

OUR MISSION: Read to Grow promotes language-building and literacy for children, beginning at birth, and supports parents as their babies' first teachers.

Arianna Huffington To Be Guest Speaker April 15 In New Haven

Author and media powerhouse Arianna Huffington will be the speaker at a Read to Grow fundraiser luncheon April 15th, noon–2 p.m., at the Omni New Haven Hotel at Yale.

Huffington, who is Chair, President and Editor-in-chief of The Huffington Post Media Group, will talk about her new book, “Thrive: The Third Metric to Redefining Success and Creating a Life of Well-Being, Wisdom, and Wonder.” In her latest of more than a dozen books, she says that women and men must look beyond money and power to include compassion and giving as valued aspects of success in both our professional and personal lives. Huffington's accomplishments over the years have spanned writing, politics, commentary, and even acting. She is the mother of two.

Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, of Connecticut's 3rd District, is the event Honorary Chair. DeLauro served as the founding chair of the Congressional Baby Caucus and has worked for public policy supporting families with young children and early childhood programs.

For “Thrive,” Huffington was inspired by her 2013 commencement speech at Smith College. That address was followed by “Third Metric” conferences in New York, London, Munich, and Hawaii. Similar conferences are planned this spring in New York, Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles.

For the April 15th luncheon, individual tickets, group tickets and corporate sponsorships are available by calling 203.488.6800, or by emailing: rbaker@readtogrow.org.

Kosher meals by Abel Catering for Passover observance will be available by prior request.



ARIANNA HUFFINGTON

Word Gap

Children from low-income families are likely to hear 30 million fewer words by age 3 than are others from more affluent households, according to 1990s research. Recent Stanford University research shows a ‘word gap’ as early as 18 months of age. This disparity can lead to lifelong difficulties; language skills closely correlate to reading ability, and literacy is a proven indicator of success or failure in school and beyond.

Closing The Gap

Parents of all socioeconomic backgrounds can help to level the literacy field. Read to Grow reaches out to all parents of newborns in our 12 partner hospitals, delivering 20,000 Literacy Packets annually—each with our baby board book and info on the importance of communication and language development for babies.

Dear Friends of Read to Grow,

As we embark on our 14th year, we are heartened by the energy and research supporting the critical need for early childhood education, yet we are dismayed by the number of children still starting school not ready to learn to read.

Our mission is to provide parents information leading to an understanding of the importance of language development for their children's future success, as well as the tools to make that happen. We have done this by meeting with moms of newborns and by distributing more than 120,000 books a year.

We are now embarking on an exciting next step. By collaborating with other agencies that are already working with at-risk families, we will have the opportunity to reach more families, to reinforce our message and to educate. Frederick Douglas said, “It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.” At Read to Grow we are committed to the building, the prevention, so that the heartbreaking cycle of poverty can be stopped.

*Thank you for your continued support and enthusiasm.
Roxanne J. Coady, Chair*

Our Annual Report & Appreciations

Please see pages 3 through 6 for our Annual Report, Treasurer's Report, and appreciations to donors and book drive organizers over the last year. We are grateful to them all. They make our work possible and have helped to change the lives of hundreds of thousands of children and their families over the years.

Simon & Schuster Donates 16,400 Books

Global publisher Simon & Schuster donated in February more than 16,400 books to Read to Grow for newborns and young children.

Jon Anderson, President & Publisher of the Children's Division, said that Simon & Schuster makes its donation in recognition of the need for literacy programs to reach the youngest children.

"We couldn't be more pleased and appreciative of this gift," said Roxanne Coady, Chair of Read to Grow's Board of Directors. "To have Simon & Schuster join in our efforts to promote language-building and literacy among children further strengthens our mission."



A study spanning 20 years and completed in 2010 at the University of Nevada shows that the number of books in a home had a more direct effect on the level of schooling that a child reached than did the parents' socioeconomic and education levels.

All of the board books from Simon & Schuster are designed to be durable and easily held. They feature colorful pictures and words appropriate to different developmental levels of infants and children up to age 3.

Titles of the book include: "Let's Count 123!" and "Smiley My Animal Friends". Simon & Schuster is a global leader in general interest. It is the publishing operation of CBS Corporation.

NEWSLETTER OF READ TO GROW

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Head of Family Services Agency Joins Read to Grow Board

Thomas P. Gullotta, M.A., M.S.W., the Chief Executive Officer of Child & Family Services of Southeastern Connecticut, has joined the Board of Directors, bringing further expertise in programming for children's needs to Read to Grow.

