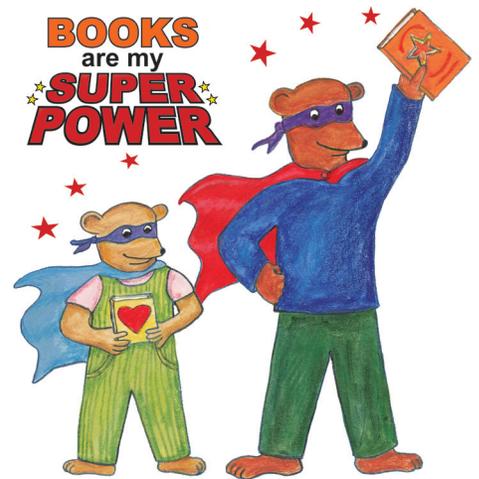




# At Home with Books



FAMILY READING PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER

Spring 2016

## Using Networks to Expand Impact *by Katrina Morse*

**This is your challenge:**  
**Read aloud to a young child every day.**

- Read books aloud that you already know; share the warmth and comfort of the familiar.
- Read books aloud that are new to you; share the spark and excitement of curiosity and learning.
- Snuggle up and read with a child; create the emotional connection of sharing a story together.

If you have a young child in your life, you can start right now and read! If you know someone with a young child, you can encourage that family to read aloud every day.

**Reading Aloud has Huge Benefits.** The benefits of this simple act—reading a book aloud to a child—are too many to count! Hearing books read aloud teaches children new words—words that would rarely come up in everyday conversation. Children learn about people, places, and how things work. They learn about emotions and feelings and how to use words to share their ideas. Books teach facts, inspire imagination, and start children on a lifetime of learning.



Family Reading Partnership (FRP) has been promoting reading aloud since its beginning in 1997 when FRP founder Brigid Hubberman championed the cause by creating programs and initiatives in our community that give books, encouragement, and support to families to read aloud to their children, using existing community networks.

**Using Local Networks.** Networks such as WIC, health care practices, human service agencies, libraries, childcare centers, and schools have ongoing relationships with families and are the ideal vehicles for giving books, encouragement, and support for reading aloud. When a family receives a book from a trusted

professional, the book is even more valuable to the family and they are much more likely to read that book at home. Research by the American Academy of Pediatrics cites that families are 10 times more likely to read a book given to them by their pediatrician.

In this way, a small organization like Family Reading Partnership can have a huge impact in promoting literacy. In our own county in upstate New York, families receive a consistent message from everyone in the community

*continued on page 4*

**W**ow! What an amazing time for Family Reading Partnership, seeing our mission to connect children and families with the joy of books spread to so many other communities! Celebrating National Read Aloud Month in March with the *Books are my Super Power* Read-Aloud Challenge (read all about it in this issue's cover story) was a powerful way to reconnect with the very heart of what we do: encouraging and supporting reading aloud at home.

Partnerships are also at the heart of our work, and the Read-Aloud Challenge was a fantastic opportunity to apply our community model to the national stage by partnering with National Head Start and First Book. It's exciting to see our work reach beyond our county's borders to touch the lives of families across the nation.

The best part is that using our national partners' networks to share resources we've already developed for our local community means we're able to expand our reach without compromising our focus.

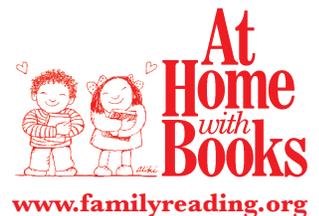
Thank you for helping us give all children in our community the opportunity to grow up knowing and loving books for nearly 20 years. How exciting to think that our community-grown organization can be part of giving all children, everywhere, the same opportunity!

*Katrina Morse*

Katrina Morse  
Interim Co-Executive Director

*Elizabeth Stilwell*

Elizabeth Stilwell  
Interim Co-Executive Director



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### 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.

**Waiting for Baby & Welcome Baby**

Every expectant family receives a book at a prenatal visit and another to welcome baby into the community.

**Books to Grow On**

Doctors give young families a new 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.

**Read-Along Songs**

**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, collected and placed on red shelves, are 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!

