

Reading Is Fundamental, Inc.

Club RIF • Resource Guide



A Mentoring Program For Teens & Kids



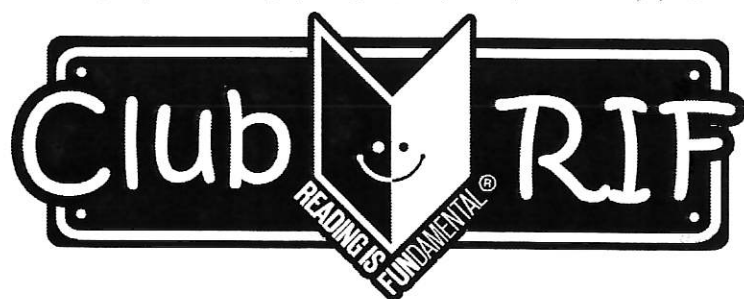
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Club RIF



Resource Guide

A Mentoring Program For Teens & Kids



ABOUT RIF



Founded in 1966, **Reading Is Fundamental, Inc.** develops and delivers children's and family literacy programs that help prepare young children for reading and motivate older children to read regularly, focusing on the nation's neediest children, from infancy through age 11. RIF operates through a national, grass-roots network of 400,000 volunteers at more than 20,000 sites, which include schools, libraries, community centers, child-care centers, hospitals, migrant worker camps, Head Start and Even Start programs, homeless shelters, and detention centers. In 2001, RIF programs provided 15 million new, free books and other essential literacy resources to nearly 5 million children. RIF has recently celebrated its 35th anniversary and the milestone of placing more than 200 million books in the hands and homes of children who need them most.

Through a contract with the U.S. Department of Education, RIF provides federal matching funds to thousands of school and community-based organizations that sponsor RIF programs. RIF also receives private support from hundreds of corporations and foundations, thousands of local organizations and businesses, and countless individuals.

For more information, visit www.rif.org, or contact RIF at:

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ABOUT BEST BUY CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION



Best Buy Children's Foundation has partnered with Reading Is Fundamental to pilot the Club RIF program. BBCF supports many life skills programs that help kids reach their full potential and that get young people involved in their communities. BBCF awards grants to nonprofit organizations that take an innovative approach to preparing young people for the future through mentoring, leadership development, and education.

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"We start to load
boxes of books
and prepare a show
for the kids a week
ahead of time. We put
the books out
on the tables so the kids
can see and choose
what they want.
We always help each
child write their name in
the book they select."

Lavonne, Club RIF member

INTRODUCTION



What Is Club RIF?

The concept of Club RIF is built upon the best practices of innovative teen-based RIF programs and the success of the Club RIF program at Red Mountain High School in Mesa, Arizona. Pat Heck (1999-2000 RIF Volunteer of the Year) founded the Red Mountain Club RIF in 1988 to encourage her students to develop a love for reading. The program's success has spread throughout the school, with its annual membership now reaching 1,800 students.

Club RIF is a reading-motivation and mentoring program that brings teens, children, and their local communities together around books and fun, literacy-related activities. Teens who become Club members serve as mentors for younger children. They share books, reading-motivation activities, and their enthusiasm with elementary school students or other children in the community. Club members are encouraged to take on responsibilities associated with running a RIF program, such as ordering books, organizing activities, and coordinating volunteer efforts. Participating Club members and children also receive free books to keep and take with them on their journey to becoming lifelong readers.

"Club RIF's members participate in learning exercises and keep kids entertained with books to teach them the importance of literacy."

Raven, Club RIF member

The Club RIF Pilot

The Club RIF pilot is a three-year trial period, during which RIF will assess the program's potential for replication as a national model. The first year of the pilot phase includes the development of program materials and the identification of participating sites. Selected sites will run Club RIF programs during years two and three, with the financial support of Best Buy Children's Foundation. Sites will also receive fundraising training and be encouraged to become self-sustaining through a combination of grants and local support.

Your participation and feedback during this pilot is essential. Your efforts will help establish the foundation of this new initiative and shape a national program model.



Program Goals

All Club RIF programs will:

- Increase the amount of time children spend reading and engaging in fun, literacy-related activities.
- Promote mentoring relationships between teens and children.
- Increase the confidence and self-esteem of teens as readers and mentors.
- Encourage teens to develop managerial and communication skills, while using technology as a resource.
- Make reading a highly visible activity in schools and communities.
- Promote partnering opportunities among teachers at various levels.

Program Components

Book Distributions

Each year, Club RIF members and participating children select three free books for their personal libraries. Club members are responsible for planning and attending their own distributions as well as those for the children. Distribution events include fun, motivational activities to encourage a love of reading.

Lending Libraries

A collection of books is located at each site, increasing the resources available to children and teens for paired reading activities. Children can check out the lending library books to take home and share with their families or to enjoy during the day. Club members can use these libraries to familiarize themselves with children's literature and to help them plan activities. Teens are primarily responsible for ordering books and maintaining lending libraries.

Paired Readings

Club members read and conduct literacy-related activities with younger children to generate excitement about reading.

Program Management

Club RIF members are encouraged to take on many of the responsibilities of running a RIF program. Under the guidance of their Club RIF advisor, members gain managerial skills as they schedule and organize events, maintain budgets, and encourage volunteerism in the community.

Reflection

Club members are encouraged to use a combination of reading, writing, creating, and sharing to reflect upon their Club RIF experience throughout the program year. Younger children are also encouraged to share what they are learning and enjoying.

Club RIF Support Materials

Advisor's Guide

This resource provides a program overview and gives Club RIF advisors the project management tools needed to run a successful program.

Resource Guide

Advisors, Club members, and volunteers will find this user-friendly guide a helpful resource for running a Club RIF program. Each task is broken down into easy-to-follow steps, making book ordering, activity planning, and invoice payment simple for teens and adults.

Member's Guide

This guide is filled with reading-motivation activities, reproducibles, and literacy resources to assist Club members in their work with children.

CD-ROM

This interactive tool provides Club members and project coordinators with guidance and support. It offers materials to help them run a program, such as worksheets for ordering books. It also includes activity ideas to use in preparation for paired reading sessions.

Bookplates

Programs receive Club RIF bookplates to affix to lending library books and hand out at book distributions.

Membership Cards

Club members receive a card identifying their affiliation with Club RIF.



Who's Who? Roles and Responsibilities

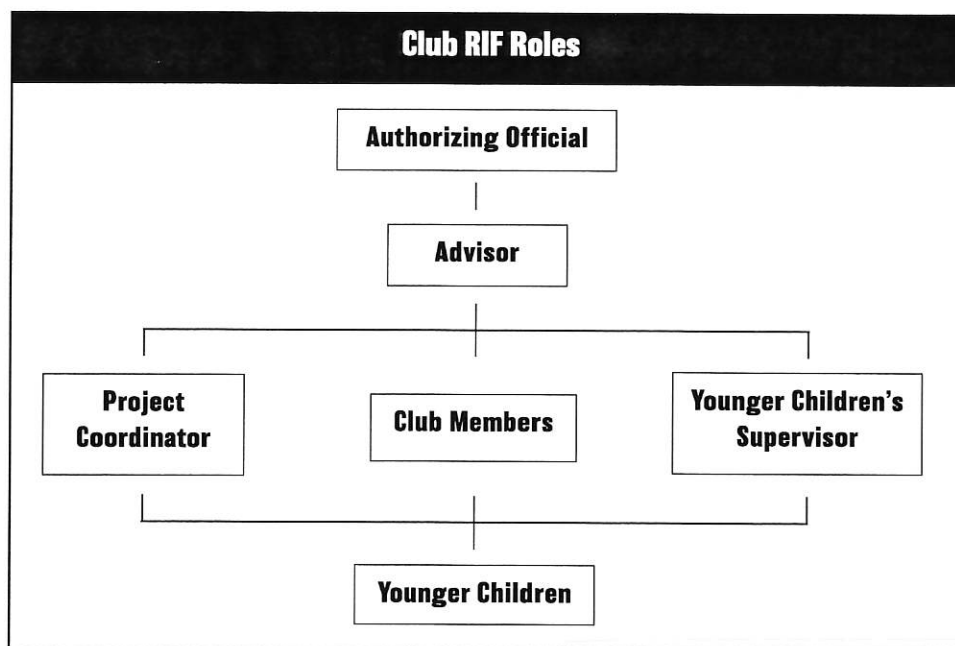
It takes a team of dedicated individuals like you to make a program successful, including:

