

Giving kids in need the chance to read

Books Out Loud

It's unusual to hear a weather forecast for "cloudy with a chance of meatballs." But when the weather forecaster is Page Ahead's Jessica Young, meatballs are a likely prediction for what might fall from the sky.



For the past 9 months Jessica has visited more than 100 kindergarten and Head Start classes throughout King County to read with kids and pique their interest in books. Each 45-minute "Storytime" is built around a theme: bedtime, friendship, the moon, and weather are among them. Jessica reads a book to the class ("Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs" by Judi Barrett) and answers their questions.

She leads the class in a song about the topic. For her second story she selects a different kind of book on the same topic; for example, Eric Carle's "Little Cloud."

"If one book has abundant words, intricate illustrations, and requires concentration, the second book will be its opposite: few words, simple illustrations, immediate. That way, I vary the pace and appeal to the learning styles of individual children." Jessica follows the stories with a craft activity, such as constructing a "weather wheel." The children take their hand-made project home, along with a list of the storytime books that were read, in case parents want to read them at home. Jessica also provides parents with questions they can ask their youngster to help them remember the books: Which story was your favorite? Who were the characters in the stories? Because parental involvement greatly boosts a child's interest in books and ability to read, Jessica also suggests something further for parents and children to do together. In the case of weather, making a wind chime is the suggested activity.

If parents want to hold storytime at home over the summer, Jessica's advice is simple: select a book, a song, and some type of craft activity to make reading an interactive and physical experience. "The main thing is *be involved*," she recommends.

If your school or program would like to schedule storytimes (to begin in September), call Jessica at 206.461.0123 to make arrangements. And in the meantime, look out for a sudden shower of meatballs!

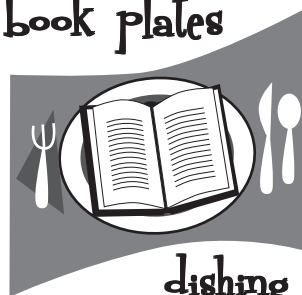
Upcoming Events

- July 4 - Office Closed
- July 17 - Mariner Book Drive
- August 18 - Book Plates: Dishing Up Literacy
- August 28 - Mariner Book Drive
- September 5 - Office Closed
- September 16 - United Way Day of Caring

Books on Plates

On Thursday, August 18 Washington's children will get a boost in their ability to read when regional restaurants donate a portion of their proceeds to Page Ahead Children's Literacy Program. For the third consecutive year, supporters of literacy can put books in the hands of kids simply by going out to eat as part of *Book Plates: Dishing Up Literacy*.

book plates



dishing up literacy

August 18, 2005

Dozens of restaurants across the state will participate. "It's easy for restaurant owners to see the benefits of supporting this event because Page Ahead supplies free books and reading services to kids in their neighborhood," said Executive Director Sam Whiting.

The highly successful pizzeria Tutta Bella in Columbia City was the first to sign up to participate in *Book Plates* this year. Owner Joe Fugere commented on his involvement in last year's event: "Page Ahead really promoted *Book Plates* and created great visibility for us. They met with our neighborhood business association, got most of the surrounding stores and restaurants involved, and advertised the event to the neighboring schools and families they serve."

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Heartfelt Books

Page Ahead puts books into the hands of kids by working with nearly 200 educational sites across Washington. But one site stands out for its HEART—Homeless Education to Achieve Readiness for Tomorrow.

HEART is a family literacy program at the South King County Multi-Service Center, an organization funded by grants and the City of Kent since the early 1990's. Families stay at the emergency shelter while they seek permanent housing; because the need for temporary shelter is so great, three months is the maximum stay. Robin Corak and Stephanie Parsons oversee the program. "The consequences of homelessness last far longer than the actual shelter period and affect the attention that parents are able to give to their children's education," observed Robin.

Because families served by the Center are in a state of crisis, parents cannot always participate in the weekly book distributions. That's why nine Boeing employees decided to volunteer at HEART on April 23. According to Boeing employee and Page Ahead board member Jeannette Jarvis, "We wanted the children to know that literacy is important and that *they* are important." When reading with the children, Boeing volunteers adapted voices for characters, asked thoughtful



questions about the books, and encouraged the children to read to them. Jarvis continued, "The kids were bright, funny, and well-mannered. The books allowed them to be silly as they acted out characters, escaped into a story, or used their imaginations to create their own book." As children constructed a book complete with their own story and pictures, Boeing volunteers obliged with scissors, colored paper, glue—and plenty of encouragement.

"Page Ahead's books provide a form of stability to the kids in their current unstable lives and give them adventure, fun, and education during a time of turmoil and transition," commented Parsons.

The enthusiasm of Boeing volunteers matched that of the children. "It was an honor to spend time reading with these kids—and a perfect opportunity for Boeing employees who participate in our Books & Backpacks drive to understand the impact of their donations," said

Jarvis.

Page Ahead applauds the staff at the Center for their dedication in serving at-risk children. And, as always, Page Ahead appreciates Boeing volunteers—with special thanks for the *heart to HEART*.

Birthday Books

Imagine a birthday party of a different sort. The traditional elements are all in place—cake and candles, balloons and streamers. Young guests playing games and parents conversing over coffee. A pile of presents on the table. But when it comes time to unwrap those gifts, the birthday boy or girl has the pleasure—and the pride—of knowing that children in need will be benefiting from his or her generosity.

