

## RIF and MetLife Foundation Announce 2003 Challenge Champs



Over 360,000 children used their RIF Reading Passports this winter to explore the world with books, as participants in Read With Me: The 2003 RIF Community Reading Challenge, presented by MetLife Foundation. These children, from over 1,100 RIF sites, were not only challenged to read independently, they were encouraged to invite family and community members along on the two-week journey.



Volunteer Geanice Hunter reads *The Cat in the Hat* to small-site national champions in Lonoke, Ark., on Dr. Seuss's birthday.

At the end of the Challenge, the two RIF sites (one large and one small site) that spent the most time reading and found the most creative ways to involve community members were named challenge champions. This year, Lonoke Child Development Center Head Start in Lonoke, Ark., and Juan Linn Math and Science Magnet School in Victoria, Texas, earned the national titles. How did they do it?

For **Small-Site Champion Lonoke Child Development Center Head Start**, it was the slogan, "Lonoke Is Cool—Come Read at School," that kept their Challenge momentum strong.

The Challenge enabled all 53 Head Start students to learn from and interact with members of their community, including older students. Lonoke Middle School students performed a puppet show that was "a real success for both the older and younger students," Center Director Sharon Rudder said. "Being able to take a book and put it with a whole language experience shows the children that reading doesn't have to be work. They can have fun with books in many different ways."

The opportunity to form community partnerships, such as the one with Lonoke Middle School, was one of the best parts of the Challenge, says Rudder. The Center plans to continue collaborating with the middle school to pair older readers with younger learners.

For **Large-Site Champion Juan Linn Math and Science Magnet School**, it was the support of over 3,000 visits from guest readers that made their site stand out.

When reading teacher Linda Light distributed invitations, news releases, and fliers asking the community to participate in two weeks of reading activities, the result was incredible. "We had an excellent turn out," she said. Parents, hospital staff, police officers, truck drivers—anyone interested in supporting children's literacy—came to share a book with children in pre-K through fifth grade.

Readers checked in at a table where they chose a book if they didn't bring a favorite. Teachers modified lessons to accommodate guests, ensuring that every child had a chance to read with an adult and hear how reading helped the volunteer contribute to society. "Our students were exposed to many different people from the community," Light said. "The volunteers told the students that reading can help them be anything they want to be."

In April, the 2003 small- and large-site national champions received the Margaret McNamara Readers Cup, a national champion banner, medals for each child, and \$500 to purchase books for the site. This May, champions will travel, all expenses paid, to Washington, D.C. See page 7 for a list of this year's national and state champions, or visit [www.rif.org](http://www.rif.org).



The 2003 national and state Community Reading Challenge champions celebrate with these great prizes at their sites this spring.

### RIF Included in President's 2004 Funding Budget, But...

The Bush administration has included RIF in its fiscal year 2004 budget, proposing that \$24 million be allocated to RIF's Inexpensive Book Distribution Program, operated through a contract with the U.S. Department of Education. This amount, however, is \$1,334,000 less than the approved funding level in the 2003 budget bill.

RIF is currently communicating the need for additional funding, so we can continue to serve the 5 million children in RIF programs and implement new programs from a growing waitlist of over 500,000 children. To read up-to-date information and to see how you can support and increase federal funding for RIF, visit [www.rif.org](http://www.rif.org) and click on "How You Can Help."

### NEWS BRIEFS

#### Save the Dates: 2004 Contest Deadlines Set

RIF is pleased to announce the deadlines for the 2004 RIF National Poster Contest and RIF Community Reading Challenge.

Posters must be received at RIF's headquarters by November 14, 2003, with a winner to be announced in January 2004.

Pledges for the Community Reading Challenge must be received by October 31, 2003. Programs may run challenge events during any two-week period in early 2004, but must be concluded by March 2, 2004.

Themes and tips for the running the contests will be posted on [www.rif.org](http://www.rif.org) in June and in future issues of Read All About It. Details for each contest will be mailed to programs over the summer.

