

PO#1

**A SERVICE PROJECT FOR
YOUNG CHILDREN: PRIORITY ONE**

Reading Is Fundamental

The Problem

Children who grow up in homes where parents do not read, or have only marginal reading skills, often lack early exposure to reading. They do not have stories read to them by a parent. They do not see books or print materials in their homes. They often do not have parental help with schoolwork.

Because of this widespread lack of reading skills, nearly one-third of all young families are poor, and millions are unemployed. More than 1 million teenagers become pregnant each year. Scores of adolescent parents do not have a high school education or the basic skills needed to find a job. One-fourth of all families are headed by single parents, many of whom are women with an eighth-grade education or less.

Some 15 million children live in these households, and the cycle of illiteracy often is perpetuated. A child in this environment enters school with little understanding of the importance of reading. In short, these children have little motivation to learn to read, and the result, as statistics on adult illiteracy indicate, is that many never learn.

Educational research repeatedly has recognized the importance of introducing early learning and literacy, the value of reading for pleasure, and the need for adult role models. Access to books remains a key factor in children's reading achievement.

The RIF Program

Reading Is Fundamental Inc. (RIF) is a US nonprofit, nationwide organization that brings children and books together to help young people acquire the habit of reading. Children who read grow up to become adults who can read. So, RIF does more than help local sponsors distribute books to children—it develops a better educated, more informed public.

From headquarters in Washington, DC, Reading Is Fundamental supports more than 5,500 programs serving 5 million children in the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. RIF serves young people from preschool through high school, from all economic and social backgrounds. Project sponsors include local nonprofit groups, such as parent-teacher associations and Kiwanis clubs, and public agencies, such as schools and libraries.

RIF negotiates substantial discounts from more than 150 book publishers and distributors. Sponsoring groups select and purchase the books and administer the program in their communities. A local program makes reading exciting and allows children to choose books to take home, to read and to keep, without cost to the children or their families.

RIF will help Kiwanis clubs develop and operate projects with volunteer training materials, periodicals, and the services of a traveling team of reading motivation specialists. Specifically, clubs can learn much from:

- The RIF Newsletter, sent four times a year.
- The RIF Handbook: *How to Run a Successful Reading Is Fundamental Project*, which offers step-by-step technical help on how to select and order books, raise funds, and motivate reading. It comes in a loose-leaf format that is easy to revise and update. The handbook is provided to a RIF project once its proposal has been approved.
- A member of the RIF Programs staff, assigned to review your club's proposal, who will answer questions and give advice on making your project effective.

The Role of Kiwanis

Kiwanis clubs can change the future by giving young children the gift of reading. To support the Young Children: Priority One focus on children prenatal through age five, clubs should implement RIF projects in centers and schools that serve young children. Clubs can decide how many children to help, what books to order, what activities to provide, and how to raise funds.

Organizing a RIF Project

RIF requires potential sponsors to submit a program proposal for authorization to begin or renew a project. Kiwanis clubs that plan to undertake RIF projects will need to go through these steps:

Contact local agencies to select a site—A Kiwanis-sponsored RIF project should serve children age three through five. A club might approach a preschool, child-care center, Head Start agency, or any facility that works with youngsters who are not ordinarily exposed to books at home.

A club also could seek advice on an appropriate site from the state Association for the Education of Young Children and the regional Head Start office. Any program that serves low-income families is a likely place to find children who would benefit from a reading project.

Gain approval from the targeted institution—Explain RIF to the manager or administrator and obtain support to begin the program, pending RIF's approval of the club's program proposal. Explain there is no cost to the facility or the children's families.

Decide how many children will participate—Decide which children the club wants to reach and how many. The club may sponsor a RIF project that operates at more than one location.

To determine how many children the club can serve, consider these factors:

- The number of children available in a selected group.
- The amount of money the club can spend or raise.
- The amount of work the club is willing to do.

- RIF’s requirement that all children in a designated group be served, regardless of income, delayed language skills, or other factors.

Choose a program—The club must decide whether to conduct a RIF project for the summer, the school year, or as a year-round program. Book distribution, depending upon which program the club selects, will vary from at least two to five books for each child.

If you are operating a program for:	You will need to give at least:
A school year	3 books through 3 distributions
The summer program	2 books through 2 distributions
An entire year	5 books through 3 distributions

Order extra books to allow children a choice.

$$\frac{\text{Children}}{\text{Children}} \times \frac{\text{Books/Child}}{\text{Books/Child}} + \frac{10\%}{10\%} = \frac{\text{Total Books Needed}}{\text{Total Books Needed}}$$

Assume that books for young children are about \$ 2.50 after discount

$$\frac{\text{Books needed}}{\text{Books needed}} \times \frac{\text{\$2.50}}{\text{Cost/Book}} = \frac{\text{\$}}{\text{Cost for books}}$$

Determine the expense—To develop a budget, estimate the number of books you will need.

