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Save the Children and Reach Out and Read Launch Rural Literacy Initiative with U.S. Department of Education Innovative Approaches Literacy Grant

\$4.2 million award to help 20,000 children in rural America build critical literacy skills

Washington, DC, (Feb. 25, 2015) –Save the Children, in partnership with Reach Out and Read, is launching a major rural literacy initiative with a new \$4.2 million award from the Department of Education’s Innovative Approaches to Literacy Program. The “Building Child-Centered Communities in Rural America Project” will help develop communities’ capacity to support and foster children’s education and wellbeing in some of the United States’ most impoverished and isolated regions.

“We know that children who are unable to read on grade-level by the fourth grade are unlikely to ever catch up,” said Kathy Spangler, Vice President of Save the Children’s U.S. Programs. “And in rural areas, where resources are few and far between, nearly half of kids fail to meet this benchmark. That’s why Save the Children is pleased to partner with Reach Out and Read and to help ensure that communities can support children from the start- with early education, literacy resources and health services- the things that every child needs to thrive in life.”

The Building Child Centered Communities project, which is grounded on the core premise that collaboration between organizations is essential in effecting lasting change, will surround children in an intentional and integrated structure of home, school, and community resources. The implementation is designed to nurture a ‘*Culture of Literacy*’ for 30 rural schools in Arizona, Colorado, Kentucky, and South Carolina.

“Reach Out and Read is thrilled to partner with Save the Children to build a ‘Culture of Literacy’ that leads to brighter futures for children in Kentucky, Colorado, Arizona, and South Carolina,” said Reach Out and Read Executive Director Brian Gallagher. “We are grateful to the U.S. Department of Education and the Innovative Approaches to Literacy program for the support that will allow us to build on our evidence-based model and promote the importance of reading aloud as part of a broader community-based effort. Together with Save the Children, we can provide families with the support, resources, and community they need to help their children start life on a path to success.”

Together, Save the Children and Reach Out and Read will deliver a more meaningful and sustained, collective impact than any program in isolation, reaching nearly 20,000 children in underserved rural communities. Key elements of the project include:

- **Building Home Libraries for Children:** Every family participating in Save the Children’s home visitation program, Early Steps to School Success, will receive high-quality, age-appropriate children’s books to ensure each family builds their own libraries.
- **Increasing Under-resourced School Libraries’ Technology Resources:** School and Classroom libraries will be equipped with high-quality age-appropriate books, tablets, and eBooks. Save the Children invests \$4,000- \$6,000 worth of reading materials for each school per year. An additional infusion of \$10,000 worth of books, tablets and eBooks for each school will be



where great stories begin™

made possible through this award.

- **Developing Community Literacy Asset Map:** A locally hired Community Literacy Manager will develop an asset map to develop a blueprint for increased community collaboration and build local capacity and leadership.
- **Strengthening Home-Health Linkages:** Reach Out and Read will serve 16,706 children ages 6 months through 5 years at 30 medical clinics. At each clinic, physicians teach parents about the value of reading aloud and giving each child a new, age- and developmentally-appropriate book to take home and keep.

“We know it takes a village to raise a child,” added Spangler. “And we thank the U.S. Department of Education for the opportunity to help build lasting community capacity to support the development of children who need it most.”

For nearly 100 years, Save the Children has been the leading independent organization creating lasting change for children in the United States and around the world. Last year in the U.S., Save the Children partnered with school districts and community organizations to run 230 literacy programs serving more than 38,000 children in 16 states and the District of Columbia.

For more than 25 years, Reach Out and Read has reached millions of children and their parents with its pediatric intervention, ensuring children have high-quality books at home and parents grasp the value of reading aloud regularly. The body of research validating Reach Out and Read’s efficacy is more extensive than any other psychosocial interventions found in general pediatrics.

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About Save the Children

Save the Children invests in childhood – every day, in times of crisis and for our future. In the United States and around the world, we give children a healthy start, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

About Reach Out and Read

Reach Out and Read is the evidence-based, national nonprofit organization that promotes early brain development, literacy, and school readiness by giving new books to children and advice to parents about the importance of reading aloud at regular pediatric checkups. Nationwide, Reach Out and Read’s 20,000 doctors and nurses serve 4 million children annually at 5,000 hospitals, health centers, and clinics in all 50 states, with a focus on serving families in low-income communities.

To learn more, please visit www.reachoutandread.org