**Stay Connected. Stay Informed!**

Book trends and family events  
[www.facebook.com/FamilyReadingPartnership](http://www.facebook.com/FamilyReadingPartnership)

Book suggestions and read-aloud tips on WordPress  
[www.FamilyReadingCorner.wordpress.com](http://www.FamilyReadingCorner.wordpress.com)

**Beyond Books** e-News  
 Current news and literacy information sent to your inbox  
[www.familyreading.org/eneews-sign-up/](http://www.familyreading.org/eneews-sign-up/)

**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.

## Welcome to School Book: Creating Community Through Books

Since 1998, M&T Bank has helped all kindergartners in Tompkins County feel welcome in their new school by sponsoring a book gift as part of kindergarten registration.

When all children in a kindergarten class come to school knowing the same book and have it at home, children from different neighborhoods and backgrounds share a common experience. The book becomes a way to create community and form new friendships.

The book given to incoming kindergartners in our area has changed over the years, but it's always a book that speaks to the curiosity of a 5-year-old

and has a theme that resonates with a young child's life, such as animals, friendship, or learning to read. Above all the book, needs to be a story that families love, with engaging illustrations, so that

children will want to hear the book read time and time again.

Now it's time to choose a new *Welcome to School Book*! Do you have any suggestions? We'd like to know! Email [Melissa@familyreading.org](mailto:Melissa@familyreading.org).



## “Baby Cakes”: a Sweet Gift for our Family *by Christine Uliassi*

Recently, at our daughter's two-month well-visit appointment, we received the board book, “Baby Cakes,” by Karma Wilson. I found out this was a gift from Family Reading Partnership's *Books to Grow On* program and was delighted when I saw the title of the book. I have been calling our daughter Mariama “Baby Cakes” since she was born because of her undeniable deliciousness. Beyond the personal connection to the title, the book turned out to be quite sweet and special and is now one of our favorite books.

“Baby Cakes” shows children from many different racial and ethnic backgrounds illustrated with a variety of skin colors and hair colors and textures. My daughter has beautiful caramel skin and dark bouncy curls, just like a couple of the adorable babies in the book.

She is biracial—I am White and my husband is from the Gambia in West Africa. At the library and bookstores, I am always looking for great multicultural books to add to Mariama's collection. It is so important for children to see both reflections of themselves

and depictions of children from different backgrounds represented in children's literature.

We love the interactive and engaging nature of “Baby Cakes.” It is like a fun bedtime game for a caregiver and baby. Wilson writes “Kiss my little Baby Cakes on the nose” and “Smooch my little Baby Cakes on the toes” and continues to engage with singing, clapping, and bouncing. Mariama coos and smiles when we act out each step! The rhythm and tone make it catchy and sing-songy—a great choice for an infant.

I appreciate the thoughtfulness that went into choosing this *Books to Grow On* book. It is sure to foster positive feelings and encourage many fun bedtimes for many little ones! We are looking forward to our next well-visit to add another book to our growing collection.



*Christine Uliassi and her daughter Mariama, 2 months old, enjoy “Baby Cakes,” a book gift from their pediatrician, as part of the Books to Grow On program.*

## Using Networks *continued from page 1*

that reading aloud is important for children. From hospital nurses and pediatricians to human service workers, teachers, and even the local grocery store, families get the message to read aloud to their children. The message spreads exponentially as more networks become involved.

**Expanding to National Networks.** This spring Family Reading Partnership had the opportunity to see our local networking model used on a national scale. During National Read-Aloud Month in March, FRP partnered with the National Head Start Association (NHSA), who used their own network of over 1,700 agencies that oversee more than 50,000 Head Start classrooms and home-based programs to reach the families of one million Head Start children with the read-aloud message. Using the same message promoted in Tompkins County through local networks, Family Reading Partnership was able to extend our reach to schools and homes across the country through the NHSA network.