Other expenses may include postage, photocopying, decorations, refreshments, and materials for motivational activities. Not all these are required, and your club may find there are businesses that will assist.

To make certain that RIF projects will be adequately funded, the proposal asks applicants to declare the amount of money on hand and the amount that will be raised. The smallest budget RIF will approve is \$200. After a RIF budget has been developed, present it to the club’s board of directors for approval. The club can supplement its own fund-raising ideas with others offered in the RIF Handbook.

Plan publicity—Decide how the club will relay information about the RIF program to the children’s families. The publicity chairman may wish to send letters home with the children, send news releases to local newspapers, or display posters.

Involve parents and the community—Decide how the club can involve parents in the program. Your club might invite them to help with the planning, fund raising, book selection, motivational activities, or refreshments. RIF recommends that the sponsoring group invite parents, librarians, and teachers to be involved in book selection, as well as staff members from the facility the club chooses to serve.

Submit a program proposal—Reading Is Fundamental requires potential sponsors to complete a program proposal for authorization to begin or renew a RIF program. The questionnaire seeks to ensure each project’s success by asking the sponsoring group to determine each of the areas discussed above -

the type of program it wishes to undertake, the number of children in the program, the anticipated expense, approval from the targeted facility, how it will publicize the project, and community involvement.

Kiwanis clubs that decide to establish a RIF project should request a program proposal and instructions from the Reading Is Fundamental office in Washington, DC. A club may call 1-877-RIF-READ, visit the web site at www.rif.org, or write at the address on page 4.

Make committee assignments—To give committees an overview of the program, the club might circulate the brochure “Starting and Running a RIF Program” and back issues of the RIF Newsletter. Each reading project is organized a little differently, but the following are areas for which a committee should be formed.

Book selection—RIF requires a committee of at least three persons to select books for distribution and recommends that it include teachers, librarians, and parents. Those who select and order books should try to match books to children and be sensitive to community standards. Thousands of new children’s titles are published each year, so selection is a task that takes time and consideration.

RIF arranges for more than 150 publishers and distributors to supply books to local projects at sizeable discounts, and the book selection committee may order only from those suppliers. RIF also provides a book supplier profile that lists discounts and a description of the types of books in which each supplier specializes, such as particular reading levels, specific ethnic and religious heritages, sports, or classics.

Motivational activities—Members in charge of motivational activities, which take place at book distributions, will want to emphasize fun in order to achieve the serious purpose of encouraging children to read for pleasure and information. They should plan imaginative activities to spark interest in reading, such as bringing in a local storyteller or inviting special visitors—an athlete, a fire fighter, the mayor—to talk about their work and why reading is important to them. The special guest might read their favorite stories to the children.

Other possible activities are puppet shows, reading marathons, poster or billboard contests, parades of costumed storybook characters, illustrating books on posters or bookmarks, inviting children to pack lunch for a RIFnic, and videotaping book distributions to be shown over local television stations. The RIF Handbook offers additional ideas.

Book distribution—Working closely with other RIF committees, the book distribution committee could hold the event in the facility’s activity room, at the zoo, a park, or a playground. Not all distributions need to be elaborate, but members generally will want to decorate the site and serve refreshments. The chairman might invite parents, Key Club or Builders Club members, or senior citizens to help with a distribution. Book distributions are particularly rewarding because members see firsthand the positive effects of children choosing a book to take home and keep.

Suggested Book Distribution Process—In the Alabama District, the largest Kiwanis RIF Program now reaches all Head Start centers in the state. The efficiency of the system developed for Kiwanians supporting the Jean Dean RIF program makes it attractive to clubs.

This system involves purchasing the same five books for all three distributions during the year. This means that each child will own three of the books by the end of the year, but the quantities of particular books purchased can be much greater. Also, the book selection process is done only once each year.

Before the books are taken to the school, a bookplate is put on the inside front cover. Bookplates can be custom printed locally, or colorful bookplates can be ordered from the Supplies Department at Kiwanis International. A few extra bookplates can go with each set of 20 books bundled for a classroom, to cover any mistakes made while inscribing names of children.

The organizer of the RIF project needs to meet with each Head Start teacher to hand over the books and explain what the readers will need when they arrive:

- A checklist of all the children's names with the names of the books across the top (sample on page 7). It may be that the club will need to create this.
- Nametags on all children, so the children's names can be spelled correctly in their books.