Gullotta was elected in January for a three-year term. Over the last 29 years, he has led Child & Family to become the largest private, non-profit children's services provider in the southeast region of Connecticut. With an annual operating budget of over \$10 million, the agency funds 28 service centers.

Gullotta, a resident of Glastonbury, is a member of the Psychology and Education departments at Eastern Connecticut State University. His scholarship includes co-authorship of two college textbooks and authorship or editing of numerous books and articles on social behaviors and problems among children, adolescents and adults.

"Tom's breadth of experience and his keen intelligence and wit have already made an enormous contribution to our work at Read to Grow," said Roxanne Coady, Board Chair. "We are delighted to welcome him."

Gullotta said, "The strength and energy of the Read to Grow leadership are clear. I feel fortunate to be joining the team and our working together for literacy for all children and adults in Connecticut."



New Administrator to Lead Branford Office Operations

Kyn Tolson joined the Read to Grow team in January as the new Director of Operations & Development, heading the Branford office.

Tolson most recently worked for eight years as director of Outreach to Haiti, based in Connecticut and Port-au-Prince. A resident of East Haddam, she has been a writer for a communications and design firm and was a reporter and deputy managing editor at The Day of New London. Her journalism experience includes stints as an editor for Associated Press and for Dow Jones, both in New York City. She has also worked as a photographer for various newspapers and publications.

"We are thrilled to welcome Kyn as we embark on the next exciting stage for Read to Grow," said Roxanne Coady. "Her experience in development and communications and her capacity for successful execution of objectives will heighten our abilities to effect change."

Preparation Gap

Many parents don't realize their babies are highly receptive to learning words and meanings well before they can speak. Even in the weeks after birth, babies can be engaged through talking and singing as parents sit down with them or go about daily activities.

Closing The Gap

With informational DVDs, Read to Grow reaches out to expectant parents in prenatal clinics for low-income families. Also, with a parent's guide and three free books during a child's first year, we supply tools for language-building. And, through distribution of more than 100,000 books annually, we support a continuum of literacy efforts for families.



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*Denotes multi-year pledge



A MESSAGE FROM STACY RUWE, TREASURER

During the last fiscal year, Read to Grow began putting into place a new organizational structure to align with new strategies and a new initiative.

A Director of Operations & Development will be leading our office team to implement a plan that calls for strengthening our core programs and launching an initiative based on formal partnerships with other non-profits that serve the neediest populations in the state. A new bilingual staff member will help to integrate the partnerships' services so that language-building and literacy efforts are enhanced for low-income and at-risk families.

Over the last year, supporters maintained strong relationships with Read to Grow through their donations and volunteerism. More than 70 people gave freely of their time and talents for our *Books for Babies* and our *Books for Kids* programs.

We hosted two major fundraisers during the year. In New Haven, we celebrated the release of our baby board book, "Welcome to the World!" with guest speakers Gov. Dannel P. Malloy and Yale-New Haven Hospital Chief Executive Officer Marna P. Borgstrom. In Hartford, we hosted another luncheon with Chris Matthews after the release of his book "Jack Kennedy: Elusive Hero."

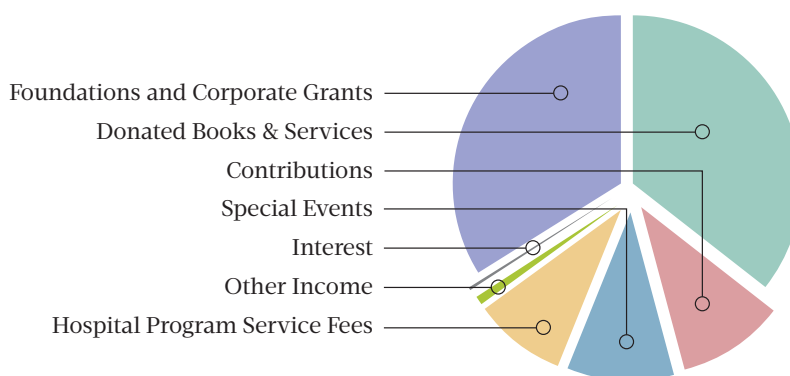
We saw a 31% increase in book applications from families. Also, we continued to run efficiently, with 83% of expenses directly for programs.

