



At Home with Books



FAMILY READING PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER

Fall 2014

Every Baby! Every Day! Ripples by Elizabeth Lane Stilwell

“When you drop a pebble into a pond, ripples spread out, changing all the water in the pool. In some small way, the pond is never the same again.”

~Dalai Lama

In January the Family Reading Partnership dropped a pebble into the “pond” of our community with the launch of our newest initiative, *Every Baby! Every Day! Talk. Sing. Read. Play.* Inspired by a growing body of research that demonstrates the crucial importance of a baby’s first year in brain growth and development, we invited the whole community to join us to help give every baby the best start possible.

Our quest is to ensure that all babies in our community are provided with key ingredients to support brain growth—an abundance of language with the attention of a loving adult. This may sound ambitious, but we are off to an extraordinary start. The community’s response has been strong and far-reaching and the ripples have been spreading out, connecting babies with words, songs, and stories in remarkable ways.

Our community-wide promotion has created a “surround” to encourage people to take action. Big,

beautiful *Every Baby! Every Day! Talk. Sing. Read. Play.* banners hang in highly visible locations throughout the county to help raise awareness; hundreds of individuals and businesses proudly display lawn signs with the message; and community leaders have raised their voices in support of the campaign through a series of compelling public service announcements.



To bring the *Every Baby! Every Day!* message into homes and have the greatest possible impact, we have partnered with organizations who have direct, ongoing relationships with families. It is in these one-on-one, caring, and supportive interactions that significant and sometimes unexpected ripples will continue to spread out and reach babies.

One of the most extensive examples is our *Baby Reading Buddies* program. Since early spring almost 40 volunteers have completed training to be *Baby Reading Buddies* and are now reading to babies in the



Baby Reading Buddy Kelly Doolittle, Youth Services Librarian at Tompkins County Public Library, shares a book with almost 3-year-old Emmet Haskins at a WIC clinic. Volunteers have been trained to read to babies and young children in the community to extend the reach of Family Reading Partnership’s Every Baby! Every Day! initiative.

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Director's Words



Brigid Hubberman, FRP executive director

At Home with Books Fall 2014

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Each time I begin a director's column for the upcoming newsletter, I realize that while the stories in the newsletter change, the themes are often the same: abundance, gratitude, accomplishment, partners, love, the power of "we," and always faith in families.

All in all, the most common thread woven throughout our *At Home with Books* newsletter is progress. We are continually moving forward in innovative ways toward our mission for creating a culture of literacy.

As we marshal resources and organizational force toward the new *Every Baby! Every Day! Talk. Sing. Read. Play.* initiatives, we are always working to strengthen and deepen the impact of our other core programs. In addition, we continue to build organizational capacity to better share what we have learned.

The newsletter articles you see here are only a mere snapshot of the incredible work we are doing together every day with staff, volunteers, and the community at large. And we simply could not do it without all of you!

As always, thank you so much for believing in and being part of this incredible journey. Our work has never been more important for our quality of life now, and for the future.

Brigid

Family Reading Partnership Programs

Every Baby! Every Day!
Talk. Sing. Read. Play.

Our community-wide campaign encourages everyone to give babies an abundance of words.

Read-Along Love Songs for Baby

Income eligible families receive a bag of 5 board books for baby with a CD of the books being read and sung.

Books Before Birth & Books at Birth

Every expectant family receives a book at a prenatal visit and another book from the hospital when their baby is born.

Books to Grow On

Doctors give young families a book at eight well visits with a prescription to "read to their children 20 minutes a day."

Love Those Letters!

Pre-K and kindergarten students receive a book, DVD, and CD set of alphabet fun to use at home that is also used in classrooms.

Read-Along Songs

A set of 6 books and CD of the books being both read and sung are given to young children as a path to literacy through a new door.

Welcome to School Book

Kindergartners receive a new book at registration as a gift from their new school.

Kids' Book Fest

The community comes together to celebrate children's books at this fun, annual event.

Bright Red Bookshelf

Gently used books are collected and placed on red shelves free for families to select and own.

Traveling Books

Volunteers read to children at child care centers and homes and leave crates of books to be enjoyed.

