Dear Friends of Read to Grow,

Our Work - Our mission has always been to help parents understand they are their babies first teachers. We start at the moment of birth when the brain begins developing the capacity for language. We know that early stimulation contributes to a child’s ability to start school ready to learn.

When Read to Grow was founded 2000, landmark work had been done around brain development for ages 0-3. In the 13 years since we began, additional research has shown the critical element of language impacting brain development during those first years. Our staff and volunteers have met with almost 250,000 families following the birth of their children. We have distributed almost a 1,000,000 books to clinics, other agencies, schools and families, reaching 100,000 children a year. It is exciting to see what can be done to change the lives of Connecticut families.

Our Mission
To improve early literacy for all Connecticut children by providing books and encouraging language development beginning at birth.

Our Friend Terri Alpert, friend and longtime supporter of Read to Grow is the founder of UNO ALLA VOLTA. Her company works with artisans around the world to develop uniquely handcrafted treasures.

Terri is so touched by the work we are doing, that she is telling her customers all around the country about Read to Grow and our unique WELCOME TO THE WORLD! literacy program. Thanks to Terri’s generosity, RTG is featured in UNO ALLA VOLTA’s holiday catalog and a portion of its profits will be donated to RTG. Check out the artisan made gifts. By entering the code NP3RTG when you go to UNOALLAVOLTA.COM, RTG will receive 15% of your purchases now through December 15th. You get beautiful gifts and we get the financial support to reach more children.

Our Book - This year under the leadership of Donna Gruskay and her committee, the talent of Nancy Wallace, the expertise of Kyle Pruett and the guidance of Shari Kaufman of Innovative Kids we published our own book WELCOME TO THE WORLD! It is designed to provide tools to motivate parents and caregivers to read, sing and play with their children. Plus it is beautiful!!

“As a single parent, these books are very helpful and I am thankful your program exists.”
-Maria

Thank you for your dedication to and enthusiasm for our work.
Roxanne J. Coady, Chair

Pediatric Residents at Read to Grow

On a picturesque evening in July at the lovely home of Board member, Alva Greenberg, Read to Grow celebrated its generous donors. Dr. Richard Sussman, Director, Brighter Futures Initiative of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, was the guest speaker. In his inspiring presentation, “Read to Grow 2.0,” Dr. Sussman spoke of early childhood development initiatives in the State. He believes, “The current climate locally, statewide and nationally increases the potential for turning the curve for all children towards healthy growth and development.”

Pediatric Residents do “rotations” as an element of their medical training. REACH (Resident Education and Advocacy in Community Health) is a program of the Hospital of Saint Raphael. It was started in 2008, designed to provide residents with opportunities to learn and understand how community circumstances influence the health and well-being of children in the New Haven area. Read to Grow was one of the first sites visited by the Reach Residents. More than 50 residents have passed through our door since the start of this outreach.
New Board Members Elected
At the Board meeting on June 24th

The Board of Directors is excited to announce that two new Board members were elected for 3 year terms in June. Sandra Trevino is the Executive Director of JUNTA for Progressive Action, Inc. as well as the Director of The Neighborhood Place. Through such programs as housing assistance, adult education classes and financial management services JUNTA is helping the Latino and other community members to reach their potential and better their lives. Phyllis McGrath is Founder and President of Philanthropy Management, LLC. She brings to the Board not only her passion for language development of infants, toddlers and early school-aged children but a vast array of experiences in philanthropy and governmental affairs as well as engagement with a number of Boards of Directors.

Book Drives to benefit Read to Grow’s children and families.

Citizens Bank and the New Britain Rock Cats sponsored a book drive to benefit *Read to Grow* on August 13, 14 and 15 at the Rock Cats field. Through Citizens Bank branches families were encouraged to donate books at the ball games. They collected hundreds of books which will be used for distribution to families, health centers, hospitals, schools and children, free of charge. Mrs. Jan Weston (Mrs. Connecticut and a member of *Read to Grow’s* Development Committee) and Eli Schlesinger, grandson of Deborah Kelly, another RTG volunteer, threw out the first pitch at each game.

During this year book drives were held throughout the State. Those that collected over 1,000 books are listed here. We are so appreciative of these and many other endeavors to collect needed books for *Read to Grow*.

Read to Grow Launches New Initiative

*Read to Grow* recently received a grant from the Branford Rotary to purchase and distribute our DVD, *First Guide for Parents of Newborns: (Tips to Becoming Your Child’s First Teacher)*. As the title suggests, the DVD is directed to families who have already delivered their babies. However, because families receive so much information following their baby’s birth, *Read to Grow* has initiated a new endeavor of placing the DVDs in community-based prenatal health clinics. We believe that it would be helpful for prospective parents to have the DVD prior to the birth of their child. Along with the DVD *Read to Grow* has enclosed additional information which families might find useful prior to their baby’s birth. To date the DVDs have been placed with Yale-New Haven Hospital Saint Raphael Campus, the Women’s Health Center, the Nurturing Families program of the VNA of South Central CT and the OB Primary Care Center at Yale-New Haven Hospital.

I found the booklets that come in the mail very helpful. They told me ways on how to read to my child.

-Jackie

**Read to Grow**

*First Guide for Parents of Newborns: (Tips to Becoming Your Child’s First Teacher)*

Guiding Infants to Fluency from Birth

Sponsored by the Branford Rotary Foundation

www.readtogrow.org

Photo by Tricia Bohan Photography.
**Challenge** Two-thirds of America’s children living in poverty do not have any books at home and the number of families living in poverty is on the rise.

**Solution** Read to Grow provides free, gently used, age-appropriate books to community agencies, health clinics, schools and families. Along with the books we include information for coaching parents about the importance of communicating with their infants and toddlers. We distribute almost 150,000 books per year to organizations and families.

**Challenge** Not enough language is spoken in economically challenged families.

**Solution** Read to Grow has published its very own board book, WELCOME TO THE WORLD!, that contains language stimulation suggestions for parents of newborns. Read to Grow also provides access to additional books at 3 months and one year, further encouraging the use of positive language in their homes.

**Challenge** Children enter kindergarten or pre-school not ready to learn to read.

**Solution** Read to Grow provides literacy packets to mothers of newborns that include our book, WELCOME TO THE WORLD!, information on the importance of reading to their child and resources to help them access other needed services.

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**Language Development Research**

With greater national attention on the importance of language development in young children in their preparation for entering school, significant research findings are contributing to endeavors to help close the achievement gap. Some of the projects that are worth exploring are:

- According to the National Institutes of Health, the most intense period of language development is between birth and 3 years. In fact due to the rapid development of the brain, babies begin to understand the basic sounds of their native language by 6 months. *NIH News in Health, Sept. 2007*

- Maria D.R. Evans, Ph.D, Assoc. Professor, University of Nevada conducted a 20-year study that revealed regardless of socio-economic status and the education level of their parents, the number of books in the home had a more important and direct effect on the level of education the child will attain. *Science Daily, May 20, 2010*

- Children in our low-income neighborhoods are heading into school having heard an average of 30,000 fewer words than their more affluent counterparts. One in 300 low income children have one book in his/her home. A middle class child has an average of 13 books in his/her home. [*Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children* [Todd R. Risley, Betty Hart, Louis Bloom]]

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“Thanks for the Toddler Hints Book and songs. Will teach her some of the songs that we didn’t know. Also love the booklist in the back!” - Tanisha

“Thank you! Because of you I read to my daughter daily!” - Juanita

Help Us Help Connecticut Families

TO DONATE PLEASE VISIT
WWW.READTOGROW.ORG