The process of the selection and reading should be explained to the teacher, and advice solicited.

The process should also be explained to the group of five volunteer readers who go to a Head Start program. The reproducible handout on page 6 can be used to prepare them for their RIF activity.

Publicity—The chairman can promote the club's reading program by sending news releases to the local newspaper, inviting the paper's photographer to snap a picture at a book distribution, or sending a letter home with each child.

Developing Family Literacy

Low literacy is a family affair, and a full attack on the problem includes breaking the chain that perpetuates it from generation to generation.

A Kiwanis club that serves a community in which family literacy is an issue can enhance the RIF program in these ways:

- Providing one-on-one reading help to children whose parents cannot read.
- Arranging for storytellers and readers with whom the children can identify.
- Encouraging parent/child communication.
- Involving parents in their children's activities.
- Helping parents learn how to encourage reading.
- Urging parents to encourage student achievement, attendance, motivation, and behavior.
- Steering parents into adult literacy programs.

A Kiwanis club interested in developing a family reading program should contact one of the family literacy programs listed in the Project Idea List.

Other RIF Information

Reading Is Fun Week—A Kiwanis club can promote the observance each year in late April. The RIF Handbook suggests proclamations from the mayor, bestowing a Certificate of Merit on deserving individuals or groups, and other successful ideas a club can adapt for its community. Contact the RIF office in February for a RIF Week booklet.

RIF Servicemarks—The RIF servicemarks may not be used without written approval from Reading Is Fundamental. These include “Reading Is Fundamental” and “RIF” and the unique logo showing an open book with a smiling face on it, with the text “Reading Is Fundamental” underneath.

Clubs Outside the United States

Clubs outside the U.S. may purchase resource materials from the Reading Is Fundamental office in Washington, DC. Non-U.S. clubs however are not able at this time to purchase books for distribution through RIF.

For More Information About RIF

Call the RIF office in Washington, DC, or send a photocopy of this form to:

Reading Is Fundamental, Inc. (RIF)
1825 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20009
Phone: 1-877-RIF-READ
www.rif.org

ORDER FORM

The Kiwanis Club of _____ wants to learn more about the Reading Is Fundamental program. We would like to receive:

- An Information Packet.
- A program proposal & instructions.
- The RIF Newsletter

Please send the material to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KIWANIS CLUB OF SANDUSKY
CONTACT NAME: Bill Bright
TELEPHONE: 752-6945

SANDUSKY KIWANIS CLUB SAYS READING IS FUNDamental

On Friday, November 2, children at the Westwood Child Care Center will meet Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, the handsome prince, and a host of other classic characters at a storybook parade that will introduce the Sandusky Kiwanis club's Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) project.

RIF, a nonprofit, nationwide program that encourages reading, will be in high gear throughout the year for boys and girls at the center. The club plans three book distribution parties, which will feature a variety of storytellers and activities to encourage the youngsters to read for fun. At each party, the children may select a book to keep at no expense.

"RIF has made thousands of young children avid readers," explained Sam Hall, president of the Sandusky Kiwanis club. "Our club wants to help make that happen here in Sandusky." He added that scores of communities have seen a dramatic change in students' attitudes toward reading. As children read more, they become active participants in the educational process. They also become a better educated, better informed public.

The club encourages parents to make reading a family affair and invites parents to the parade at 10 a.m. on Friday.

Prepare press releases, similar to this one, for local newspaper publicity. Be sure to type them, double-spaced.

Prepare a letter similar to this one for the children to take home to their families. Urge parents to encourage reading at home.

Dear Parents:

Boys and girls at the Crooked Creek nursery school are participants in a reading program that stimulates children's interest in reading and makes it possible for kids to choose books they can keep as their very own at no charge.

The Kiwanis Club of Logwood, sponsor of the Reading Is Fundamental program (RIF), invites you to its first book distribution party at the nursery school on Thursday, November 11th, at 9 a.m. Come and listen to local storyteller Miss Caroline delight the young audience with a surprising tale.

And please make reading a priority at home! Help your children develop reading skills while they are young, so they will have a lifetime of reading ahead.

Two other book distribution parties scheduled during the school year also will feature activities designed to increase your children's interest in reading. RIF says:

- Read to your children and encourage them to read to each other. Set aside a time each day when everyone reads.
- Fill the house with books from the library, and with magazines and newspapers. Let your children see you reading.
- Introduce the children to the library, and make frequent visits.
- Set aside a bookshelf for each child.
- Provide a quiet corner where family members can curl up and read.
- Take books along wherever you go—to the store, on a bus, to Grandmother's house.
- Play games with words. Name words beginning with the same sound, words that end with the same sound, and words that rhyme.