Give the Gift of Family Reading

Low-income families choose new books at the holidays to give as gifts to their children.

"Read to Me" Banners & Calendars

Reading together images are made into large banners and calendars to spread the message Read to Me!

Our Mission: To create a culture of literacy in which all children have early, frequent, and pleasurable experiences with books, as part of everyday family life, right from the start.

Ripples

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community at WIC (Women, Infants, and Children, a nutritional support program) and child care centers that serve infants and toddlers.

At a series of *Baby Reading Buddies* trainings in May, participants began to imagine new venues in outlying, more isolated, settings. As a result we have a new array of *Baby Reading Buddy*-initiated efforts, including:

- Volunteers now read to babies and children at food pantries in Brooktondale and Trumansburg.
- Cornell Cooperative Extension helped start a new "Baby Reads" program at the Dryden Community Café, encouraging families with babies and young children to gather for stories and social connection.
- The Groton Public Library and Tompkins County Public Library encouraged staff members to participate in the *Baby Reading Buddies* training and are now providing outreach for babies at Tompkins County Health Department WIC, Groton WIC, and TCA Early Head Start.

We can almost hear the ripple of words, songs and stories filling in the empty waiting time for babies and their families at WIC sites and food pantries throughout the county!



Ithaca Mayor Svante Myrick used his parking space-turned-park at City Hall as a spot where people could pick up a lawn sign to promote Every Baby! Every Day! Talk. Sing. Read. Play.

Magnets are being produced at the suggestion of home visitors so they have a long-lasting gift for families that serve as a reminder to talk, sing, read, and play with babies.

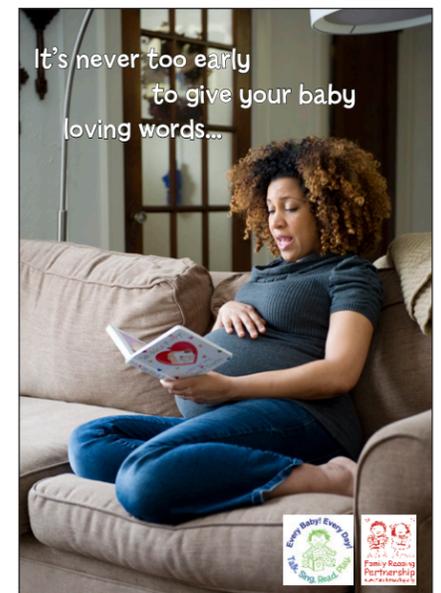
Because we know that books gain value when given through trusted relationships, we are thrilled to be partnering with TCA Early Head Start Family Partners, and the Child Development Council's Teen Pregnancy and Parenting Program (TP3) and Family Services Program to provide additional books and support to families with fewer resources. Through a *New Books for New Babies* book drive led by Leadership Tompkins, we were able to provide 247 brand new, beautiful board books for these partners to give to families at home visits this summer.

By actively engaging and working closely with our partners, our initiative continues to evolve in a responsive way. Through dialogue with family home visitors and *Baby Reading Buddies*, we developed new materials and resources in response to feedback from these experts in the field. These include a ring of simple, fun, and engaging baby songs and finger plays and a set of "Talk. Sing. Read. Play." refrigerator magnets to provide a long-lasting, easily visible invitation to families to make sharing words, songs, and stories with their babies a part of everyday life.

Our *Every Baby! Every Day! Talk. Sing. Read. Play.* campaign is an example of how a combination of small changes can have big collective impact. The incredible progress that we, collectively, have made since January only strengthens our resolve to invite everyone to "Be a Part of It!" and "Spread the Word!" There is no doubt that, together, our efforts will continue to spread out in ripples that will touch the lives of every baby in our community.



Posters will soon be on the walls at OB-GYN and pediatrician offices to remind everyone to give babies words.



It's never too early to give your baby loving words...

Love Those Letters! Alphabet Museums by Melissa Perry

Children in Kathleen Downes' Pre-K class at Caroline Elementary had the opportunity to take their love of letters to a whole new level this past school year by creating their very own alphabet museums.

