

Read and be Read Aloud To

Increasing Literary Skills and Reading Comprehension at East Side Community High School

Rike Franklin



ABSTRACT

A grant written on behalf of Reader to Reader to receive money to buy new books for East Side Community High School, fund an author to speak at the school, and to establish an afterschool reading program.

Reader To Reader
Cadigan Center
38 Woodside Avenue
Amherst, MA 01002
Telephone: 413-256-8595
<http://www.readertoreader.org/index.html>

Cover Letter

08 December 2011

Jozi Hall
Better World Books
1105 Lakewood Pkwy, Ste 205
Alpharetta, GA 30004

Dear Ms. Hall,

Thank you for taking the time to read through this proposal. I am speaking on behalf of East Side Community High School and Reader to Reader to request a total of \$8,500 to purchase new books, fund a local author to speak to the students, and start an afterschool reading program.

Reading is a vital part of one's education. East Side Community High School has students with strong mathematic skills, but the same cannot be said for the English Language Arts. There needs to be more emphasis on reading so that the students reading and comprehension levels can increase.

We propose to have at least one special event where an author will come and speak about the importance of reading and writing. He, or she, would read a couple pages or a chapter of their story to the students and have a presentation. All of this will be to motivate the students to read more and put a face on the book they read in class.

We also want to stress the importance of reading out loud. It is a completely different experience from reading silently. There should be an after school reading program for the student to read aloud and be read aloud to. Money can be used for student or teacher mentors to come in after school for an hour or two to read with the kids.

East Side Community School needs people like you to fulfill this request. I am requesting \$8,500 for this project. Reader to Reader and I believe that the money can be used to accomplish the main goal in hand, "Respect the book: read often and help others to do the same." Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rike Franklin

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Executive Summary

The Importance of Reading



Reading is vital to our growth as human beings and as people who are to contribute to society. Because of this, Reader to Reader is requesting a total \$8,500 for East Side Community High students to receive new books, fund an author to present to the students and to establish a reading program to inspire the middle school students to become avid readers.

Around 60% percent of kids living in poverty do not own a book (Reader to Reader). The reading rate across the country has been decreasing over time (Medaris 2005). Around 10% of the people nation wide use the library and 40% of people in general do not read on a regular basis (Medaris 2005). There is also the high probability of “students who enter high school with poor literacy skills [face] long odds against graduating and going on to postsecondary education or satisfying careers (Cheung, Groff, Lake, Slavin).” Literacy and reading constantly provides a strong foundation in education and it helps one become more critical, analytical and creative. Reading also helps kids to become more affluent writers and better spellers (Medaris 2005). When kids read, they tend to perform well, in school, earn higher SAT scores, “and have an easier time tackling higher education than others (firstbook.org).” Because kids start off reading when they are young, they will grow up with many diverse skills, which lead to more opportunities and chances to succeed throughout their life (firstbook.org). Reading also helps cater to the imagination and increases one’s attention span (etllearning.com). Books give people the opportunity to become more productive in society and give back to it via intelligence and skill. It is very important to start promoting a love of reading and literacy at an early age. Once kids develop a love for reading, there is a higher chance they will want to continue their education and in turn leave the life of poverty. They can have a love for learning and have the desire to attend college. From there they will have the proper background, training, and experience to have a successful career path.

Another aspect of reading that is not talked about enough is reading out loud. There needs to be more of an emphasis on having students read out loud and be read a loud to. Reading aloud gives students more exposure to books that are beyond their reading level (firstbooks.org). It also gives students and the teacher the opportunity for discussion (firstbook.org). Discussions then ensure students understand what they are hearing and increase participation.

Schools should do their absolute best to provide resources that help students receive high quality education. Schools can help students become active readers and increase reading proficiency by establishing a reading program. Reading programs, when done effectively, can help improve test scores (Cheung, Groff, Lake, Slavin). By continuing to emphasize the importance of reading, there can be an increase in intelligence among the student body and lead to the first steps of a strong and independent individual.

Statement of Problems

Reader to Reader

Reader to Reader is a non-profit organization located in Amherst, Massachusetts and it is determined to expand literacy and learning opportunities for underprivileged people. They host books drives, accept book donations, donate books- both new and used- to schools, shelters and libraries. They also order books online- a majority of the books are ordered on Amazon. Reader to Reader has delivered around four million books to these places in need.