*Family Reading Partnership staff are read-aloud superheroes!*

**Books are my Super Power!** As FRP was planning the activities for National Read-Aloud Month, Elizabeth Stilwell, FRP interim co-director, knew we needed a way to make reading aloud something that would make families, children, and classrooms jump up and celebrate! To ramp up excitement, FRP touted books as a Super Power for the children who hear them read aloud and absorb all the goodness between their covers. The superhero characters that emerged

were based on characters from the Family Reading Partnership book, “At Home with Books,” and became the mascots of our challenge to families across the country. We asked “Will you take the *Books are my Super Power* Read-Aloud Challenge? Will you read to the young children in your life every day?”

**Read Aloud? YES!** The answer came quickly, first from our own schools and childcare centers and then from the National Head Start community: “YES! Bring on the Read-Aloud Challenge!” Family Reading Partnership developed a tool kit of resources to share on our website ([www.familyreading.org/rac-tool-kit](http://www.familyreading.org/rac-tool-kit)) filled with children’s activities, book suggestions, and book extension play that can be accessed from anywhere, any time, all year long.

NHSA promoted the Read-Aloud Challenge through their own email blasts and Facebook page. They also used their network of Head Start Center directors to reach out to Congress and invite all congressional members to read aloud at local Head Start classrooms in March.

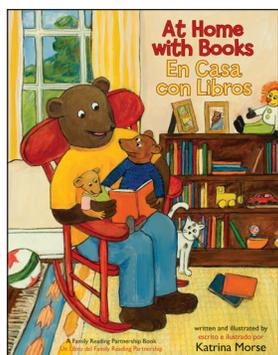
**Responsive Programming.** Teachers and families soon emailed and called the FRP office asking for materials in Spanish. Knowing that 50% of Head Start children are from Spanish-speaking households, Family Reading Partnership began translating materials so that we could reach many more families. FRP offered activities and read-aloud tips in Spanish, and most significantly, “At Home with Books” became a bilingual book with the addition of Spanish text.



**New Partnerships.** First Book Marketplace became the next partner in the Read-Aloud Challenge. As a national book distributor, First Book offers deep discounts on quality children’s books to classrooms and agencies that serve a population of at least 70% low-income families. Already a partner with NHSA, First Book became the distributor of “At Home with Books/ En casa con libros” and shared Read-Aloud Challenge information with all of its 100,000 members. Thanks to the First Book network, the reach of the read-aloud message expanded even further.



*Family Reading Partnership joined forces with the National Head Start Association and First Book this spring to use those national networks to reach families with the read-aloud message on a much larger scale.*



*“At Home with Books” was translated into Spanish by Juan Brache, a native of the Dominican Republic, and reprinted as a bilingual book to reach even more families.*

National Read-Aloud Month provided the perfect framework for Family Reading Partnership to promote reading aloud more broadly than ever before. Leveraging the networks of new partnerships made it easy to share on a much larger scale and to reach exponentially more families. The Read-Aloud Challenge started in March but is just the beginning of what families and children can share all year long. Read to the young children in your life every day! Take the Read-Aloud Challenge to give all children the best start for a lifetime of learning from books that can become their Super Power!

*Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency (OLHSA) Head Start children (in Michigan) became read-aloud superheroes for the month of March!*

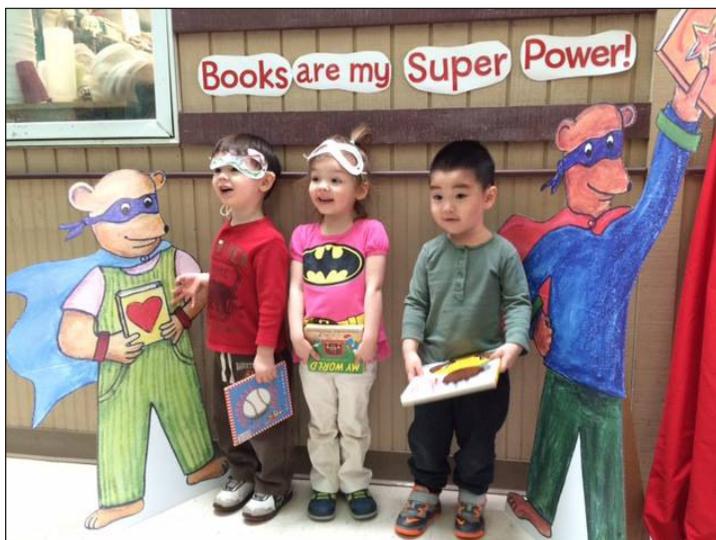
*The ultimate goal of the Books are my Super Power Read-Aloud Challenge is to increase awareness of the importance of reading aloud to children so that it becomes part of everyday life at home and at school.*