Using *Love Those Letters!* materials, the children first spent time getting to know the alphabet. Each day, a letter was chosen and together the class brainstormed lists of words that began with that letter.

To create the museums, the children chose an object that started with each letter of the alphabet and then placed the object in a box labeled with the letter. Once each box was filled, they were arranged in alphabetical order on a piece of cardboard.

As a final step, the class researched roof styles; each child chose the style he or she most preferred and decorated it with

paint and alphabet stickers. The children also created "Alphabet Museum" signs. The museums were prominently displayed at the class's art show.

Kathleen reports the students loved the project and frequently visited their museums when they were displayed in the classroom.

As a special education teacher, Kathleen says she especially appreciates that the project made *Love Those Letters!* accessible to all students, regardless of developmental age. "Children at developmentally 24 months love touching the objects and learning vocabulary," she says. "Children who are five were able to generate lists of objects and reinforce their love of letters."

Families were asked to bring in small items from home, such as toys or photos, to fill the museums. Other materials for this project were purchased with funds from a Red & Gold grant awarded to Downes from Ithaca Public Education Initiative, for projects that enrich curriculum and actively engage students.

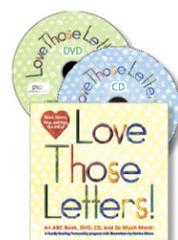
Family Reading Partnership is thrilled that *Love Those Letters!* can support teachers and learning in this way. It is our intention to provide a way to learn and

love the alphabet that lends itself to creativity, multiplying the power of the *Love Those Letters!* book, CD, DVD, and other materials.

We love to learn and share how others are using *Love Those Letters!* Please share your stories with us by emailing them to melissa@familyreading.org.



Children were fully engaged as they found small items to represent the sound of each letter of the alphabet. A to Z letter boxes were then stacked to make alphabet museums.



Love Those Letters! is a research-based resource developed by Family Reading Partnership and Ithaca City School District reading specialist, Carol Cedarholm, to support developmentally appropriate literacy learning in young children. Visit www.lovetheletters.org



This creative project was accessible to all students, regardless of developmental age.

Spreading the Love by Melissa Perry

Imagine if all children had the opportunity to explore and learn the alphabet with *Love Those Letters!* books, CDs, and DVDs... Imagine if all children had the benefit of using *Love Those Letters!* materials in their play and learning... Imagine generations of children who just adore the alphabet... Now, imagine all this becoming reality... because *Love Those Letters!* is available to everyone!

Literacy consultant Olivia Wahl calls *Love Those Letters!* "revolutionary world-wide" and tells us that "the lives of Pre-K children would be transformed if they had *Love Those Letters!* at home and school."

As part of the mission of Family Reading Partnership, materials

are developed with the intention of sharing with others beyond Tompkins County. We're so happy to be spreading the love!

In addition to the 6,276 children in Tompkins County, 2,994 children from 21 states, plus Canada, the UK, China, and Japan have already received *Love Those Letters!* materials. While it's a promising start, we'd love to someday reach every pre-kindergarten and kindergarten child in the nation!

Love Those Letters! is currently in search of a sponsor. For more information on how you can help spread the love and joy of letters to children in Tompkins County, or if you'd like to find out how to give *Love Those Letters!* to children in another school

district, state, or country, or if you'd like just one copy for your own home, please contact us at (607) 277-8602 or visit our website at www.familyreading.org.



National literacy consultant Olivia Wahl, (O), recently met with Melissa Perry, (M), coordinator of the *Love Those Letters!* program, to tell Family Reading Partnership how she uses the book and materials in all of her presentations. Wahl would love to see *Love Those Letters!* in other school districts across the country.

Welcome to School with a new book for every kindergartner



This fall, *Rocket the dog* (FRP board member Nancy Schuler) acted out the story as each principal read the book in kindergarten classrooms across the Ithaca City School District.

Kindergartners were so excited that they knew the story of "How Rocket Learned to Read" and were proud to have the book at home!

At one school children spontaneously made alphabet banners like ones they saw in the book, using the materials on hand—adding machine paper tape!

At kindergarten registration last spring, every kindergartner in Tompkins County received the book "How Rocket Learned to Read" by Tad Hills as a gift from their new school, with sponsorship from M&T Bank.