The way Reader to Reader is able to accomplish this is by groundbreaking literacy programs, book & computer donation programs, and school district partnership. They have done many projects in the past. Some of these includes setting up a mentoring program where college students and kids read a book and then discuss them online on a forum, a literacy program for pregnant and parenting teens, and providing Five College students- students from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College, Amherst College, and Hampshire College- the opportunity to go out and lead their own literacy program.

Normally, people who have heard about Reader to Reader will ask for a certain amount of books or will be looking for specific books they would like to have in their collection. Reader to Reader also does outreach. They focus on rural areas and inner cities that are struggling financially and on Native American reservations. They also look for the percentage of students on free or assisted lunch, which helps them determine how students are living. Lastly, they look to see how many minorities are in a school or shelter. It is not the determining factor of whether or not the place that desires to increase their book collection will receive the books, but it does give Reader to Reader a sense of what the area is like and whether or not the kids are truly in need. Their main mission is “dedicated to expanding literacy and learning opportunities for the nation's most chronically underserved and vulnerable communities, including inner-city schools, Native American reservations, and poor rural towns (Reader to Reader).”



*Reader to Reader photo;
a link to learn more
about the mentoring
program.*

East Side Community School



East Side Community High School is located in Manhattan New York and it is a “college preparatory” middle and high school (eschs.org). The grades range from sixth to twelfth grade. The student body consists of 600 students and demographics are 59% Hispanic, 27% Black, 6% White, and 8% Asian and 71% of students are eligible for free lunch (The New York

State School Report Card 3).

The educators at this school are really trying to push their students towards a higher education. Their mission statement is to create a community of advanced students who will continue to learn all throughout their life and think critically (eschs.org). All this will help prepare them for both college and the workforce. Despite this marvelous and well-meaning goal, the student body does not have an exceptional reading level according to state standards. In 2010, only 30.1% of the student body scored a level of three or higher on the English Language Arts versus the 65.6% for the state standard math tests (insideschools.org). A level three on the English Language Art exams means that the students are “meeting [the] learning standards. [The] student performance demonstrates an understanding of the content expected in the subject and grade level (The New York State School Report Card, 17). Up to 40 % of the middle school student body scored level three- level that meets learning standard state requirements, (The New York State School Report Card 17).

- Grade 6 - 40%
- Grade 7 - 24%
- Grade 8 - 40%

Only 29.2% of ninth grade students are on the standard and regular reading level and the graduation rate for the student body is 78.9% (insideschools.org). While students are learning and are graduating from this school, the literacy rate can improve, especially for the students who were in grade 7.

East Side Community High School has a Literary Specialist named Elisa Zohana and she works with students to help understand the books they are reading. However, since the majority of the student body still does not reach the learning standards for the English Language Arts, there still needs more of an emphasis on reading. One of the many ways to solve this problem is to order books that the students would like to read, read a book and listen to an author present it back to them, and to create an optional afterschool reading program that works with students to read out loud and be read aloud to.

Project Details

Project

Though East Side Community High School is a middle school and high school combined, the focus is going to be on grades 6 – 8. The earlier kids develop a love for reading, the more likely it will stick with them as they move on in their middle school and high school career. The overall project is to order around 200 new hardcover books - if available, fund a local author willing to present to the student body for an hour or so about the importance of reading, and to establish a reading program that encourages older student mentors and/or teachers to listen to the middle school students read out loud or be read aloud to.

Goals

The main goal of the project is to encourage the students to read during their free time and to read books they want to read, not only the required school readings. Because of this, we are hoping to order books that are in series that the students can enjoy and read on if they like the first book. A list of potential books series can be found in the appendix. When the students realize the joy of reading, it can help contribute to increasing their literary and comprehension skill and in turn increase the scores on the English Language Art Exams. This should all be accomplished in the years 2012, 2013.