- An **authorizing official** to accept program guidelines and sign appropriate documents.
- An **advisor** to organize the different participants and oversee the program's success.
- An adult, teen, or team of Club members to serve as the **project coordinator(s)** at each site to plan, implement, or supervise day-to-day activities.
- **Club members** to help develop and participate in paired reading activities with younger children.
- A **supervisor for younger children** to oversee paired readings and book distributions and communicate with parents.
- **Children** from a local elementary school, prekindergarten program, or community center to participate in paired reading activities with Club members.

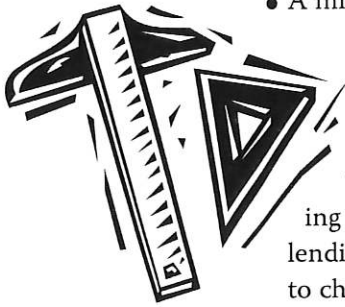
"Book distributions have to be prepared in advance.

It's hard work, so I've learned to know my job and get it done."

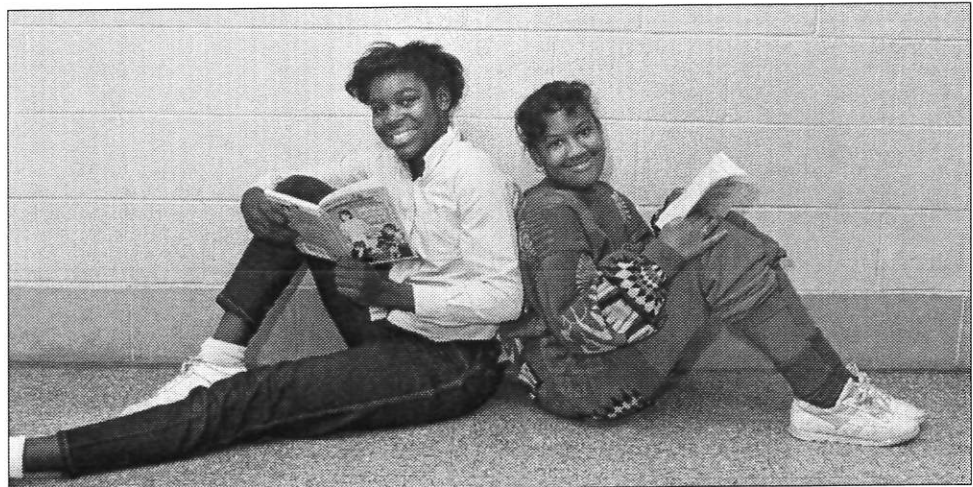
Lavetta, Club RIF member



Club RIF Guidelines



- A minimum of three people (including teens and community members) must serve on each book selection committee. These committees are responsible for choosing appropriate books to place in lending libraries and to distribute to children and teens for ownership.
- All book distributions must be conducted within the contract year, which begins with the effective date and ends on the termination date.
- All distributions must be held at least one month apart.
- Club members must be able to choose one free book at each of three distributions. Motivational activities should occur in conjunction with each book distribution.
- Younger children must be able to choose one free book at each of three distributions. Motivational activities should occur in conjunction with each book distribution.
- Participants who are absent during a distribution should have the opportunity to select a book at another time. An alternate may not choose a book for the absent person.
- Only Club RIF participants (teens and children) may receive RIF books.
- Books intended for ownership may not be distributed to adults or placed in classroom collections.
- Books purchased for lending libraries must be accessible to all participants at each site.
- Lending library books may not be distributed for ownership.
- Club members must be involved in the management of the program.
- All funds allocated from RIF must be spent on books for the Club RIF program, and these funds from RIF should be spent entirely. Any remaining funds must be returned to RIF and may result in a decrease in the program's future funding.
- All paperwork must be submitted to RIF according to the following timeline:
 1. Distribution reports within 30 days of each book distribution.
 2. Renewal documents (proposal, subcontract agreement, performance report, and guidelines checklist) no later than the termination date. We recommend sending documents one month prior to the termination date.
- Books may not be ordered until the program is approved and has received authorization from RIF.



VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT



It takes lots of time and energy to make Club RIF work. One way to ensure your program's success is to welcome the assistance of volunteers from your community. Volunteers can be local merchants or businesspeople, parents, grandparents, school staff, law enforcement officials, or any other members of the community with an interest in children and literacy.

A few benefits of engaging volunteers in your program are:

- The more assistance you receive from volunteers, the more smoothly your events will run.
- Volunteers are also members of your community. Simply by being involved, they will make their co-workers, friends, and families aware of your program and your tireless dedication to children. This will inevitably help your program gain additional support from the community and attract the attention of potential financial contributors.
- Parents who volunteer at book events, for example, and learn new read-aloud techniques may be encouraged to read more often with their children at home. In turn, kids who see the adults in their lives valuing reading and having fun will better understand the importance of reading.

Recruiting Volunteers

Identify Potential Volunteers

Get together with your core group of Club RIF participants and brainstorm community members that your program could recruit. For example:

- When you invite parents to book events, extend the invitation to siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other family members.
- Service clubs such as Kiwanis Clubs, sororities or fraternities, or local businesses are often looking for new projects to fund and/or support through volunteers.
- Local senior centers and retirement communities are also often looking for new projects.
- Don't forget the staff at your program site. Principals or center directors, cafeteria staff, administrative personnel, and others who work with or near children daily may be interested in helping out.

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Get the Word Out

Recruiting volunteers can be as elaborate as a poster campaign, or as simple as inviting parents to help at a book event. Here are a few tips for recruiting volunteers:



- Just ask! A personal invitation goes a long way. If you are talking with friends or meeting with potential funders, don't forget to ask them to come to the book distributions. Other community members and parents of the younger children you serve might also be interested in playing a role in Club RIF.
- Set up a Club RIF table in a visible area at organization-sponsored events. Display photos from past book distributions or of teens reading with children in your community, so passersby can see the joys and rewards of contributing to a Club RIF program. A Club member or volunteer should be available to discuss what Club RIF is and how they can get involved. Have a sign-up sheet at the table.

- Ask volunteers for small chunks of time. Often, even busy people want to get involved but are unsure about committing time they just don't have. Ask them to help for a few hours before a distribution. They can sort books and set up tables. Or, ask them to make decorations for an event during their free time at home.
- Publicize Club RIF through posters, newsletters, and bulletin boards. Invite potential volunteers to attend meetings. Submit a public service announcement (PSA) to local radio/television and cable stations, newspapers, newsletters, and magazines. See sample PSA below and pp. 29-32 for more information about publicizing your program.

