



READING IS FUNDAMENTAL, INC.

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READING IS FUNDAMENTAL LAUNCHES LATINO LITERACY INITIATIVE

Jorge Ramos, Cristina reinforce literacy messages to Latino families

WASHINGTON, September 15, 2004 — Reading Is Fundamental, Inc. (RIF®), the nation's oldest and largest children's and family literacy nonprofit, today launched a special initiative to promote early childhood literacy among Latino families in the United States. Called "Un futuro brillante empieza en un libro" (A brilliant future begins with a book), the initiative includes the release of a Spanish website for families (www.rif.org/leer); two Spanish language television public service announcements (PSAs), featuring Univision's Network News Anchor Jorge Ramos and Univision's Talk Show Host Cristina Saralegui; and a 30-minute educational parent video in Spanish.

"RIF knows well the importance of reaching out to Latino children and families," said Carol H. Rasco, RIF president and CEO. "We need to do all that we can to better meet the literacy needs of this rapidly growing part of our society. We consider the Spanish language PSAs, video and website as an important first step in providing families with the resources they need to help children understand that reading is both fun and fundamental to success in life."

RIF created the campaign to emphasize the ways Latino families can incorporate into their lives simple, appropriate activities—many of which families already do regularly—that will promote literacy among their children. The resources emphasize three key messages for Latino families:

- Sharing stories and reading aloud to young children may be the single most important thing families can do to help children learn to read;
- Everyday activities such as singing, storytelling and rhyming helps reinforce and encourage literacy; and
- Families can grow closer by taking time to read with their children.

To shape the focus of the message, RIF consulted leading Hispanic groups including the National Council of La Raza, the National Latino Children's Institute and Aspira.

A core component of the initiative, a new bilingual website for families, invites families to tour an interactive house in which each room provides a variety of online and offline activities promoting the benefits of a literate home. Children and adults alike can browse the house for literacy resources, tips, interactive games, bilingual booklists and group suggestions, all tailored to their specific needs. Each resource included draws on cultural traditions and modern issues for Latino families. Site visitors can also view the PSAs and preview and order videos.

Both PSAs will be offered in 15- and 30-second formats via satellite feed, and will air on Univision affiliates nationwide. The 30-minute video features parents and educators and outlines specific steps families can take to better support their children's literacy skills. To distribute the video, RIF is tapping into a network of educational, literacy, Latino and other organizations that communicate directly and regularly with Latino families.

To request copies of the PSAs or the parent video, visit www.rif.org/leer or contact feedback@rif.org.

Reading Is Fundamental, Inc., founded in 1966, works to build a literate nation by helping young people discover the joy of reading. RIF's highest priority is to serve the nation's underserved children and families through the development and delivery of literacy programs and campaigns that motivate youth to read regularly. Through a national, grassroots network of 450,000 community volunteers at 25,000 RIF program sites, 5.1 million children are provided with 16.5 million new, free books and other essential literacy resources each year. For more information and to access reading resources, visit RIF's website at www.rif.org.

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