Read to Grow received an unqualified, or clean audit opinion from our external auditors, Bailey, Murphy & Scarano, CPA.

We ended the year in strong affirmation of Read to Grow's mission to promote language-building and literacy for children, beginning at birth, and to support parents as their babies' first teachers.

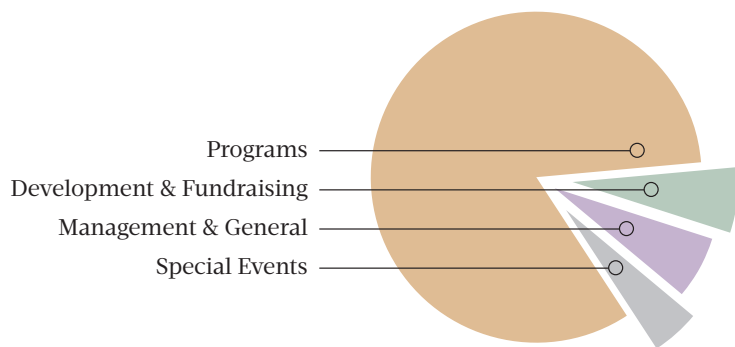
PUBLIC SUPPORT & REVENUES

Foundations and Corporate Grants	\$ 290,101
Donated Books & Services	300,678
Contributions	87,372
Special Events	87,354
Hospital Program Service Fees	76,485
Other Income	6,855
Interest	829
Total Public Support & Revenues	\$ 849,674



FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

Programs	\$ 810,521
Development & Fundraising	63,193
Management & General	60,836
Special Events	43,822
Total Expenses	978,372
Net	(128,698)
Beginning	621,985
End Balance	\$ 493,287



Program expenses account for 83% of total expenses

Imagination and Passion for Books Fuel Drive to Volunteer

For Dinah Virgulto, a favorite children's book is one that never ends. "It's a wordless book," says the 70-year-old volunteer at Read to Grow. "It's 'Flotsam,' by David Wiesner. There are beautiful pictures, showing the different things that wash up to shore ... going on and on. A cycle that never ends."

Dinah knows a lot about children's book, so her choice is not made lightly. She was a librarian for East Haven's elementary schools for 25 years. With both undergraduate and master's degrees in library science from Southern Connecticut State University, Dinah has had strong professional and personal interests in literacy. She and her husband, longtime residents of East Haven, have three children and five grandchildren. Books have always held an important place in their family life.

Since retirement, Dinah has volunteered at Read to Grow for more than two years. She is among 17 volunteers who offer their time and talents at the Branford office. About 50 others volunteer in the 12 hospitals that partner with Read to Grow. In the hospitals, these volunteers with our *Books for Babies* program talk to new parents about the importance of communicating with their newborns, and they give them our Literacy Packets. Each packet contains a board book, a parent's guide, and a reply card that enables the family to receive two more free books in the infant's first year.

Read to Grow is a place where people are passionate about what they do, Dinah says, and that makes her and other volunteers want to do more. In her normal routine at the Branford office, she packages up books to be sent out. Read to Grow, she adds, is



extraordinary in its goal and accomplishments. "To know that no child in Connecticut has to be without books is so wonderful. ... My daughter in Atlanta wanted to know if we're a national program. Every state should have this."

A Special Evening with Wild Things and Other Friends

Read to Grow thanks the sponsors of our recent friend-raiser at the New Britain Museum of American Art, *The Mischief & Magic of Max*. The evening gathering was linked to an exhibit of works by Maurice Sendak on occasion of the 50th anniversary of his children's book "Where the Wild Things Are."

The sponsors who made the February event possible were: the law firm of **Hinckley, Allen & Snyder**; **Reynolds Strategy Group**, a public affairs company representing clients before state and municipal governments; the law firm of **Udike, Kelly & Spellacy**; **Vesta Corporation**, which owns, develops and manages affordable-housing communities; **Aetna**; and **East River Energy**, a leading petroleum and energy-supplier in Connecticut.

Despite the wallop of Storm Derby, many guests came together for fun and to hear an introduction to Read to Grow's new initiative to partner with other community-based non-profits. A special thank-you goes to Peter Walker, actor and Chester, CT resident, who gave an animated reading of "Where The Wild Things Are."