Sample Public Service Announcement

Join [city/school]'s Club RIF! Help children and teens in your community develop a lifelong love of reading. On [date of event], we need enthusiastic community members to read aloud to our kids, discuss books and their professions ... and more! Contact [name of advisor or contact] at [telephone number and/or e-mail] to get involved in the fun. Club RIF is made possible by Reading Is Fundamental and Best Buy Children's Foundation.



Encourage Parent Participation

Today's busy world makes it difficult to get every parent actively involved. It's important, however, that parents understand the significance of their role in Club RIF. As the children you serve become more interested in reading, their parents play an important role in keeping that excitement alive well beyond Club RIF.

Encourage parents to attend Club RIF book distributions and to read with their children at home. Remember, working parents can take limited time off for school events. Schedule events at varying times and encourage parents to come, even if only for an hour or two. Some parents can manage to go to work late or to take an extended lunch for a special school event. So, try a "Doughnuts with Dad/Muffins with Mom" book breakfast or a "Stone Soup Lunch."

Screen Volunteers

Many community members who express an interest in volunteering for your program may have worked with children before, or they may be parents themselves. It is important that the advisor, Club members, children's supervisor, and children feel comfortable working with them.

Every school or district and community organization has policies and procedures for volunteers. Make sure you know what they are. Some organizations that work with volunteers require background checks, TB tests, finger printing, or other paperwork.

NOTES



Working with Volunteers

Volunteers should know what is expected of them at the outset. Giving them a job description can help them understand these expectations immediately (see sample job descriptions below). You may want to include specific duties in the description, as well as the time commitment, the supplies they will need, and who will provide the supplies. Depending on how many volunteers you have, you may be able to walk each of them through their duties, or you may need to schedule a meeting to give a group of volunteers a standard overview at once.

Distribute Volunteer Job Descriptions

Use the following examples as a guide when preparing your volunteer position descriptions.

- **Book Selection Committee**

Member: Helps select books that will be available on distribution days. Uses personal knowledge of books, as well as the resources from the 150 RIF-approved book suppliers, to choose age-appropriate books that best match the reading abilities, interests, and primary languages of those served by Club RIF, while keeping within the budget.

- **Book Event Assistant:** Works with a Club member or the advisor, and assists with planning and implementing book distributions.

Brainstorms reading-motivation activities and themes, prepares refreshments and decorations, and sets up book tables.

- **Club RIF Publicist:** Assists with creating flyers, posters, newsletters, etc. to increase visibility and program support. Contacts local media as needed. Helps attract volunteers and funders.

- **Club RIF Fundraiser:** Develops and implements fundraising efforts, including but not limited to holding sales events, writing grant proposals, and soliciting funds and merchandise from local businesses.



- **Celebrity/Guest Reader:** Reads aloud to groups of children or to an entire class. Celebrity readers may be people in uniform, people in costume, public officials, TV and radio personalities, or any member of the community. They may be singers, writers, or people who enjoy reading with a dramatic flair.

Say Thank You

Acknowledge volunteers' time and effort by saying "thank you." Remember to include them in Club RIF recognition ceremonies or in local/school newsletters or bulletins. You can even create volunteer recognition certificates and encourage Club members and children to send handmade thank-you notes.

Test Yourself

Volunteer Involvement

1. Where can you find volunteers to help with your program?
2. Why is it important to screen volunteers?
3. A local newscaster would like to volunteer for your Club RIF program. What should you have her do?

SHARING BOOKS AND READING

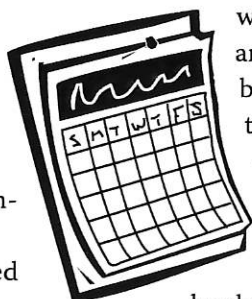


Organizing Book Events

There will be a total of six book events taking place during your Club RIF program year: three for the younger children your program serves and three for the Club members. Book events are your opportunity to create a warm, fun atmosphere around reading. Not only will participants select books to keep, the teens and children will engage in activities that remind them of the joy that books provide. The following pages and the Book Event Planning Checklist on p. 51 will help you in your event planning.

Scheduling the Events

Determine the dates for all six book events as soon as possible. Some programs hold book events around holidays, during a unit the children are studying, or whenever there is a free moment on the calendar! Remember, book events for each group must be spaced at least one month apart.



event is met with anticipation and excitement. Children and teens will rush to the book displays anxious to select the best books. Maintain this enthusiastic atmosphere and maintain order by displaying the books so covers and titles can easily be seen. Consider these suggestions for setting up books at your event:

- Spread books over large tables.
- Sort books by age group, reading level, theme, or other categories and display them at separate tables.
- Have the books delivered in an exciting way such as on a delivery truck or a fire engine. Display the books on or near the trucks.

Choosing a Venue

After determining when your book events will take place, think about where you would like to hold them. Be sure to choose a location that can accommodate the number of expected participants and is appropriate for your scheduled activities. For example, some programs have book events outside with blankets on a lawn, or in a gymnasium where the younger children go through an obstacle course. Wherever you choose, don't forget to get permission from the manager of that space, and confirm that there aren't any other events scheduled to at the same time on that day!

Planning the Book Distributions

Choosing free books for personal ownership is a highlight of the book event. Many participants may have limited access to books — so each

Remember that free choice is essential in all RIF programs. Children and teens should be able to choose their books without interference from supervisors, parents, Club members, or other volunteers. Adults and teens helping out at the distribution can suggest books that may be of interest to a child, but the final choice belongs to the child. Even absent participants must be offered a selection of books from which to choose upon their return or at the next event.

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Involving Volunteers

Organizing a book event is a tremendous task. Why not recruit the help of volunteers? Here are a few ways volunteers can support your book event (see pp. 9-12 for additional information).



- Make or set up decorations.
- Prepare or serve refreshments.
- Set out books on distribution tables.
- Serve as guest readers.
- Place bookplates in each book and write the children's names on them as they make their selections.

Publicizing the Event

Book events are great opportunities to raise awareness about your program. Media attention may attract volunteers and/or financial support from the community. See pp. 29-32 to learn how to publicize your event.

Having Fun with Books

Connecting with books in fun and interesting ways is central to the book events. Club members are encouraged to create activities or presentations that demonstrate how exciting reading can be. The activities do not have to be elaborate or expensive. Simply introducing a theme such as "slumber party" and having children read with pillows and blankets, for instance, can make the day special.

Use the resources in the lending library, *Member's Guide*, and CD-ROM to develop activities. Or, seek the assistance of younger children's supervisors or other Club participants with event planning experience or a creative flair. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

Motivational Activities for Children

Read-Alouds

Children love to have stories read aloud to them. Use these tips as you and other Club members read with the children at book events and in paired reading sessions.

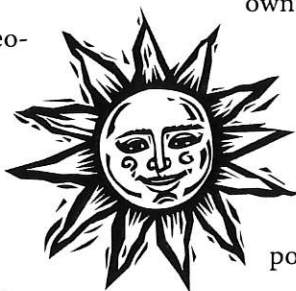
Tips for Reading Aloud

- Choose a story that can be completed in one sitting. Be sure to read the book in advance to develop a feel for its language and pace.
- Set the stage by asking a question that will engage children in the story they are about to hear. It can be a question based on the title, book cover, or subject matter. Your question should help children anticipate what is about to come.
- Modulate your voice as you move from character to character.
- Readings should take no more than 15-20 minutes (10 minutes for preschoolers). It may be difficult to hold children's attention much longer.
- Do not rush through the story. Stop now and then to ask questions, explain the meaning of an event, or let children look at the pictures.
- Use props, costumes, or music to make the story come alive. Some readers wear silly hats or dress up as storybook characters. Others perform a series of pantomimes to convey the story.