The Books

When kids enjoy the first book of a series, they are going to want find out what happens in the sequels. Because of this, it's going to keep the kids reading. If there are series that consists of six or seven book, that is six or seven books read. This why it is important to have the kids read series to help them dive into new worlds and keep them reading. While the focus is to get kids to read, it is also important for them to read individual books. A list of authors that focuses on children's literature can be found in the appendix.

East Community High School predominantly Hispanic, so it is important for the students to read books where the characters look like them. The books they read should offer a significant amount of diversity to help open their eyes to the world around them. Multicultural books are important because students can "gain a better understanding of people from other countries and ethnic background (ipl.org)" For the students who are also "of a specific ethnic minority, reading positive stories about their own ethnic group can increase self-esteem and make them feel part of a larger society (ipl.org)." Also, children like to see others that resemble or look like themselves (npr.org). A list of multi cultural books that are geared towards children can be found in the appendix.

The Author

It would be a wonderful experience for the students if they could read a book and then put a face on the one who wrote it. Having an author come in to speak about the book they wrote and talk about the importance of reading and writer can help inspire students and to give them a new perspective on reading. The presentation can last anywhere from an hour to an hour and half. It is preferable to have a local author come and speak to the students not only for lower fees, but also because there may be a chance they would be available since they will not have to travel too far. The author may want to have a PowerPoint presentation for visuals, especially since the audience will be students ranging from 6th to 12th grade.

The Afterschool Reading Program

The goal of the reading program is to inspire the students to read for fun and to increase their reading levels. The students should be reading books that match their reading skills. Once they are showing interest in learning and are improving their reading comprehension, they should be pushed to read more challenging books.

The after school reading program will also have mentors, whether it would be teachers or the high school students at the school who would read books to the kids. The ration of students to mentors should be five to one. The program should be at least one hour and should last no more than two. Since Elisa is the Literary Specialist at the school, she can over see the program and ensure that the mentors are using effective measures to helping the students learn more about the books they are reading.

The amount of middle students who do participate in this group, will determine how many mentors are needed. The reading program will be free for the students participating in it and the mentors should receive a little stipend, whether it would be money for the teachers, or extra credit for the high school students. The high school student mentors should have good academic standing. They should be have a 3.3 GPA, and have great reading skills.

The reading program will run every school day. The books covered can focus on the required readings one to two days of the week. At least one day should be devoted to books the kids are interested in or want to read for fun. On other days, students should read passages challenge and help them with their comprehension levels.

Mentors will help Elisa, and she can set up worksheets or assignments to help move the learning process along. If the reading program is a success for a year, it may be expanded and include some of the high school students for the next year, 2014.

Timeline

Steps	Tasks	Dates
1	Order the books, coming from Amazon and Reader to Reader.	May 2012
2	Ensure all order books are at the school and are ready for the students	July 2012
3	Begin to find mentors for Reading Program	September 2012
4	Start to read a book by a potential author who will have a presentation for the students.	October 2012
5	Have the place and time established for the Reading Program	December 2012
6	Have an author Present to the school	January 2013
7	Establish all the student mentors for the reading program	March 2013
8	Start the Reading Program	September 2013

Budget and Details

Books

Estimate of \$4,000

- Two copies of serial and individual books
- \$3- 4 shipping and handling for each book

Author

\$600 - \$2000 dollars

- Travel fees
- Time taken to prepare the presentation

Reading program

- \$8 per hour for student/teacher
 - \$25 dollars for snacks per week
 - \$1000 for publicity
 - Multiple Newsletters
 - Flyers
 - Applications for high school student volunteers
- \$500 for multiple copies of books being read as a group

Total: \$8,500

Closing Statements

Thank you for taking the time to read this grant. We hope that you too see the need for middle school students to read more, especially at East Side Community High School. We hope that you like the plans for the project and want to become a part of it as well. If projects desired are successful, it will be because of you reading through this grant and sending the money needed to make them happen. Once again, thank you for you time. Please know you are giving young students the chance to see wonderful discoveries in the world of books and leave their life of poverty.