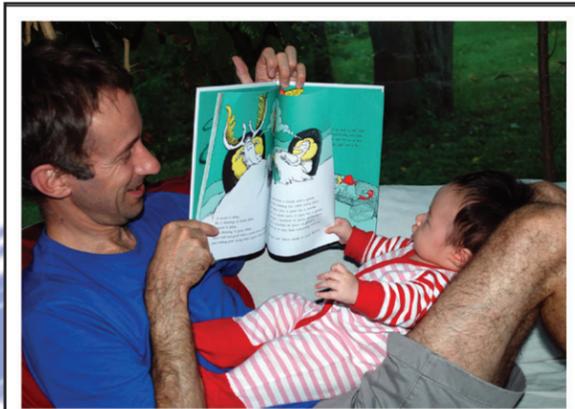


With a little glue and some crayons, kindergartners made Rocket and Bird puppets that they can use to tell and retell the story at home with their families.

The read-aloud at school, the visit from Rocket, and making puppets to bring home made a rich book experience for children and strengthened the home-school connection.

Give every baby an abundance of words!

- talk about your day • sing a favorite song • read a book aloud • play together



Every Baby! Every Day! Tip #1

Your face and your voice are your baby's first and most important toys!

When reading to a baby, try looking face to face while you read aloud to her so she can see your expressions and connect books to the things she loves most (you!).



Every Baby! Every Day! Tip #2

Keep talking—your baby is listening!

Newborn babies sleep a lot, but they are absorbing all the sounds they hear whether they are awake or asleep. Read aloud, talk about your day, tell your baby what you are doing. Feed your baby a diet rich in words!



Every Baby! Every Day! Tip #3

Talk to your baby! Read to your baby!

"It's not the toys in the house that make the difference in children's lives; it's the words in their heads. The least expensive thing we can give a child outside of a hug turns out to be the most valuable: **words.**"

~ Jim Trelease, *The Read-Aloud Handbook*



Every Baby! Every Day! Tip #4

"Hello, cute little baby!"

Say hello to all the babies you see during your day. Talk to your own baby, your neighbor's baby, even babies you see in the grocery store. Babies love to see a smiling face and are learning all the words they hear.



Every Baby! Every Day! Tip #5

Open them, shut them, turn them all around... Babies use books as some of their first toys.

Keep your child's books in a basket on the floor or on a low shelf where your baby can reach them. Then your baby can explore books like he explores the rest of his world.



Every Baby! Every Day! Tip #6

You can read anything to a little baby!

Read the newspaper, an email, a cereal box, or even the novel you are reading out loud. You can read children's books, too! Babies love to listen to your voice. Even if they don't understand yet, they are learning by listening!



Every Baby! Every Day! Tip #7

Just Sing!

If your baby isn't in the mood to hear you read a book, try singing! Sing to your baby even if you can't hit every note. Your baby is a great audience and will love hearing how your voice changes when you add music.



Every Baby! Every Day! Tip #8

Read books and play with them too!

Bring books to life by using silly voices, acting out the story, or even using finger puppets. Your young child will giggle with delight when you try something new!



Spread the word! Find these tips to share—and more!—on our Facebook page!

Third Grade Students Advocate for More Books

by Katie Dietrich-Cacciotti

Something wonderful happened in our third grade classroom last year at Beverly J. Martin Elementary. As the school year came to a close and students emptied their desks and books got packed away, there was an excitement buzzing in the air. It was the sound of engaged and inspired students. It was not for the summer days ahead, but about what they had learned and the power that they felt as they wrapped up their school year.