Celebrity and Guest Readers

Invite guests to read aloud from books available at the distribution. Encourage individuals familiar to the children to read a book with them. Involving people like the principal, custodians, or other staff reinforce that reading is important for everyone, not just children.

Celebrity readers may be people in uniform or costume, public officials, TV and radio personalities, or any member of your community. They may be singers, writers, or people who wish to share their heritage. Share Tips for Reading Aloud (p. 24) with guest readers.



Book 'Em Read Aloud

Invite a local police officer to be a celebrity reader. Let the officer use an inkpad to help the children press their fingerprints onto bookmarks or the inside cover of their new RIF book. (Be sure to have plenty of hand cleaner available.)

Cheerleaders, Cheer-readers

Invite the middle- or high-school cheerleading squad to lead reading cheers at a reading rally. Or, have Club members create their own cheers to encourage reading.

Themed Events

Themed book events allow Club RIF participants to escape from the structure of an ordinary day into a world of books and fun. Choosing books, activities, and decorations around a theme will enhance the feeling that reading is something special.

Themed events do not have to be complicated to be successful — just use a little imagination. Here are a few suggestions:

- **RIF Day at the Beach:** This activity is often used as a kick off for summer reading or as a mid-winter break. Children, teachers, and teens wear Hawaiian clothes and bring a beach towel, which they will later spread out on the floor for a little beach reading. Children make their own sunglasses. Volunteers decorate the room with fake palm trees and swimming fish. You can even place the RIF books to be distributed that day in an empty plastic wading pool or on towels on the floor.

- **Storybook Dress-Up Day:** Get a group of children to dress as all the different characters of a book.

- **RIF-nic:** Grab some good books and a paper bag lunch, and head outside for a book-nic under the shade of a tree. Consider giving the children chalk to draw pictures of favorite books and to write "side-walk slogans" promoting reading.

- **Author or Book Character Birthday Party:** Celebrate Peter Rabbit's birthday with carrots and tea. Or, celebrate a favorite author's birthday with a cake and read-alouds from the author's books. Children can also make a birthday card for the honoree.

- **Plant a Seed and Read:** This is a nice way to celebrate spring. Highlight books about spring, gardens, flowers, etc. Give each child a packet of mixed flower seeds with their RIF book. Or, plant "reading" trees on school grounds. Your book event could even help to kick off a reading campaign: children can track their progress on a bulletin board by adding petals to a flower or segments to a bookworm.

NOTES

Motivational Activities for Teens

Character Interviews

A volunteer pretends that he is a character from a book he has read. One or more people interview the "character" about his life and interests. The volunteer must remain in character throughout the exercise, speaking and reacting as the character would. (This is also fun if the character is unknown and the group has to guess his identity.)



Character Skits

Teens take on the personae of characters from books they have read. Pair teens to create situations where two characters from different books meet. (Suggest a discussion topic or theme to get them started. Remind them they can choose the time and setting of the meeting, but they must stay in character.) Teens can then create brief skits to perform to the group.

Plot Twists

Choose a well-known book, or read a new picture book to Club members. Have groups of two to four teens introduce a twist to the plot (e.g. new character or a mysterious event) and describe how the characters react. Encourage groups to share their revised stories.

Wacky Revisions

Take an excerpt from a book, and replace key words with the type of word that has been omitted (e.g. replace the word "create" with another verb). List the missing words by their type — noun, adverb, verb, adjective — then have teens complete the list by supplying the replacement words. Read the revised story aloud.

Chain Stories

Break teens into groups of five or more, and make one of them a scribe. Start with an interesting sentence or topic; each person adds a sentence to the story until it is completed. The scribe writes the story down as it is told. Read the entire story aloud.

Creative Storytelling

Model good read-aloud techniques by combining storytelling with interactive activities (e.g. use origami to create objects from a story).

What's My Line?

Select well-known quotes from books, and have teens guess who said what. Or, name a character and have the group come up with one of the character's lines.

Book Ads

Have teens create advertisements for a favorite book. Display their work at the book event or at your site.

Book Reviews

Have teens write a review of a book they have read recently. It can be a book they loved or one they did not enjoy as much — not all reviews are glowing. Encourage teens to post their reviews on Web sites like the RIF Reading Planet (www.rifreadingplanet.org).

Test Yourself

Organizing Book Events

1. Who should you inform about upcoming events?
2. Can children's book events occur at the same time as the Club members' events?
3. Why is it important to have motivational activities at events for Club members?

Coordinating Paired Reading Sessions

Taking time to read with young children is a great way to reinforce the value of reading. The following section will help you and young Club RIF participants gain the most out of paired reading sessions.

Planning Paired Reading Time

Schedule a Time and Place

Finding a time and place that works for both the children's supervisor and the teens is essential. Paired reading sessions should be at least 30 minutes long and should be scheduled as consistently as possible. Try holding sessions on the same day of the week and in the same location. For example, Friday is Club RIF day in Mrs. Field's classroom, or the third Thursday of each month is Club RIF day.

Choose Books to Read Aloud

Readers should look for titles that interest their reading partners as well as themselves. They should consider the children's reading level, attention span, and special needs. Would their reading buddy enjoy a bilingual book, a tale about dinosaurs, or one with pictures of cars? It may take a few sessions before readers can predict which books will appeal to their buddies. (See the *Member's Guide* for more information.)

Prepare Motivational Activities

Most activities are generic and can be applied to any book. However, it may be helpful to keep selected titles in mind when preparing an activity. Refer to the Club RIF lending library, *Member's Guide*, CD-ROM, and other Internet resources for activity ideas. (See p. 48 for more suggestions.)

Read Aloud Together

Readers should familiarize themselves with the story, characters, and author of each book before reading it aloud. By looking at the cover, illus-

trations, and text, they can identify places to pause and ask questions throughout the reading, as well as understand where to change voices and read dynamically. When reading buddies meet, they should find a space away from the others and free from distractions. Children may want to climb into the reader's lap, turn pages, or sit closely. The reader should do what feels comfortable and appropriate. For reading aloud tips, see p. 24.

Reflect Upon Reading Time

Readers should share with others the work they did with their buddy that day. It is also important for readers to process how they felt about the session. What went well? What could be improved? Suggest they keep a journal of these comments, or discuss their experience with other Club members.

Reading Buddies Get Acquainted

Before a reader can choose books that will interest her reading buddy, she will need to know a little bit about the child! Encourage her to conduct a book buddy interview (see the *Member's Guide* for more information). Readers can ask their buddies questions to learn about the child's interests, family, friends, etc. Children can ask readers the same questions, so they can get to know their mentors too. If readers feel they still do not know their buddies' interests after a second or third meeting, suggest they ask the child's supervisor for recommendations.

NOTES



Paired Reading Activities

- **Book Stamps:** Let the children design — on paper — a rubber stamp with a reading slogan and a place to write a child's name (e.g. "This book belongs to..."). Ask a local office supply store to make rubber stamps from the winning design.
- **Tote Bags:** Help the children design tote bags using fabric markers and two pieces of muslin sewn together. This creates a colorful, personal way to transport and store books. Children can draw scenes from favorite books, favorite characters, or messages about reading.