Appendix

Authors/Poets who focus on Children's Literature

- *Roald Dahl*
- C.S Lewis
- Gary Pulson
- R.L Stein
- J.R.R Tolkien
- Judy Blume
- Walter Dean Myers
- Laurie Halse Anderson
- J.K Rowling
- Scott O'Dell
- Madeleine L'Engle
- Gail Carson Levine
- Mildred D. Taylor
- Jean Craighead George
- Garth Nix
- Tamora Pierce
- Eoin Colfer
- Avi
- Shel

Titles of Potential Book Series

- *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* by Rick Riordan, six books
- *A Series of Unfortunate Events* by Lemony Snicket, thirteen books
- *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid,* " by Jeff Kinney, six books
- *The Sisters Grimm* by Michael Buckley, eight books,
- *Artemis Fowl* by Eoin Colfer, seven books
- *The Warrior Series* by Erin Hunter, six books.
- *Sisterhood of Traveling Pants* by Anne Brashares, five books
- *Anne of Green Gables* by L.M Montgomery, eight books

Titles of books that have diversity or a non-white protagonist

- *Bud Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis
- *Dear America Series* by various authors
- *A Single Shard* by Linda Sue Park
- *Crispin: The Cross of Lead (Crispin, #1)* by Avi
- *Sparks Fly Upward* by Carol Matas
- *Estrella's Quinceanera* by Malin Alegria
- *Journey of the Sparrows* by Fran Leeper Buss
- *The Tequila Worm* by Viola Canales
- *Behind the Mountains* by Edwidge Danticat

- *Salsa Stories* by Lulu Delacre
- *Downtown Boy* by Juan Felipe Herrera
- *Breaking Through* by Francisco Jimenez
- *The Truth about Las Mariposas* by Ofelia Dumas Lachtman
- *Sparrow Hawk Red* by Ben Mikaelson
- *Crazy Loco Stories* by David Rice
- *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan
- *The Jumping Tree Y Otros Cuentitos: A Novel* by René Saldaña, Jr
- *Petty Crimes* by Gary Soto
- *Flight to Freedom* by Ana Veciana-Suarez
- *Star of Luis* by Marc Talbert
- *Souder* by William H. Armstrong
- *Kira-Kira* by Cynthia Kadohata
- *Afrika* by Colleen Craig
- *A Girl Named Disaster* by Nancy Farmer
- *Waiting for the Rain: A Novel of South Africa* by Sheila Gordon
- *The Other Side of Truth* by Beverley Naidoo
- *Child of Dandelions* by Shenaaz Nanji
- *Home of the Brave* by Katherine Applegate
- *A Thousand Never Evers* by Shana Burg
- *Flygirl* by Sherri L. Smith
- *In the Shade of the Nispero Tree* by Carmen T. Bernier-Grand
- *Flight to Freedom* by Ana Veciana
- *Tonight By Sea* by Frances Temple
- *Before We Were Free* by Julia Alvarez
- *Revolution Is Not a Dinner Party* by Ying Chang Compestine
- *Sword* by Da Chen
- *Shen and the Treasure Fleet* by Ray Conlogue
- *Mismatch* by Lensey Namioka
- *Seeing Emily* by Joyce Lee Wong
- *The Secret Voice of Gina Zhang* by Dori Jones Yang
- *Stanford Wong Flunks Big-Time* by Lisa Yee
- *Angelfish* by Lawrence Yep
- *Homeless Bird* by Gloria Whelan
- *Keeping Corner* by Kashmira Sheth
- *Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind* by Suzanne Fisher Staples
- *The Revenge of the Forty-Seven Samurai* by Eric Christian Haugaard
- *The Ghost in the Tokaido Inn* by Dorothy Hoobler
- *Ties That Bind, Ties That Break* by Lensey Namioka
- *Sisters of the Sword* by Maya Snow
- *Kira-Kira* by Cynthia Kadohata
- *Weedflower* by Cynthia Kadohata
- *The Day of the Pelican* by Katherine Paterson
- *Strange Relations* by Sonia Levetin
- *Confessions of a Closet Catholic* by Sarah Littman
- *Sweetgrass Basket* by Marlene Carvell

- *Offsides: A Novel* by Erik E. Esckilsen
- *Twilight Boy* by Timothy Green
- *The Secret of Dead Man's Mine: A Rinnah Two Feathers Mystery* by Rodney Johnson
- *The Brave* by Robert Lipsyte
- *The Chief* by Robert Lipsyte

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