Some of Page Ahead's most effective book drives are held *by children for children*. A boy forms a club from his kindergarten class especially to collect new books. A young man asks each guest to his Bar Mitzvah to bring a brand-new book instead of a gift. A fifth-grade class organizes their entire school to collect books for kids from a less affluent school across town. By hosting a book drive, children experience the satisfaction of sharing. Is it ever too early to begin cultivating the spirit of giving?

Celebrate a child's birthday with a book drive for Page Ahead, and we'll help make the day. We can supply a short video that features kids choosing books and talking about why they love to read. We can help write invitations that make it clear that new books are being requested in lieu of gifts. We can suggest party activities that allow kids to talk about their selections—what books they are giving, and why. We can even arrange for partygoers to visit a school, present their books, and read with the book recipients.

Help your child give kids in need the chance to read.

Chapters Summer 2005

Chapters is a publication of Page Ahead, a nonprofit organization that advances literacy and strengthens communities by promoting reading activities and providing new books to children at risk of academic failure and their families.

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Jim & Marilyn Cook

A campaign to keep kids reading all summer long has generated thousands of books for distribution across Washington. Page Ahead kicked off its *10,000 Books for 10,000 Kids* campaign on April 6 at a fundraising luncheon where donors gave more than \$40,000 and the investment firm of Piper Jaffray pledged its support. The Sonics and Washington's Lottery joined the campaign, soliciting donations from fans at games in April and May. Regional bookstores also solicited contributions from their customers. The campaign finished with a free event on June 25 at the Tacoma Art Museum that featured storytellers, games, crafts, free snacks, and door prizes.

"Some of Washington's children have access to books only while school is in session, because in those households parents can't afford to buy books for their children," said Jacki Crowther, Book Program Manager for Page Ahead. "Kids who read over the summer are better prepared to begin school in the fall."

While middle-income students experience slight gains in reading performance over the summer months, the reading ability of low-income students decreases—according to a recent review of educational research. However, parents who read books with their youngsters at home over the summer can prevent a loss of reading ability in their children.

"Our bookshelves are filled with new books for 10,000 children," commented board member Marty Collins. "Staff and volunteers are busy selecting and packing books to give kids in need the chance to read. And these books are truly terrific." That sentiment was echoed by Sanislo Elementary schoolteacher Sunny Moroles: "Our students are excited and proud of the books from Page Ahead. Kids show off their new books to parents, friends, and teachers. And our reading scores have increased dramatically."



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Books for Yakima County

For the past 15 years, Page Ahead has been providing the children of Yakima County with books and activities to inspire reading. Page Ahead celebrated a milestone by giving away its 100,000 book to a child at Union Gap Elementary School on Thursday, April 21.

Community leaders, school officials, and professional newscasters visited classrooms at Union Gap during the day to read with children. Students participated in book-related games while being cheered on by friends. During evening festivities, families had their photographs taken while reading their favorite books. Godfather's Pizza donated food for the event.

Union Gap teacher Desi Reinmuth commented, "Many of our families are unable to purchase books, and the Page Ahead books provide reading material for the home. Parents love the quality and content of the books. When students write their name on the bookplate, they are so proud."

Executive Director Sam Whiting praised Page Ahead's partners in Yakima County. "These teachers are extraordinary in their efforts to instill a love of reading in Yakima Valley's youth. Now that Page Ahead has VISTA staff based in Yakima, our partnership is growing even stronger."

Thanks to three-year commitments from The Gates Foundation and the Norcliffe Foundation, Page Ahead has been able to expand its programs to rural areas in Washington State where incomes are low, resources are few, and need is great. As Reinmuth noted, "This area's poverty level has been steadily increasing each year. Many families still consider books at home a luxury. We want to help change that. Page Ahead gives us that opportunity."

Shopping at Amazon.com? Start at www.pageahead.org and Amazon will make a donation to Page Ahead.

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Teachers at nearby schools are equally enthusiastic. "Kids at Orca are very proud of the books they receive. For some, these are the first books they can call their own," said Valerie Wells, Program Manager for Powerful Readers, a recipient of books from Page Ahead.

Last year, some families who ate at Book Plates' restaurants received a nice surprise—a visit from a character in a popular children's book. "I'm glad Clifford dropped in to greet the kids," joked Fugere, "But I'm relieved he didn't order from the menu. A dog that big could eat you out of house and home!"

2005 Book Plates Participants

Ballard Carnegies India Bistro Matt's Gourmet Hot Dogs Taco del Mar	Stumbling Goat Taco del Mar (Greenwood)
Capitol Hill/Madison Park Bing's Bar & Grill Julia's on Broadway Six Arms McMenamins	Issaquah Fins Bistro Julia's in Issaquah XXX Root Beer Drive-In
Columbia City Tutta Bella	Olympia The Place Family Restaurant Plenty Restaurant
Downtown Seattle F.X. McRory's Macrina Bakery & Cafe Matt's in the Market Tulio Ristorante	Queen Anne McMenamins Queen Anne Ten Mercer
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	West Seattle Amante Pizza & Pasta Angelina's Trattoria

visit pageahead.org for a complete list of participating restaurants

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