



## Young Children / Priority One



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### Largest “Reading is Fundamental” program in United States

Who would have guessed in December of 1990, that the Reading Is Fundamental project started that year in Alabama as a part of the Kiwanis International Young Child (0-5) Priority One Program to serve "about 2000" at-risk young children would have served 275,000 at-risk young children by 2005? Who knew the Jean Dean RIF/Alabama Kiwanis project would be the largest RIF program in the United States serving pre-schoolers from its very first year? In early 1991, when the RIF project became a part of the fledgling Alabama Kiwanis Foundation in order for donations to be tax exempt, who, in their wildest dreams, could have imagined that in order to secure permanent warehouse and office space for the program in 2004, the Alabama Kiwanis Foundation/Jean Dean RIF would BUY a building?

For 14 years, Jean Dean RIF was able to "grow and go" because of the extreme generosity of many people ... several of them in the Opelika Kiwanis Club. These people and many others are true heroes of Jean Dean RIF. Past Club President, and one of the owners of Lambert Transfer & Storage, Carlton Hunley provided free warehouse space for the RIF project from '90-'91 through '03-'04. Past Club President and Past District Governor Joe Dean provided free office space/utilities, equipment, supplies, "sweat equity" and a lot more to the program during that same timeframe. Club members Joe Dean, Jr. and Tutt Barrett have provided free fax and copying and free legal services, as needed, since 1990. Lambert Transfer moved to its new location in December of '03 and the building we were using was put on the market. The building formerly occupied by Joe Dean Agency was sold in the spring of '04. For over a year, Jean Dean RIF searched diligently for a permanent home, daily looking at buildings, talking with owners, contractors, bankers, city officials, board members, etc. to try to get permanent space. **(Continued on Page three)**

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#### **“RON” SEZ:**

- 1. Keep your Club focused on Young Children/Priority One.**
- 2. Start a new YC/PO Project this month.**
- 3. Involve every member of your Club.**
- 4. Partner with other organizations.**

## **1,000 Books Before Kindergarten starts Jan. 21**

At their meeting the Kiwanis Club of La Crosse (Wisconsin) approved a \$1,000.00 donation to the LaCrosse Public Library to be used to help fund their early literacy program, '1,000 Books Before Kindergarten'.

It's a simple act: an adult reading aloud to a child. But the simplicity underlies great importance. According to reading and learning experts, reading aloud with children is the single most important activity for parents to prepare children to learn to read. It can:

- Stimulate language and cognitive skills
- Build motivation, curiosity and memory
- Build vocabulary
- Encourage positive feelings about books and reading later in life
- Help children cope during stressful times



The Fond du Lac Public Library's new early literacy program 1,000

Books Before Kindergarten will encourage parents to make the time necessary for this essential building block of learning. The program will kick off with a free family concert on January 21.

"Literacy is the cornerstone of learning," said Children's Services Coordinator Julia Cartwright. "Reading aloud to children – from the very beginning of a child's life – creates the best environment for success in school. It's a gift parents can give to their children that will pay off their whole lives."

The free program will help parents keep track of reading, at home, day care, preschool and 4K and will provide incentives to keep parents motivated through the child's preschool years. At each 100-book level, parents and children receive rewards such as free books and gift cards for gas and groceries to keep them motivated to continue. After achieving each 100-book milestone, the child's name will appear on a giant banner in the Children's Room. At completion, the parent and child's accomplishment will be recognized by having the child's name inscribed on a bookplate in a Children's collection book. Children who finish also will be invited to a celebration hosted by Browser, the library's mascot and spokesdog for 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten.

"This program is intended to reinforce parents' role as their child's first and best teachers," said Cartwright. "But the program will be big on fun, too, with activities throughout the year to keep the momentum going."

According to Reading Rockets, a national literacy program, many students enter kindergarten performing below their peers and remain behind as they move through the grades and confront more-challenging reading material.

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**ELIMINATE**  
maternal/neonatal tetanus

## **1,000 Books Before Kindergarten (continued)**

1,000 Books Before Kindergarten aims to help parents give their children a solid learning foundation. Parents can sign up starting January 21 at the library's Children's Desk. They will receive a starter kit and instructions on how to participate.

The program is supported by community donations like the La Crosse Kiwanis Club. For more information about 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten, contact the Children's Desk at (920) 929-7080, ext. 127 or **La Crosse Kiwanis Club President Cedric Friesen at: [cedricf@familyradioinc.com](mailto:cedricf@familyradioinc.com)**

## **Books for Kids at Detroit #1**

Over the past four years, the Detroit Kiwanis club has distributed more than 400,000 supplemental reading books to Detroit public elementary school students. The focus of the project is to help teachers and parents instill a love of reading and learning in children during the early grades.



Since this project has expanded distribution to community-based organizations and agencies in the Detroit metropolitan area. Anyone who works with children, youth and families and wants to include literacy strategies in their programming is eligible to apply. Service providers working to strengthen families by including reading as parenting or "teachable moment" strategies may also apply. **For more information: Thomas Mann, President at: [thommann@wideopenwest.com](mailto:thommann@wideopenwest.com)**



## **Largest "Reading is Fundamental" program in United States (Continued)**

Alabama Kiwanis Clubs have partnered with local businesses for years to help pay for the books for the children served through Jean Dean RIF. Purchasing the books through group buys and sending them to local areas saves at least 50% on the cost of books for Alabama's at-risk young children. Having the program administered from one location assures stability and longevity for the program and saves a lot of set-up time for local volunteers. It is a necessary part of the program that most funders, volunteers and sites served never see.

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### Editor's Notes:

“You are encouraged to send articles for publication that showcase your Club's, , Division or District Young Children/Priority One Projects. If you e-mail me with the contact, I will do the rest.” NEIL



**ELIMINATE**  
 maternal/neonatal tetanus

## Orem (Utah) Kiwanis Club strikes out for “Reading is Fundamental”

On warm summer evenings baseball fans want to hear the crack of the bat and join the cheering crowd, but the Orem Kiwanis Club members prefer strikeouts.

With every strikeout of the Orem Owlz' opposing team at home games, Ancestry.com donates \$10 to the Club to help local kids and the Owlz announcer and video board acknowledge the gift. The Owlz are a perennial front-runner in the Minor League Baseball's Pioneer League and pitched more than 600 strikeouts last year.

This year Ancestry.com will donate approximately \$3,500 to help the community through Kiwanis. Owlz General Manager Jason Badell is a new Orem Kiwanis member and facilitated the Ks for Kiwanis Kids program.

The fund raiser was the brainchild of Kiwanian Brian Gurney. "I thought it would be a good fit (at games) to hang up the Kiwanis 'K' for each strikeout," says Gurney. "I thought it would be an even better idea to tie a fundraiser to it."

Each visitors' strikeout adds a K to the Owlz scorecard and Orem Kiwanis Club members take turns attending each game to hang a K for Kiwanis Kids above the Ancestry.com sign in the Owlz' outfield. The Owlz have donated free admission for the Kiwanis member and guest hanging the Ks up at each game.

Funds raised from the Ks for Kiwanis Kids program will support: several programs including Reading is Fundamental which provides books for each child in Orem Head Start, Excellence in Youth Scholarship awards for one high school senior from each Orem high school nominated by guidance counselors, and Hope of America awards for a boy and girl from every 6th grade class in an Orem elementary school. **More information:** Brad Whittaker, President—[bradw@fibert.net](mailto:bradw@fibert.net)