- **Shake, Rattle, and Read**
Distribute or make instruments the children can use to form a rhythm band to accompany read-aloud sessions. Many books are filled with rhythms and rhymes perfect for shaking and rattling. With beans, two paper plates, and a stapler, children can make a tambourine.
- **Reading Quilts:** Quilting has a rich history in several ethnic traditions. Read stories about some of those traditions, such as African-American slaves hiding codes in their handmade quilts. Have children make their own story quilt. Children can add a patch to the quilt each time they complete a book, or they can design a patch based on a favorite story to be included in a large storybook quilt.
- **Reading Place Mats:** Give the children an opportunity to illustrate their favorite stories on a large piece of paper and laminate it. Within minutes, they will have a colorful, personal place mat to remind them of the joy of reading at snack- or mealtime.

- **Reading Menu:** Make a meal from foods in favorite stories. Try starting with "stone soup." Then move on to green eggs and ham, followed by a bucket full of blueberries, gingerbread, or even currant buns (from Beatrix Potter's *Peter Rabbit*).
- **The Great Book Graffiti Wall:**
Unroll a long piece of butcher paper. Let the children cover it with drawings of storybook characters and reading slogans.
- **Trade a Page:** Take turns reading pages. Help the child if he or she gets stuck.
- **Watermelon:** While reading, insert a silly-sounding noun like "watermelon" every so often. For example, say, "And then Goldilocks sat on the watermelon." The child will quickly correct you and say, "No, it's a chair!" This game keeps their eyes focused on the print as they try to anticipate the next "watermelon."
- **Fill in the Blank:** Read normally, and then stop a few words before the end of the page. Ask the child to finish the sentence.

Test Yourself

Coordinating Paired Readings

1. Why are activities necessary when reading aloud is fun itself?
2. What should teens do to prepare for paired reading sessions?
3. Why is it important to write or share about paired reading interactions immediately following the session?

PUBLICIZING YOUR PROGRAM



Publicizing your Club RIF program is important for reasons that go beyond making headlines. By raising awareness about your program's activities, you can inspire and motivate others to get involved. Through newspaper articles and television/radio reports, you can attract new volunteers and reassure current ones that they are doing important work. Media attention may also draw additional financial support from individuals, businesses, and other community organizations. The more your community knows about your program, the more likely they are to offer support.

NOTE: Your school or organization may have specific policies about or resources for publicizing your program, interviewing students, and the use of photos in publicity materials. Be sure you are aware of any restrictions or resources before you begin making your publicity plans.

Six Steps to Publicizing Your Club RIF Program

1. Create a Media List

Your school or organization may already have a list of media contacts, and you may have a list that needs to be updated. Work together to compile a list of appropriate contacts. Your local library may have media directories of reporters' names, titles, addresses, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail addresses. Look for contacts at your local television network affiliate news stations (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX), radio stations (especially all-news stations and affiliates of National Public Radio), cable news stations, newspapers, and magazines.

List education reporters and editors; human interest and Sunday feature reporters; reporters, producers, and correspondents for locally focused broadcast shows; and even general assignment reporters. Also include editors of newsletters at prominent civic or business organizations in the com-

munity or editors of community calendars. Visit <http://newslink.org> to look up nearby media outlets.

2. Introduce Reporters to Your Program

One of the more important tenets of publicity is to develop relationships with members of the media. Get to know them before you ask them to publicize an event. In addition to major media sources, local cable-access television and weekly community papers are also great ways to help get the word out. Keep the following in mind when contacting media representatives:

- Keep your message short (no more than four sentences).
- Limit yourself to three major ideas you are hoping to get across.
- Develop messages that have emotional appeal (easy to do when your message involves teens mentoring children).

NOTES

- Use simple but powerful words, and avoid jargon or specialized language.
- Refer to the Club RIF Talking Points on p. 52 for ideas to include in your media message.
- Create a Club RIF binder of clippings, photos, and letters of recognition demonstrating your program's contribution to the community. Use the binder as a tool when talking to the press or potential funders. Even if your program is new and you do not have photos, you can compile fact sheets or student statements about what they hope to get out of the program.

3. Give Reporters the Facts

Prepare the following items for each event in brief, easy-to-read formats. Examples of each item can be found on pp. 53-55.

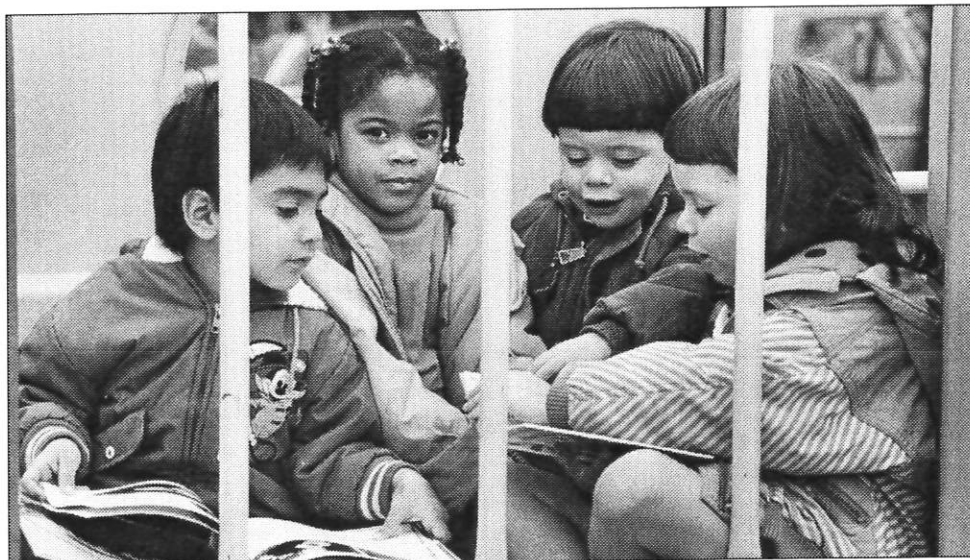


Media Advisory: A one-page invitation alerting the press as to the who, what, where, when, and why of your event. (See sample on p. 53.) Send this to reporters and editors two to three weeks prior to the event. Follow up with a phone call the week before the event.

Press Release: A one-page article announcing that an event is happening or has happened recently. (See sample on p. 54.) Send the press release with a media advisory to your local media contacts. Fax these items a week before the event and include them in a press kit distributed at the event.

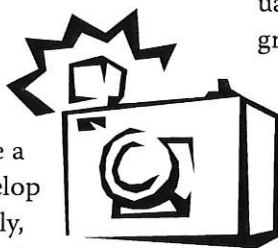
Fact Sheet: A one-page handout informing reporters about your program and RIF. (See sample on p. 55.) Distribute this before the event and/or include it in a press kit. Also, have it on hand to give to people who attend the event or others who request information about your program.

Press Kit: A folder of information about the event. This can be as simple as a pocket folder with a RIF sticker on it. Stuff the folder with a backgrounder, press release, and any additional information reporters may need. You may wish to create a sheet of national literacy statistics and facts, or incorporate the data into your press materials (see p. 59 for literacy research and statistics).



4. Take Photos of the Event

A good way to interest the media in your program is to take pictures of important events. If possible, use a digital camera or develop the photos immediately, and offer to send them to local media contacts. Include a brief description of the activity in



the photo and identify the individuals shown. See tips for taking great photos, *below*.