We had been studying a unit that focused on accessing the power of reading. As part of this unit, we read about many different people all over the world from many different walks of life who one way or another accessed the

Something wonderful happened in our third grade classroom last year...

power of reading and changed their communities. We read and analyzed stories, watched videos, viewed images, and discussed what we learned. A large part of this exploration involved looking at images of how people around the world create access to books. We looked at mobile libraries such as camels, donkeys, and



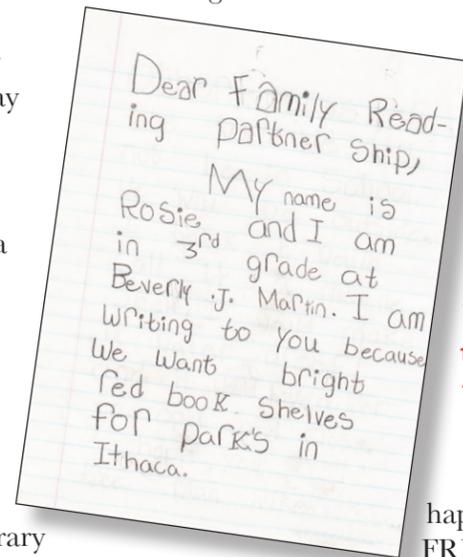
Katie Dietrich-Cacciotti is a third grade teacher at Beverly J. Martin Elementary School, Ithaca, NY.

boats. We looked at community libraries that included creatively designed libraries placed at bus stops, on beaches, and built into mountainsides.

While we were studying this unit, the park across the street was being built and Dr. Eschbach, our principal, had begun to ask the staff and the students to think about opportunities for learning in our soon-to-be outdoor space. One day I asked the students what they thought about the idea of creating some kind of library in the park across the street. Students shouted out what their library would be like; they suggested putting them in all the parks so people could read all summer. The excitement in the room soared.

The students then wrote letters to Family Reading Partnership, which were promptly answered with an enthusiastic letter offering the students the opportunity to plan, design, and implement their vision. Brigid Hubberman, FRP executive director, and Suzie Brache, FRP

program coordinator, arranged to come in for a visit to ask the students about their ideas. School was ending shortly so we took a poll of who would like to serve on a committee in the upcoming school year to plan, design, and create their idea. Every single hand in the classroom went up. Brigid and Suzie assured the students that they would find a way to make a library



Each child in the class wrote a letter to Family Reading Partnership explaining how the shelf could be kept outside and benefit the neighborhood.

Bright Red Bookshelf

happen. But immediately FRP would begin by

placing a Bright Red Bookshelf over at the Alex Haley Pool for the summer, since many of the students had mentioned in their letters how cool it would be to have books by the pool. The kids left school looking forward to the summer and the next school year, and feeling a real sense of power in the fact that their idea would come to fruition.

I look forward to taking this vision into the new school year along with the students and Family Reading Partnership. Thanks, Family Reading Partnership for your dedication, action, and commitment to sharing the love and power of reading.

Volunteers Make it Happen!

Volunteer Carolyn Greenwald has been stocking Bright Red Bookshelves with her

children for 5 years. How amazing that her three boys have grown up sharing books with others! We recently caught up with Carolyn to find out more about her family's commitment to Family Reading Partnership.

Q: Carolyn, please tell us a little about yourself. How did you first become involved with Family Reading Partnership?

My husband Adam Schaye and I are both lawyers and we have three sons. I became involved in 2009 after attending my first Book Fest. My son Nathan's first writing was authoring his own book at an FRP event.

Q: Could you describe what you do as a volunteer?

I stock the Bright Red Bookshelves with

gently used children's books at The Salvation Army and at Family and Children's Services.

Q: What does volunteering with Family Reading Partnership mean to you?

In my small way, I help bring the gift of reading to a new generation of readers.

Q: If you were to give words of encouragement to inspire new volunteers, what would you share with them?

I would encourage them to involve their family. I bring my boys with me to stock the Bright Red Bookshelves whenever I can. Jamie, my youngest, calls the children who leave with books our "customers."

Q: Do you have any special reading traditions in your family?

We read "last stories" every night. "Lord of the Rings" is the most popular choice. We are on the 3rd reading because my son Teddy loves it.



Reading together is a favorite pastime for the Greenwald-Schaye family.

Q: You have written a children's book. Can you share more about it? My book is called "The Gelt Giving Golem" and it will be available this Hanukkah. The book comes with a Golem doll that leaves a piece of chocolate Hanukkah gelt to children who are well-behaved during the holiday.

Thank you, Carolyn, for everything you do! You have helped so many children and families discover the joy of books and reading!