#### RIFNet Creates Gateways to Early Literacy Video Series



In May, RIFNet will introduce a video series called *Gateways to Early Literacy* to help family childcare providers move young children toward becoming literate.

*Gateways to Early Literacy* consists of four half-hour videos that explore the critical ways family childcare providers can enrich and support children's early language and literacy development. Each video features nationally recognized early childhood educators and literacy experts who highlight and discuss key messages, scenes from a variety of family childcare sites that illustrate the key messages, and comments from the providers themselves on what they do to support children's early literacy development and why. Video topics focus on creating a print-rich environment, the importance of conversations with children, reading aloud, and emergent writing.

The *Gateways to Early Literacy* package also includes a user's guide, a full-color poster with scenes of a literacy-rich childcare provider home, and a children's book with a bookmark. For more information, call RIFNet toll free at 800-590-0041.



# RIF Launches Web Site Geared for All Audiences

As RIF continues to grow and serve more children nationwide, supporting RIF programs has become more challenging than ever. RIF coordinators, parents, and educators all want varying kinds of information in one place, and RIF's online communications team has stepped up to meet the demand. After a year-long effort to reorganize, redesign, and rejuvenate RIF's Web site, the entire RIF community can now rely on [www.rif.org](http://www.rif.org) to help motivate the young readers in their lives.

“**T**he new site is evidence that RIF is the leading organization to turn to for reading motivation information,” says Diane Henry Leipzig, RIF Manager of Online Communication. “It delivers customized information to RIF coordinators, research-based literacy resources to educators, motivational tips and advice to parents, and interactive games and activities to children.”

Here's a brief look at all [www.rif.org](http://www.rif.org) has to offer:



- **RIF Coordinators:** Coordinators can access a wealth of resources, from tips and activities to step-by-step information for implementing a RIF program.
- **Educators:** Educators will encounter professional development articles, recommended booklists, a database of reading activity suggestions, Q&A with leading literacy experts, and viewing information for *RIF Exchange*, RIF's half-hour monthly television series.
- **Parents:** Parents, grandparents, and caregivers will find articles and tips on topics including choosing good books, talking with teachers, and creating comfortable reading spaces at home. Booklists, family activity ideas, and expert advice are also available here.
- **Kids:** Kids of all ages can explore the RIF Reading Planet with RIF's loveable motivational icon, Riffington. They can discover interactive reading and writing games and activities, submit book reviews in the “Book Zone,” or share opinions in “Express Yourself.”



## RIF 101

RIF's Web site makes it easy to find information about RIF and its programs. From job seekers to partner organizations, individuals interested in RIF will have no trouble learning all there is to know. Check out the following sections for a crash course on:

- **Who We Are:** Read about RIF's history and leadership, visit RIF's Newsroom, and find out about RIF's partnerships and promotions.
- **What We Do:** Learn about the types of programs RIF operates, and the events and contests it runs each year to help children experience the joy of reading.
- **How You Can Help:** Find out how to start a RIF program, become an advocate for RIF, or make a donation that will help RIF in its effort to serve children.

## RIF Exchange Works

Whether you choose to share *RIF Exchange* with volunteers, parents, or just watch it yourself, *RIF Exchange* “is a good source for ideas,” said RIF coordinator Barbara Moehring of Payne Elementary in Wichita, Kan.

As part of RIF's distance-learning initiative, Moehring and thousands of RIF coordinators received free videos of *RIF Exchange* Season IV. The seven 30-minute episodes offer advice from experts on topics such as family literacy and readers with special needs.

RIF programs are using the *RIF Exchange* videos in a variety of ways. At the Mid-Columbia Children's Council, Inc. in Hood River, Ore., RIF coordinator Doreen Hotchkiss shared a segment from the first show, “RIF Works,” with her RIF Book Selection Committee. The segment demonstrated ways to involve Head Start parents in their children's literacy development.