NOTE: Be sure to get parental permission before taking photos of children. Your school or organization should be able to provide the necessary forms.

NOTES

Photo Taking Tips

Designate a photographer.

It's hard to take great pictures if you are also checking to see if each child received a book and all the volunteers have arrived. Before the event, ask a teacher, parent, or volunteer to be the photographer. Or carve out some time to focus only on picture taking.

Know your equipment.

Make sure you or the person taking the pictures knows how to use the camera. Practice ahead of time. Check the flash and try shooting both horizontal and vertical images.

Consider the light.

Always keep a strong light source (i.e. the sun, a bright light fixture) behind you when framing a shot.

Avoid the bull's-eye effect.

The bull's-eye effect is when your subject is in the center of the picture and is sometimes very small. Think of the film as a canvas. Use your whole canvas. If you're practicing taking a picture of a squirrel in your yard, the squirrel should fill up most of the picture, not the trees and grass.

Shrink your comfort zone.

Move close to your subject. If you usually take pictures from 10 feet away, try 8 feet, then 6 feet. RIF events can often be chaotic and hard to get close shots. Try to get as close to a crowd of kids as possible.

Look around.

While shooting the event, watch for someone who has a sparkle in his eye (who is excited by the book distribution). You may find this person near the book table or in one of the perimeter areas after she has gotten a book. Sometimes a corner or hallway is the best place to take photos because there is more room to move around and photograph the children as they are enjoying their books.

Give direction.

When people read, they appear to be asleep to the camera. After taking a few candid photos, ask the child to tell a friend what he sees on the book cover. This way the children are looking at each other with their eyes open. Or ask the kids to say something funny and take a picture of them smiling.

Good photography isn't always fair.

Sometimes people are more concerned with taking everyone's picture than good pictures. Apart from being fair, consider how you can take pictures that talk about reading — pictures that show how words and stories can be shared. If you come out of each event with one or two good ones, over time you'll build a whole collection.

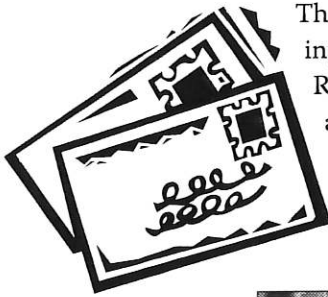
5. Set Up Interview Opportunities with Reporters

The person or people who are going to speak on behalf of your program should have first-hand knowledge of Club RIF and be prepared with specific details about your program. They should understand the main ideas you wish to convey to any given audience. Refer them to the Talking Points found on p. 52 for general facts about Club RIF. Spokespeople should also be prepared to share facts specific to your program.

Identify interview subjects in advance. Be sure to get their consent and parental consent if necessary. Club RIF teens and the children make great interviewees.

6. Ask Children to Write Thank-You Notes to Reporters

This will help foster a good working relationship with local media. Reporters want to feel good about what they do. A thank you will help achieve this goal while creating a positive, lasting impression of Club RIF.

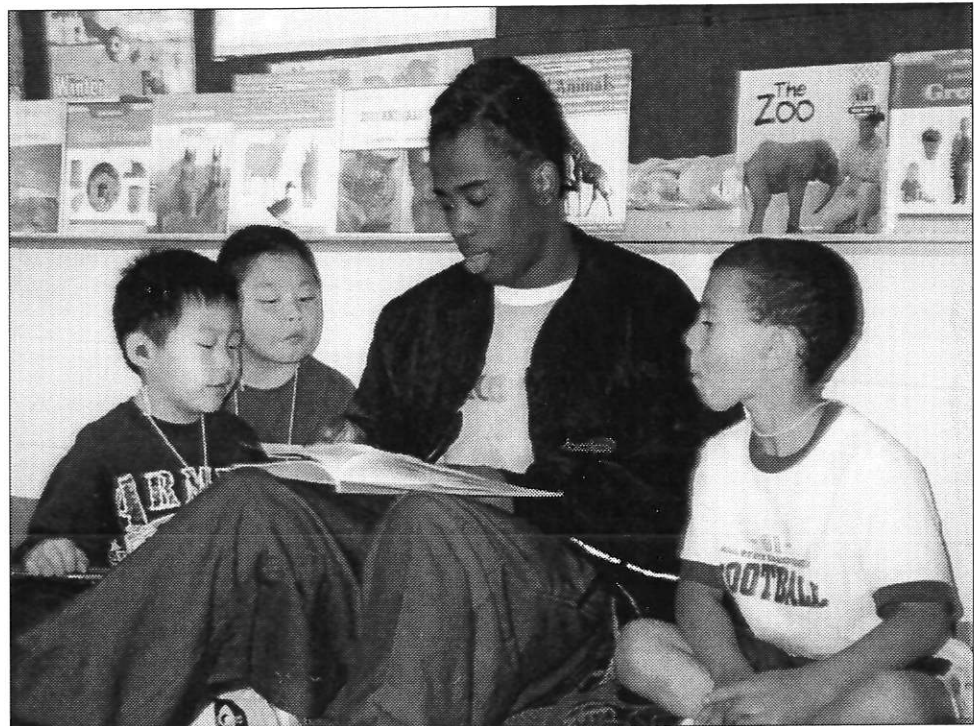


After you have informed the media, it's important to monitor if and how they are informing the public about your program. Be sure to check the local newscasts and daily newspapers the day of and the day after your event. Monitor weekly newspapers for coverage over the next month. Forward copies of clips to RIF national so we can celebrate your success too!

Test Yourself

Publicizing Your Program

1. What should you give reporters to inform them about your Club RIF program?
2. Why is it important to involve Club members in your media interviews?
3. How can you follow up with reporter visits?



RAISING FUNDS FOR YOUR PROGRAM



A secure financial foundation for your program will ensure its future success. Therefore, you may have to turn to your community to provide financial and in-kind support. Your program may not always receive full funding from RIF. So, we encourage you to use the grant funds you receive to leverage other resources and donations for your Club RIF program. The additional funds can be used to supplement your budgets for books, gain additional resources, or enhance your overall program.

Before you begin fundraising, clear your plans with your authorizing official. It is important to be certain there are no prohibitions regarding fundraising or accepting donations for your Club RIF program.

NOTES

Developing a Fundraising Plan

It is important to create a detailed fundraising plan before asking for local resources. The more time you devote to preplanning, the easier it will be to establish a clear goal, develop a succinct message, and find the right people to assist you along the way. As always, you will want to share your plan with your authorizing official and other influential people to ensure their support.

- 1. Set your budget:** RIF only provides funding for books. Consider other costs your program may incur through events, additional book purchases, or transportation.
- 2. Identify how you will use funds:** Create a specific plan outlining where funds will be used. Include grant funds provided by RIF as well as funds your program raises on its own.
- 3. Establish a timeline:** Set a timeline that allows ample time to raise funds and still have a successful program. Consider the

dates of your book distributions and other events, and determine when you must order your books. Remember, it can take up to six weeks for your program to receive books — so your contributions and donations will have to come well in advance of that date. Be prepared to tell your donors when you will need their contributions so your program will run smoothly without delay. Here is an example of a partial timeline for a program that runs from September to September.

Identify potential donors.

Schedule meetings with potential donors.

Receive funds.

Receive books.

12/15 - Hold first book event!

August

September

October

November

December

Research potential donors.

Select books.

Order books.

Process invoices.