Children enjoyed hundreds of books from the Bright Red Bookshelf at the Alex Haley Pool this summer. The shelf was the great idea of BJM school third graders. (see story on previous page)

"The Bright Red Bookshelf at the Alex Haley Pool was a great idea. Children would sit on the tables on their towels when they took a break from swimming and they would pick up a book and read. Books were always going from the shelf. You don't have to force kids to read if you have books available."

~Shelia Seyfried, Ithaca parent



Sheila Seyfried and her son Lord Samuel Cruz, age 7, have enjoyed books from the Bright Red Bookshelf since he was born and look forward to reading to their new baby in a few months.

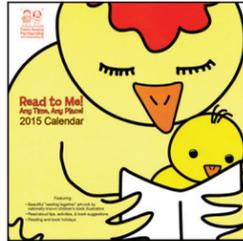
Program Sponsorship and Gift Opportunities



New Books for New Babies

\$5 per book

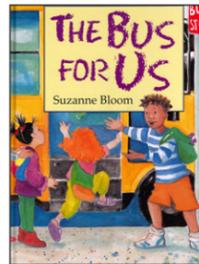
As part of our *Every Baby! Every Day! Talk. Sing. Read. Play.* initiative, we are giving board books to babies in our programs whenever we have the supply. Buy one book or more at our website: www.familyreading.org. Click on the *New Books for New Babies* link.



Read to Me Calendars

\$3,000 annually

Sponsorship gives all Pre-K and Head Start students in Tompkins County a *Read to Me Calendar* to take home at the end of the year. The same calendar is given to each classroom to strengthen the school-home connection. The calendar features reading together illustrations, reading and family holidays, and read-aloud tips for families.



Welcome to Pre-K Book

\$3,000 annually

Children enrolled in Pre-K receive the book, "The Bus for Us," by Suzanne Bloom as a gift from their classroom teacher when he or she meets the family at a summer home visit. Then when the children start school in the fall, they have the common experience of knowing the same book, easing the transition from home to school.



Books at Birth Book Bags

\$3,500 annually

The family of every baby born at Cayuga Medical Center receives a book and a beautiful red cotton book bag with the FRP logo to use again and again—850 bags (one year supply).



Read-Along Songs

\$10,000 annually

This highly successful program needs new sponsorship to continue. The set of six books and the accompanying CD of the books being read by Cal Walker and sung by John Simon is given to Pre-K and Head Start children each spring in a blue book bag. Books are used in the classrooms and at home, and John and Cal visit each school.

For further information about sponsoring a program in full or contributing in part, please contact:

Liz Kinast at liz@familyreading.org or 607-277-8602

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR NEWEST SPONSORS!

Cornell University: *Bright Red Bookshelf* program

The Cope Family: *Books to Grow On* book, "Baby Cakes," given at 2-month child well-visits

Anonymous: *Books to Grow On* book, "Moo, Baa, La! La! La!," given at a 4-month child well-visits

The Dunlop Book Fund: *Books to Grow On* book, "Tickle, Tickle," given at 6-month child well-visits

Thank you for helping us place books into the hands, homes, and hearts of children and families.

Family Reading Partnership Donation Form

Your contribution gives books and read-aloud support to families in our community. **Thank you!**



\$50 \$100 \$500 \$1,000 Other \$ _____

My check for \$ _____ is enclosed.

You can also give online!
Visit www.familyreading.org

Please charge my Visa/MC for \$ _____

Card # Expires _____

Signature _____

(Optional) My gift is in honor or in memory of: _____

Please send a recognition card to: _____

Address: _____

Please make any corrections to your name or address on the other side of this page.

Mail form and donation to Family Reading Partnership, 54 Gunderman Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850

Giving More Than Books by Caroline Cope

I learned my love of books from my father. He read aloud to all four of his children—often all at the same time! In our pajamas, nestled together in the living room, we were enchanted as he read aloud. It was only as an adult that I marveled at his ability to captivate us all with one book—two boys and two girls with an eight-year age span—all enthralled.

