue Rockwell
srockwell@rorva.org
(804) 521-0425

Reach Out and Read Virginia
1742 E. Parham Road
Richmond, VA 23228
www.rorva.org

RORVA - Making Books Part of a Healthy Childhood

Pediatricians, community residents foster a love of reading in young children, one book at a time

Reach Out and Read Virginia (RORVA) helps young children in more than 100 communities across the state build personal libraries and develop a love of reading.

What makes the program unique is its collaboration with pediatricians and family doctors, and its emphasis on encouraging parents to read aloud to their children beginning in infancy. Starting early helps children learn the mechanics of language and build a vocabulary that serves them well when they enter school.

For many Virginia youths, reading and books are not a priority when their families are financially stressed, or when education hasn't been emphasized for other reasons. Hundreds of children are growing up in homes where few books or reading materials are present.

Research consistently reveals that the consequences of a slow start in reading become monumental over time, and as the academic achievement gap grows, so does the likelihood that affected children will become delinquent.

A typical middle class child enters first grade with 1,000 hours of being read to while the corresponding child from a low-income family averages just 25 hours.

That's why RORVA is so important.

By the time a child turns 5, he or she will have received 10 new books from RORVA. RORVA's goal is to make sure that, when the child starts kindergarten, he or she is well acquainted with books and loves the process of reading.

Doctors encourage parents to read the books aloud to their youngsters and use the books as a tool to discuss developmental stages of growth with the parents.

In the end, everyone wins: Doctors build stronger relationships with their patients (and their parents), parents bond with their kids, and the children get a head start on learning.

Some doctors receive grants through RORVA to purchase books, while others pay a portion of the book fees.

Book drives sponsored by businesses, churches, schools and organizations are a vital method for providing clinics with both the new books doctors can distribute to patients, and used books that are available for free in the RORVA pediatrician's waiting room to patients of all ages.

RORVA is an affiliate of the ROR National Center, which this year will provide more than 4.9 million books to more than 3 million children throughout the country.

In Virginia, more than 1,000 ROR doctors and nurses advise parents on the importance of reading aloud to young children and distribute over 175,000 new children's books annually.

Metro Richmond residents can help more children obtain books and gain a love of reading by sponsoring a book drive on behalf of RORVA, or by sponsoring a RORVA Read-a-thon, during which a \$1 (or more) donation is made to RORVA for every page of a book (or books) participants read during a designated period.

To learn more about how to conduct a book drive, visit RORVA's website, www.rorva.org.

For more information, call (804) 521-0425 or send an email to RORVA's Executive Director, Sue Rockwell, at srockwell@rorva.org.