Hotchkiss encouraged her committee to pass on the ideas they learned from the video to others at their Head Start Centers. “We can't wait to receive the other episodes to share with our committees,” Hotchkiss said.

Moehring used the “RIF Works” show with her volunteers, too. “The episode fits well with what volunteers do,” she said. “I want to show it when I have volunteer training at the beginning of the year.”

*RIF Exchange* is one of many resources available through RIFNet, RIF's distance-learning initiative. Be sure to check out the other RIFNet resources including:

- *RIF Exchange* Viewers' Guides and other educational tools to promote reading (go to [www.rif.org](http://www.rif.org) and click on “Educators”).
- Multi-media *RIF in Action* Resource Kit: containing four-part *RIF In Action* video series and interactive CD-ROM on how to run a successful RIF program.
- “Be in the Know” CD-ROM: including overview of RIFNet services and clips of *RIF Exchange* episodes.

**Tell us the great ways you're using RIFNet resources. E-mail your ideas and comments to [exchange@rif.org](mailto:exchange@rif.org).**

Be sure to tune in to the last episode of *RIF Exchange* Season IV on May 7 at 6:30 p.m. ET or May 12 at noon ET. (R) = Rebroadcast

### MAY 7 AND 12

#### Show 407—“Summer Reading: A Bridge to Literacy”

Help kids plunge into summer reading—tune literacy skills up when school is out.

#### Show 306 (R)—“Sharing and Extending Books”

Learn how talking about books and reading with others promotes lifelong reading.



## Win and the Whole Community Wins!



Nominate an Extraordinary RIF Volunteer for the 2003 Anne Richardson RIF Volunteer of the Year Awards.

Extraordinary volunteers exist within every RIF program. Selecting the few who best exemplify the spirit of RIF's late chair emerita Anne Richardson is always a difficult task. But it is made easier by the thoughtful nominations supplied by the colleagues and supervisors of the volunteers who follow in her footsteps and help inspire children nationwide to love reading.

The award program selects a national winner and five regional winners, who will offer field expertise to national RIF and act as a resource for developing programs and prioritizing initiatives.

All RIF volunteers nominated for the award will receive a certificate of recognition.

All winners will receive:

- National recognition and the opportunity to share their best practices with other RIF coordinators across the country;
- Resources for professional development; and
- Funds to buy books for their program.

Programs should receive nomination forms in May. To request a nomination form or more information about nominating volunteers, contact Seung Yu at [VOYA@rif.org](mailto:VOYA@rif.org) or 1-877-RIF-READ. For quick online nominations, visit [www.rif.org](http://www.rif.org) and click on “Coordinators.”

The deadline for nominations has been extended. Nominations must be postmarked on or before **June 20, 2003**.



# LITERACY CALENDAR

JULY–AUGUST

“ Thank you for the free book, I really appreciate it! I am learning English, since I recently came to the United States, and it is very nice to have a new book of my own. ”  
 GORAN VLATKOVIC—5th Grade, Milwaukee, Wis.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
National Media Education Conference 2003 Baltimore, Md. (June 28–July 1) <i>Sponsored by the Alliance for a Media Literate America</i> www.nmec.org		1 NEA EXPO 2003, New Orleans, La. <i>Sponsored by the National Education Association</i> www.neaexpo.com	2	3 	4	5
6 	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23 NAFCC's 2003 Conference, Buffalo, N.Y. <i>Sponsored by the National Association for Family Child Care</i> www.nafcc.org	24	25 	26
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**DATES & REMINDERS**

**June 13**

Nomination deadline for RIF Volunteer of the Year Awards. To request a form or more information about nominating volunteers, contact Seung Yu at VOYA@rif.org or 1-877-RIF-READ. For quick online nominations, visit www.rif.org and click on “Coordinators.”

**While supplies last**

Order up to 25 free posters featuring the artwork of this year's National Poster Contest winner. The back of each poster is filled with summer reading activities. Sorry, all the bookmarks have been distributed. Visit www.rif.org and click on “Coordinators” to order, while supplies last.