4. Determine the best way to meet your funding needs: There are a variety of ways to procure additional funds. You may want to raise funds through a partnership with a local business or organization, or through a sale or fundraising event. If your program needs more substantial funding, consider establishing several partnerships or applying for grants. (See pp. 41-44 for more information.)

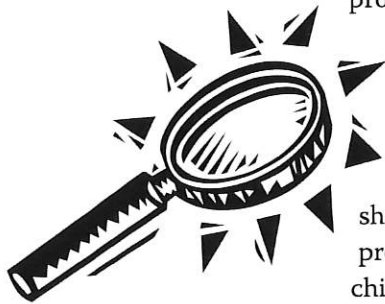
5. Network to reach new donors: Encourage all Club members and volunteers to bring Club RIF to the attention of their families, friends, and business associates. These contacts can be your most valuable fundraising tool. They may know someone who works at the organization you are hoping to approach. You may then be able to solicit them directly, ask them to set up a meeting for you, or ask them to put in a good word for your program.

Creating Local Partnerships

Many businesses and organizations have philanthropic goals to meet each year. This is their way of investing in the community and demonstrating their dedication and support. Donating funds, services, or products to Club RIF may help these businesses and organizations meet their goals, as they help your program meet yours. The following steps will help you find funders and develop strategies for establishing long-lasting partnerships.

1. Find Potential Donors

When identifying potential donors start with places you know. With which organizations does your program already have a relationship? Where do the parents and families of your Club RIF teens and children shop?



Then, look for donors that share your program's values. Your program provides free books to children and fosters strong, mentoring relationships. Find businesses and organizations committed to similar goals. For example, organizations that serve children or at-risk families, or businesses that focus on education or child-care may be ideal funders.

Helping children in transition gain access to books may not be a specific priority for each potential funder. However, contributing to children's general welfare, improving literacy, or supporting a service learning initiative may be a common goal. Develop a message that highlights your shared values.

Use the following chart to help you begin your search for funders. Look for their donation history — to what other projects have they contributed, and how much? Learn as much about each organization as possible. This will help you tailor your funding messages. Be sure to keep a careful record of all potential donors and your contact with them.

How to Find Funders

NOTES

Who to Ask	How to Find Them	Where to Get Information
Businesses and Professionals Banks, department stores, car dealers, law firms, restaurants, printers, toy stores, bookstores, family medical practices, etc.	Ask people you know, phone book, chamber of commerce, local newspaper's business writer.	Request an annual report, read the business section, check advertisements. Look up information on www.hoovers.com
Service Organizations Organizations that sponsor local initiatives. Kiwanis, Jaycees, Rotary International, Lions, sorority/fraternities, PTA, local and national service organizations.	Phone book, city government office, chamber of commerce, public library.	Call the group's president and ask whether they are fully committed or sponsoring new projects.
Public/ Governmental Organizations School districts, city councils, public libraries, universities and community colleges, local agencies serving children.	Phone book.	Ask the public affairs department or information desk for the person to speak to, and request a list of their guidelines for supporting public service.
Religious Groups Churches, synagogues, and national religious groups.	Ask people you know, phone book, chamber of commerce.	Ask for information about projects they supported in the past and if they are sponsoring new projects.
Foundations and Trusts Corporate or philanthropic organizations both national and local, and trust officers in banks.	Public library, The Foundation Center at (800) 424-9836 or www.fdncenter.org , newspapers: <i>Not for Profit Times</i> and <i>The Chronicle of Philanthropy</i> , <i>Encyclopedia of Associations</i> , <i>The Foundation Directory</i> , <i>Taft Corporate Giving</i> , <i>Standard and Poor's</i> , and <i>Who's Who</i> .	Search for foundations whose priorities match Club RIF's goals. Cross reference those foundations with the geographic index to identify which award grants in your area. Send letters of inquiry. (See Grants section for more information, pp. 41-44.)
Individuals Community members with a likely stake in RIF, others connected to RIF, people you know.	Newspaper's community pages, membership lists of local board of trade, boards of directors of local institutions and organizations, city directory at the public library.	Find out which interests and causes individuals support before contacting them.
United Giving Campaigns Organizations that leverage resources to promote change in communities. United Way, United Black Fund, Combined Federal Campaign.	Phone book, www.national.unitedway.org , or www.opm.gov/cfc .	Call and ask how your program can qualify for funding.

For other organizations known to have supported RIF, see pp. 56-58.

2. Approach Potential Funders:

When soliciting an individual, business, or organization, use a combination of letters, telephone calls, and personal visits. A per-



son-to-person visit, arranged preferably by someone who knows the prospective contributor, is perhaps the most effective way to obtain a large donation with minimal effort. It's more difficult for someone to refuse your request once you have established a personal rapport. Use the Club RIF Talking Points (p. 52) as a quick reference when speaking with potential funders.

Study your research and fundraising plan prior to the meeting. Consider sending a Club member with the adult who is making the request in order to strengthen your argument. Additionally, you may want to bring items that demonstrate the success of your program (e.g. newspaper articles, videos, or photos), share national literacy statistics (see p. 59), or extend an invitation to an upcoming event.

3. Identify Benefits for Donors:

Think about each donation from the contributor's perspective. What will they need to hear to convince them that they should give to your program? Here are some benefits you may want to present to potential donors:

- Very strong buying power. It costs just \$6.60 to provide one child with three, new books — often the cost of just one book in a store. The return on their investment is very high and very visible.

- Recognition at book events in the community. Book events are great places to acknowledge donors by mentioning their contribution or publicizing it on posters or bookplates.
- An affiliation with a well-established, national organization, whose mission is to serve children and create strong, confident adults.

4. Determine How Much to

Request: Your research should tell you how much the organization or business has given to projects like Club RIF in the past. This information along with your program's budget goals will help you determine how much is appropriate to request.

Ask for a specific amount, not "whatever you feel you can afford." Share your program's fundraising goal, and explain how their contribution will impact your program. Remember, it is easier to ask one contributor for the full amount than to ask several for partial amounts. The donor will tell you how much they can realistically give. If the business agrees to make a donation, be prepared to request the money by a specific date. This will ensure that you receive the funding when your program needs it.

Keep in mind that many businesses and organizations, overwhelmed by solicitors, make a policy of turning down all requests for money. However, some may consider donating or discounting the products and services they sell. Be prepared to request in-kind goods and services you have identified in your fundraising plan.

Follow every meeting with a sincere "thank you" regardless of the contribution. A "no" today may lead to a "yes" later if you establish a good rapport.

5. **Choose the Best Time:** Consider your timing carefully. December is a good time to ask for money, since everyone is rushing to make the last tax-deductible donations of the year. Avoid April (tax time) and August (when many people are on vacation). Be considerate of appropriate times of the day, too. For example, don't call a restaurant owner during the lunch rush. Finally, when you meet with representatives, remember to make your visit short and succinct.



6. **Request Funds:** You need not feel embarrassed asking for money. Think of it as offering people an opportunity to invest in a program that performs valuable services for children and their community. If you target organizations and groups of people with allied interests, you are more likely to gain their financial support. Also, consider sharing the names of your other supporters. Contributions from influential businesses and groups give your project integrity.

7. **Ensure Lasting Partnerships:**

Nurturing your funding relationships will help you to secure future contributions from the same sources. Be sure to acknowledge that the donor's generosity and relationship with Club RIF is both appreciated and needed. Here are a few suggestions for fostering strong partnerships:

- **Provide information.** Share regular updates with donors. Tell them how their money is being spent and how many children were served at each event.