**Read-Aloud Challenge materials were translated into Spanish in response to teachers’ requests!**

*See story page 8.*



*Congress members in every state were invited to read aloud in their local Head Start classrooms. Senator Jill Tokuda of Hawaii read to these smiling children at a Head Start classroom in Oahu.*



*Super Brother and Sister Bears visited the Downtown Ithaca Children’s Center, where all the children wore their own handmade superpower masks and cuffs and enjoyed books read aloud to the entire school.*



The Books are My Super Power Read-Aloud Challenge is made possible by an anonymous donor.

## Superhero Volunteer, Nancy Siegele

One of my strongest memories of childhood was of my mother reading to my sister and me.

She would read to us in the dark, when we were tucked into bed; “Black Beauty,” “Charlotte’s Web,” and “The Bobbsey Twins” leap to my mind as favorites. We loved chapter books. Every night we’d get to hear a chapter or more read aloud by our mother, and, like all children, we couldn’t wait to hear what might happen next. These memories of reading aloud stayed with me and, I believe, inspired me to become a teacher and love to read.

My message to families is to read to a child any time, any place! Reading a book a thousand times is OK! The adult may get tired of it, but the repetition builds love and familiarity for children because they can hold it and love it over and over. As a teacher, my favorite part of teaching was reading to my Pre-K class. And one of my greatest joys now is watching my grandson learn to love and treasure books.

While I taught Pre-K in the Ithaca City schools (Beverly J. Martin Elementary School), I was so appreciative and impressed

by all the important and exciting programs Family Reading Partnership had to benefit children in Pre-K! I kept saying, “When I retire, I am going to help out with some of these programs!” And then just as I was ready to retire, the *Baby Reading Buddies* program began. I thought that would be a great way to start volunteering. I now read to 1 to 1½-year-olds at the Downtown Ithaca Children’s Center once a week.

Before long, I decided to help out at the Danby office, labeling and cleaning books for *Bright Red Bookshelves*, helping with mailings, and doing other projects as needed. I even made giant paper ice cream cones, swiss cheese, and other decorations for the 2015 *Kids’ Book Fest* featuring Eric Carle!

It’s hard to be at the FRP office and see so many exciting things happening and not want to become involved. So I now tend two *Bright Red Bookshelves*, one at the Department of Motor Vehicles, and the other at Citizens Concerned for Children on Buffalo Street. Very recently, I had the honor of reading to a Pre-K class as part of the March *Books are my Super Power* Read-Aloud Challenge! For a morning, I became a Read-



Nancy Siegele as a Read-Aloud Super Hero at Caroline Elementary School in Slaterville, NY.

Aloud Super Hero—complete with mask and cape!

I love being able to go out into the community as a volunteer to read, play, talk, and sing with children. It is such fun to watch them grow (even from week to week), make connections with families, and mostly to share books with energetic and enthusiastic toddlers. I also love my interactions with the staff at FRP, knowing that even an hour of cleaning and labeling books, or other tasks behind the scenes, is essential in helping move the exciting projects launched by Family Reading Partnership forward. I can’t say which of these opportunities I enjoy the most—it is all fulfilling and fun!

## Honoring Marty Allee



Marty Allee, circa 1998

Marty Allee was passionate about books and reading. As a founding Family Reading Partnership board member and reading teacher in the Ithaca City School District, she was able to share her love of the written word with thousands of children and support and encourage hundreds of families to start early and read often to their young children.

At Marty’s passing early in 2016, her family generously requested that donations of books and funds be given to Family Reading Partnership in Marty’s honor. In this way Marty’s passion for books and reading will live on, giving even more families a way to give their children the best start in life.

Thank you to Marty’s family for honoring her in this way!

## Family Reading Partnership Donation Form

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



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

Please send a recognition card to: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

My check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed.