Since 1966, RIF has made it possible for youngsters to choose, own, and read more than 200 million free books.

A RIF How-To

A Reading is Fundamental book distribution to 20 children takes five readers 30 to 45 minutes when following the steps below:

Set up

Get to the Head Start center or school, with a pen in your pocket, 10 minutes before reading time. Sign in at the office and find your four reading partners, if you didn't travel together. It helps to wear a nametag.

The five readers should agree on who will be the spokesperson and who will be the scribe.

Ask to be directed to the Head Start classrooms.

The readers should introduce themselves to the teacher, who will hand over a list of the children and the books to be distributed. The scribe takes the books and the list.

Introduction

The spokesperson asks the teacher to gather the children around him or her.

The spokesperson introduces the readers to the children and explains why they are here, saying something like this:

"Hello. I am John Updike, and this is John Barth, Richard Brautigan, Tom Robbins, and Tom Pynchon from the Kiwanis Club of Tarkington.

"We know you're all special boys and girls, and we want you all to grow up to be special big boys and girls. We want you all to be good readers!

"We know you enjoy reading at school, and we want you to be able to read at home too. So, we're going to give you a book today to have at home. Mr. Pynchon will take this list and call three of you at a time to go select your books. Show the book to him, and he'll mark which book you chose. Then, we'll divide into five groups and read the book you'll be taking home."

Book Selection

While the spokesperson is explaining the process, the scribe spreads the

books out on a table—not in neat stacks. The children seem to choose more spontaneously when the books are spread out. When the spokesperson finishes, the scribe says:

"When I call your names, come over to the table and pick out your book. Then show me what book you chose so I can mark this on my list. After you show me your book, you should go back to the circle around Mr. Updike. If I mispronounce your name, please forgive me."

The scribe should note which book each child selects. This needs to be done correctly to be ready for the next book distribution. Other readers can help with this process.

After all the children have chosen books, assign the books that are left to the children who are absent. Put an "A" and a check mark in the column where you record their books. Write their names on the bookplates and give them back to the teacher. Also, give the list back to the teacher to be filed until the next book distribution.

Reading Time

The spokesperson then says to the children:

"Are you ready to hear your book? OK, let's divide into groups. Everyone who chose (title)—the one with a monkey on the cover—go with Mr. Barth. Everyone who chose (title)—the one with the big blue lake and fish on the cover—go with Mr. Brautigan to that corner."

The spokesperson continues to group readers with children so there is a group in each corner of the room and one in the middle.

The first thing the reader must do with his or her group is to write each child's name in the child's book. If the club has put bookplates on the inside front cover, write the name there. (It's wise to bring a couple of extra bookplates to cover errors.) This helps the reader meet the children in the group. Spell the names as they

are on the children's name tags. Then, read the story to the children.

Closing

When all the groups are done reading, gather the children into one circle. The spokesperson can ask something like:

"Did you enjoy your books? Good. A book is like a friend. It's always there for you. What did you like in your book?"

"When you go home today, you can take your books with you. You can share your books with your families over and over. You can get your mother, your father, your grandmother or grandfather, your uncle or aunt, or your big brother or sister to read your book to you. And one day, you'll be able to read it to someone you'd like to share it with."

Mention several relatives to make sure that a relative the child spends time with is mentioned.

"Take good care of your books and you can enjoy them for a long time. We enjoyed being with you and hope to see you again. Good-bye for now!"

Notes:

If some of your readers don't show up, ask the teachers to help read.

So that no child is the last to choose each time, vary the order in which the children are called. Start at the top the first time, the bottom the second time, and the middle the third time.

At the second and third distributions, be sure to remind the children NOT to pick the same book they chose the last time. Tell them you kept a list and you will help them so they won't accidentally do that. This works. Check the list before writing their names in their books. Sometimes a child will think the book on the table is the one from home. Say something like, "You already have that one, sweetheart, so pick from these three so you can have another book." This seems to solve the problem.

Kiwanian Cathy Gafford developed the handout, *A RIF How-To*, for the Jean Dean RIF Program in Alabama. Adapt it to meet your system, reproduce it, and give it to each RIF reader in your club.

Sample checklist for a RIF distribution.

Book Titles Name of Children	Where the Wild Things Are	Red Fish, Blue Fish	Sylvester and the Magic Pebble	Corduroy	How the Camel Got His Hump
Angelou, Maya					
Bernstein, Lennie					
Burns, Robert					
Crowe, Cheryl					
Donne, John					
Durer, Al					
Fatt, Naomi					
Fishburn, Larry					





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