My early pleasurable experiences with books, combined with watching an older brother struggle with dyslexia, led me into education and teaching reading. Then in a school setting I learned of Family Reading Partnership from friend and colleague, Marty Allee. We taught at DeWitt Middle School together for many years, sharing a passion for teaching reading to struggling teenagers.

It was very clear to us that, though all our students had difficulty reading, those who had been read to (and continued to be read to) had a huge advantage. They had better vocabularies, understood language, had more extensive general knowledge, and could follow a story even when they couldn't read the words for themselves. (A favorite time in my classroom was when I read aloud.) And Marty saw Family Reading Partnership as a key to unlocking

that opportunity for all children.

For me, Family Reading Partnership is a natural extension of my own love of being read to, reading to others, and seeing the impact of reading in the lives of my children and students. I have been donating to FRP for many years but have truly come to understand its impact since joining the Board.

I see education as having the potential to be a great equalizer, beginning with reading.

I am excited that all children in Tompkins County are given access to books, have their own books to hold, read, re-read, and love, and that families are learning the power and pleasure of talking, singing, reading, and playing with their children. What could be more valuable?

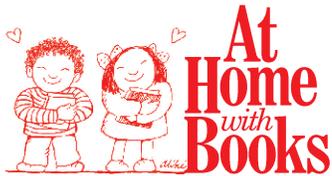
When my own children came along there was nothing I liked better than having one or both of them snuggled in my lap as I read to them. Even after they could read for themselves, they loved being read to. (My son even hid the fact that he knew how to read because he was afraid that once we knew he could read for himself, we



Ed and Caroline Cope love reading "Baby Cakes" to their 2-year-old granddaughter, Riley, so much that they decided to sponsor it for other children.

would stop reading to him.) Perhaps the greatest pleasure of all has come with having a granddaughter living near by. From the very beginning we have been reading buddies. At first I chose the books, bringing out old favorites and discovering new ones. Then she learned the word "book" and was able to clearly let me know what we should be doing. Now she has progressed to sentences. She chooses the book and hands it to me saying, "Read it." (There is no question who is in charge!)

Reading to our granddaughter is such a pleasure that when my husband and I thought about supporting FRP financially, we knew we wanted to sponsor a book. And "Baby Cakes" had become a family favorite. We love it, our son loves it, and our granddaughter loves it.



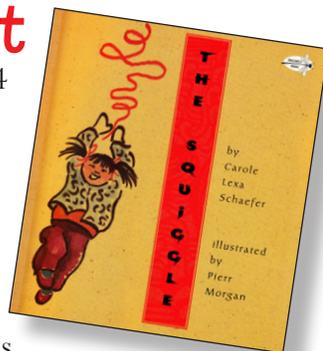
www.familyreading.org

News and Upcoming Events

Kids' Book Fest

Saturday, November 8, 2014
10am–4pm
Boynton Middle School

READ, PLAY,



Join us for free family fun celebrating children's books and the love of reading! This year's theme is IMAGINATION, and the featured book is "The Squiggle" by Carole Lexa Schaefer, illustrated by Pierr Morgan. More than 3,000 children in T-S-T BOCES elementary schools will receive their very own copy with a letter and bookmark from the author and illustrator! Come to Kids' Book Fest to imagine, create, and explore in our Imagination Station and Squiggle Central! Enjoy special activities from Family Reading Partnership and community organizations, meet local authors, and see performances including favorites John Simon & Cal Walker! Don't miss it!

Give the Gift of Family Reading New Book Drive at Cornell Men's Hockey



Friday, November 21 vs. Yale
Saturday, Nov. 22 vs. Brown

It's the 20th year of this amazing partnership between FRP and Cornell Men's Hockey! Donate new children's books or give funds that we will use to purchase books to give to families at the holidays this winter.

Receive our e-News?

Our quarterly electronic-newsletter features colorful photos, story briefs, news, volunteer spotlights, upcoming events, and activities to try at home—plus so much more—all delivered right to your email inbox!



To sign up visit our website homepage and click on **e-News!**



www.facebook.com/FamilyReadingPartnership and www.facebook.com/LoveThoseLetters
Get the facts, see the trends, and discover new ideas for reading aloud with children!