Please charge my Visa/MC for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Card #             Expires \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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

You can also give online! Visit [www.familyreading.org](http://www.familyreading.org)

## Program Sponsorship Opportunities



### Pre-K Family Engagement Package

**\$3,500**

Sponsorship gives the families of all Pre-K students in Tompkins County two important resources to support reading aloud at home: 1) a book given to them by their teacher to welcome them to new school, and 2) a Read-to-Me calendar that they also have in their classroom to welcome in the new year. These two gifts support common literacy experiences and strengthen the home-school connection.



### Read to Me! Banners

**\$3,000**

Help us promote the "Read to Me!" message by sponsoring a dozen new banners for our community. It's time to retire our current selection of 9 x 12 ft. vinyl banners and replace them with beautiful, bright banners featuring *new* artwork from children's book illustrators. Everyone knows when they come into our area that we value books and reading aloud because the message is everywhere in a BIG way. Help continue this great tradition!



### Give the Gift of Family Reading

**\$4,000**

Your sponsorship provides new books to families in our community with limited resources who may not have access to books. At holiday times, families choose book gifts for their children with love and care and establish a treasured family holiday tradition. Your generosity will support families that might not otherwise be able to give this very special gift.

**Thank you**  
to our new and renewing  
sponsors!

#### Lewis G. Schaeleman, Jr. Foundation

6-month book for the  
*Books to Grow On* program

#### Ann Halpern Book Fund

*Waiting for Baby* book

#### Cope Family

2-month book for the  
*Books to Grow On* program

#### Anonymous

4-month book for the  
*Books to Grow On* program

#### CircleLink

*Welcome Baby* book bags

#### Anonymous

*Read-Aloud Challenge*

#### Park Foundation

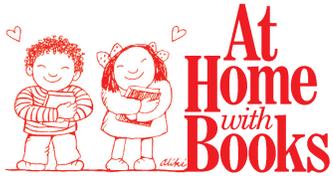
*Every Baby Every Day* program

#### M&T Bank

*Welcome to School* book

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

Liz Kinast at [liz@familyreading.org](mailto:liz@familyreading.org) or 607-277-8602



[www.familyreading.org](http://www.familyreading.org)

When the requests started coming in for Family Reading Partnership materials to be translated into Spanish for the *Books are my Super Power* Read-Aloud Challenge tool kit this past March, Claire O'Donnell of the U.S. and her friend Darling Salazar Torrez of Nicaragua stepped in to provide the needed language.

Claire, based in Wilmington, NC, has a degree in Spanish from St. Mary's College (Maryland) and teamed up via email with Darling, a native Spanish speaker in Central America. The result was a balanced Spanish translation of materials to encourage reading aloud to children. Family Reading Partnership now has "10 Great Reasons to Read Aloud to Children," the *Books are my Super Power* Read-Aloud Pledge, and activities for families and children, all available in Spanish. (*Download them at [familyreading.org/rac-tool-kit](http://familyreading.org/rac-tool-kit).*)

For Darling and Claire, working together has an even greater meaning than translating for Family Reading Partnership. Darling is raising two children and a young half-sister in Nicaragua, and she only receives about \$4.30 per day selling meals



*Darling with her two boys and her little half-sister at home in Nicaragua.*

out of her house. She is also studying to become a teacher and is saving money to pay the \$2,000 needed for her teaching certification.

The payment that Claire has been able to pass on to Darling for working on the translation will help Darling reach her goal to be a certified teacher; and what Darling has learned from understanding the materials she translated will help her encourage families to read aloud to their children!

As author Ritu Sharma says, "Teach a woman to fish and the village eats for a lifetime." Claire takes that adage one step further and says, "Educate a woman to teach reading, and villagers will educate themselves and each other for generations to come!" Darling is hoping to do just that!



*Darling and Claire in 2009*

Save the Date!

**Kids' Book Fest 2016**

Sat., November 12, 10am-4pm  
Boynton Middle School, Ithaca, NY

This year's theme:

**Nature**

All are welcome to attend the first planning meeting to brainstorm ideas for the featured book and activities!

**Tuesday, May 17th, 3:30-5pm**  
Boynton Middle Sch. conference room