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## **REACH OUT AND READ PARTNERS WITH MIDWEST DAIRY AND DAIRY WEST TO EXPAND EARLY LITERACY AND NUTRITION ACROSS 14 STATES**

*Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds* initiative will deliver 36,000 new books to families through pediatric clinics

**BOSTON** - Reach Out and Read, the national nonprofit that leverages pediatric well-child visits to promote early literacy and healthy relationships, is expanding its *Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds* initiative through new partnerships with Midwest Dairy and Dairy West. Together, the organizations are investing \$245,000 to deliver 36,000 new books to children and families across 14 states, pairing shared reading guidance with healthy eating education during routine pediatric visits.

“Each time a clinician gives a child a book and offers a family guidance on shared reading, we’re doing far more than supporting language development. We’re sparking curiosity, nurturing empathy and resilience, and empowering caregivers to build healthy habits that last,” said Dr. Lynette M. Fraga, Ph.D., Reach Out and Read’s CEO. “By pairing literacy with guidance on healthy eating, our collaboration with Midwest Dairy ensures families are supported in raising children who are ready to thrive in every sense of the word.”

Midwest Dairy’s \$150,000 investment will support the distribution of 22,000 books across nearly 800 clinics in Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and eastern Oklahoma. Dairy West’s \$95,000 investment will deliver 14,000 books to more than 500 clinics in Idaho, Oregon, Utah, and Washington.

“Dairy West and Midwest Dairy are proud to partner with Reach Out and Read to support healthier futures for children. As nonprofit organizations that conduct research and promotion on behalf of dairy farmers, we know that dairy plays an essential role in fueling growing brains, bones, and bodies,” said Lela Fausze, Vice President, Trust

Partnerships at Midwest Dairy. “Our farmers are deeply committed to caring for people and the planet, and this partnership reflects that commitment.”

Research shows that healthy eating and shared reading in the first five years of life boost brain development, strengthen parent-child bonds, and lay the foundation for long-term academic success. By bringing together nutrition and literacy, *Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds* empowers families to build daily routines that nurture both strong bodies and strong minds.

“Our dairy farmers are deeply invested in the health and future of our communities,” adds Jaclyn St. John MS, RDN, LD, Director of Nutrition Partnerships at Dairy West. “The first five years of life shape a child’s growth, learning, and well-being, and nutrition plays a vital role in that journey. By partnering with Reach Out and Read, we are uniting the strength of wholesome food with the power of books to give every child the foundation they need to succeed.”

Across these regions, Reach Out and Read’s network includes more than 1,300 clinics and over 12,000 medical providers, collectively supporting more than 1.6 million well-child visits annually in urban and rural communities alike. Books will begin arriving in clinics this fall and will be shared with families during regular checkups—turning routine visits into opportunities for connection, learning, and healthier futures.

“At the heart of this partnership is a simple idea: Every child deserves the chance to grow up healthy,” Dr. Fraga said. “When families leave a well-child visit with both a book and meaningful tips for nourishing their children — body and mind — we’re giving them more than resources. We’re strengthening relationships and offering hope for a brighter future.”

To learn more about this initiative go to [ReachOutandRead.org/HealthyReaders](https://ReachOutandRead.org/HealthyReaders).

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**About Reach Out and Read:** As a 501(c)3 nonprofit, Reach Out and Read leverages the near-universal reach of the pediatric well-child visit to support caregivers in fostering healthy relationships with their young children through shared reading. In FY25, Reach Out and Read served more than 4.8 million children and provided 9 million free books across 11.2 million well-child visits. Around 70 percent of the children Reach Out and Read serves are from low-income families. The only national pediatric literacy model endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, Reach Out and Read serves children in every state across the U.S.

**About Midwest Dairy:** Midwest Dairy® represents 3,600 dairy farm families and works on their behalf to build dairy demand by inspiring consumer confidence in our products and production practices. We are committed to *Bringing Dairy to Life!* by giving Consumers an Excellent Dairy Experience and are funded by farmers across a 10-state region, including Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri,

Kansas, Arkansas and eastern Oklahoma. For more information, visit [MidwestDairy.com](http://MidwestDairy.com), and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

**About Dairy West:** Dairy West represents dairy farm families in Idaho, Utah, Washington and Oregon to promote the dairy industry and products locally, nationally and globally. We are passionate about what we do, every day, because dairy farmers play a critical role in providing the world with safe and nutritious food. From forging industry partnerships to hosting community events, Dairy West seeks to deliver impactful information and experiences that can help secure a brighter future for us all. We thrive on big ideas, and strive to create an environment in which the dairy community is a positive change-maker. Our goal is to have the world see dairy the way we see it: as a key ingredient in the health and prosperity of our planet.