Sponsors at the friend-raiser pictured here (left to right) are: Daniel Ryan, with Udike, Kelly & Spellacy; Kevin Reynolds, with Reynolds Strategy Group; Christopher Brigham, with Udike, Kelly & Spellacy; Don Seifel of UKS; and Brenda Cisco and Emma Cimino, both with Reynolds Strategy Group.

A MOTHER'S APPRECIATION

I'm a mother of 18-month-old baby boy. I would like to convey my heartfelt gratitude toward Read to Grow.

It all started at Hartford Hospital when my son was born in 2012. That's when he got the very first book from Read to Grow called "Baby Day." He liked that book so much. I started reading this book to him when he was 3 months old. Since then I have ... received many books, and my son enjoys me reading to him. This has helped my son to learn to listen, try to recognize pictures, letters, numbers, shapes. At the age of 18 months my son has shown a significant progress, thanks to Read to Grow.

Thanks for the recent batch of books my son received. It included many new baby books that well suite his age. It included a Baby Einstein book as well. I'm sure it's going to be his next favorite book.

From Naomi Thomas

Opportunity Gap

Studies show that 61% of children from low-income families have no age-appropriate books at home and that fewer than 36% of low-income children are read to daily. By first grade, the average middle-class child has had 1,000-1,700 hours of one-on-one book-reading while an average low-income child has had 25 hours.

Closing The Gap

Read to Grow is forging partnerships with other non-profits based in communities throughout the state, particularly in urban areas, to intensify and expand outreach to low-income and at-risk families. Partnerships will include agencies whose staff work as in-home visitors.



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Read to Grow Staff

In Memory of father and father-in-law of Mr. and Mrs. Damon Glisson
Mr. and Mrs. Howard Diamond

In Memory of Alphonse Esposito
Anonymous

In Memory of Fred Frankel
Mr. and Mrs. Howard Diamond

In Memory of Ms. Naomi Gaynes
Mr. and Mrs. Howard Diamond

In Memory of Ms. Pat Gelman
Ms. Barbara Gibson

In Memory of Adam Gibson
Ms. Marcia Geringer

In Memory of Mike Girardi
Mr. and Mrs. Howard Diamond

In Memory of Alan S. Lindquist
Mr. and Mrs. Nick Tragakes

In Memory of Ms. Patricia Melagari
Mr. and Mrs. David Stone

In Memory of Gus Portuondo
Mr. and Mrs. Howard Diamond

In Memory of Marge and Herb Ruderfer
Ms. Laurie Ruderfer

In Memory of the Students and Teachers of Sandy Hook Elementary School
Ms. Maryanne Hall
Noah Wallace School
Ms. Sherra Piscitelli

In Memory of Mrs. Seelig, Melanie's mother
Ms. Melanie Seelig

In Memory of Jerome Sussman
Mr. Samuel Limbaker

In Memory of Mario Tetreau
Mr. and Mrs. Howard Diamond

In Memory of father and grandfather of Ray Wasson
Mr. and Mrs. Howard Diamond

Prudential
Redding Elementary School
Reed Exhibitions
Ruth L. Chaffee School
Saint Thomas Day School
Scout Troop #30286 of Southport
Soundview Family YMCA
Suffield Middle School
The Country School 6th Grade Class
The Eric G. Norfeldt School

The Fraser Woods School
The Healthy Child
Samuel Thorpe
Timothy Edwards Middle School
Whitby School
Trumbull Brownie Troop 35080
Philip DeLise & Johar Varma
Woodside Intermediate School



The Hartford Hospital Auxiliary donated 1,812 books in January to Read to Grow. Pictured (left to right) at the hospital are: Jenny Minton Quigley, Auxiliary member; Linda Sylvester, Books for Kids Program Coordinator; Roxanne Coady, Read to Grow Board Chair; Virginia Van Dyk and Christine Collins, Auxiliary Co-Presidents.

Read to Grow Welcomes Volunteers



You can choose from a number of ways to help in our mission. You might:

- ★ Train to volunteer in our Books for Babies program at one of 12 partnered hospitals, where you would visit briefly with new families to explain our Literacy Packets.
- ★ Come to our office in Branford , where you could:
 - ☆ assemble Literary Packets for the hospitals
 - ☆ sort and prepare books for our deliveries
 - ☆ assist with record-keeping or data-entry
 - ☆ lend a hand in website and social media development
- ★ Organize or sponsor a book drive to collect gently used children's books
- ★ Help in our fund-raising efforts

Contact us at **203-488-6800**

Visit us at
www.readtogrow.org

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