- **Make it personal.** Donors will want to know they are making a difference for your program and the community. Show them the impact of their donation by sharing cards, pictures, and personal anecdotes from the children and teens.

- **Recognize your partners.** One way to ensure contributors' allegiance is to publicly thank them for their contribution whenever possible in news articles, on posters or bookplates, and during distributions. Make donors feel like part of the team. Include them in all information about your program, and invite them to special events. Public expressions of gratitude will show the community that they support local endeavors.

NOTES

Test Yourself

Creating Local Partnerships

1. Why is research an important part of finding local partners?
2. Why does finding a local funding partner benefit your program?
3. How does contributing to your program benefit local donors?

Organizing Fundraisers: Events and Sales

An event or sale is a great way to raise money for your program. It not only provides you with funds you need to enhance your program, it is a great way to draw attention to the great things you are doing for the community.

Before You Get Started

Before hosting a large event, you should consider the legal issues involved. If your organization has hosted events in the past, you may know the answers to the following questions. If not, we suggest you consult with an official from your organization or an attorney about questions of a legal or statutory nature.

- What is your organization's tax-exempt status? (Remember, the IRS tax-exempt status of Reading Is Fundamental, Inc., does NOT apply to local RIF projects.) Your organization's status can also apply to in-kind donations.
- Are you following all applicable copyright laws? Consider this if you are planning to perform a play, even if the performance is free-of-charge.
 - Does your organization have short-term liability insurance? You may need this when entertaining the public on someone else's property.
- Do you need parental permission for children's participation and/or use of photos afterward for publicity purposes?
- Will your activity require a health license? Consider this when serving food to the public.
- Are there any state or local ordinances governing fundraising activities, such as door-to-door canvassing, bingo, or raffles?
- What is your sales tax liability?



How to Plan an Event

- ❑ **Set a Time:** Check your community calendars to ensure that your fundraiser doesn't conflict with other events or designated holidays. However, holding an event in conjunction with a happening like Back-to-School night, gives you access to an already captive audience.
- ❑ **Choose a Place:** Will there be enough room for everything and everybody? Check electrical outlets and safety. Draw up a floor plan and seating arrangements, if necessary.
- ❑ **Assign Tasks:** Make a list of jobs, and assign each volunteer/committee a specific task (e.g. decorations, budget, entertainment, publicity, solicitation of door prizes, clean up).
- ❑ **Make a Budget:** Keep a record of all costs, including rental fees for sound equipment, printing, publicity, postage, insurance, and refreshments. Try to defer costs by getting local businesses to donate door prizes, facilities, and other in-kind goods and services.
- ❑ **Publicize the Event:** To get a good turnout, publicize your event through flyers, news releases, radio announcements, and community event calendars. Lead time varies from four to six weeks, depending on the type of fundraiser. (See pp. 29-32 for more information.)

❑ **Sell Tickets:** After you have printed the tickets and determined the price, number them, distribute them to ticket sellers, and offer rewards for top sellers. Don't forget to send complimentary tickets to the press, local dignitaries, sports stars, and your donors.

❑ **Recognize Donors:** Thank and recognize donors at your events. Remind the audience that proceeds from your fundraiser will help purchase books for young people in your community.

❑ **Remember Safety:** Prepare for a safe event by having a first-aid kit and a doctor/nurse on call; the numbers of the fire department, police, and hospital posted next to the telephone; and smoke detectors and fire equipment on hand.

❑ **Clean Up:** Appoint people to clean up and return rental equipment.

❑ **Pay Bills:** Be sure to pay all bills before calculating profits.

❑ **Say "Thank You":** Follow up your event by sending a press release to the local newspaper, thanking and naming your supporters and letting the community know how much money you collected (see p. 54 for a sample press release). Be sure to personally thank your donors and volunteers.



● **Tournaments and Games:** Get the community to participate in a tournament. Line up judges or referees and participants at least six weeks in advance. Organize food and prize donations, and make a poster citing those supporters. Consider sports like volleyball or softball, fishing derbies, or spelling bees for your event.

● **A-Thons:** Sponsors pledge a certain amount of money per unit completed. Prizes are procured from the community and are shared at the awards ceremony. Think about the following "a-thon" events: walk-a-thons, read-a-thons, bike-a-thons, or cut-a-thons (at the local hairdresser).

● **Charity Auctions:** Look to your community to donate high-interest items such as collectibles, equipment, trips, tickets, or services. Begin early to solicit enough items and give receipts to donors. Advertise the auction, and release a list of bid items and starting bid prices. Serve food at your event, and get a fast-talking auctioneer to take the bids. (There are also services on the Web to allow for an online auction, which would enable you to reach a greater audience and incur less overhead cost. Be sure to include shipping costs in your bid price.)

● **Fashion Shows:** Contact local shops, and ask them to loan clothing for a fashion show. Have Club member or volunteer models try on clothes before the event. Select an emcee, and write a script for the event. Don't forget dressing rooms, an iron, mirrors, and a rehearsal.

● **Talent Show:** Entertain the community with a show exhibiting local talent.

Fundraising Event Ideas

● **Carnivals:** Most carnivals make money from ticket and food sales and raffle tickets. Be sure to have plenty of games that require a ticket purchase. Include games such as basketball shoot, fishing pond (have volunteers clip prizes to fishing lines), balloon sculptures, ring toss, and lollipop tree. Offer face painting for a few tickets, and sell crafts and refreshments.

Suggested Sales

- **Craft Fairs:** Sell table and booth space to local artists and artisans. Craft fairs offer them an opportunity to exhibit and sell their wares.
- **Flea Markets/Yard Sales:** Collect donated items that are in excellent condition to sell. Set up tables, affix prices, and plan to sell food as well.
- **Food Sales:** From typical bake sales to special dinners, food sales can help your program raise additional funds. Ask individuals, grocery stores, or restaurants to donate food items for the sale.
- **Cookbooks:** Encourage community members to submit recipes to be published in a Club RIF cookbook. Format and print the cookbooks to sell at an event or during the year.
- **Used Book Sales:** Ask bookstores and individuals to donate new or slightly used books to sell. Collect and organize books well in advance.
- **Calendars:** Publish pictures of your Club RIF program at work in a convenient calendar. Be sure to get parental permission to print photos of children, and mark important Club RIF dates as well.
- **T-shirts:** Host an art contest to create a local Club RIF design. Print the winning design on T-shirts to sell to the community.
- **Sales on Commission:** Sell products such as candy, magazines, or books for commission. Profits are not as high as those on the food you make or the used goods that are donated, but then again, organizing the sale takes less time.



- **School Store:** Set up a school store, and share its proceeds with Club RIF. The store can sell school supplies, school memorabilia, and/or refreshments. Allow Club members to staff the store before, after, and during lunch at school.

Other Fundraisers

- **Family Game Night:** Gather games and tables, and invite families to play together. Serve dinner, and sell raffle tickets for a fabulous door prize to raise money.
- **Hiring Out:** Volunteers hire themselves out to clean up after sports events, or run coat checks at school dances and concerts. Volunteers can also provide the following services to raise money for Club RIF: car washes, basement clean-ups, lawn mowing, and snow shoveling.
- **Penny Pinching:** Have community members save their pennies (and other change) to donate to your program.
- **Library Fines for Club RIF:** Partner with the local library to have the library fines go to support your program.

Test Yourself

Organizing Fundraisers

1. When planning an event, what are some of the factors you should consider?
2. How can you use in-kind donations to keep event costs low?
3. How can a Club RIF fundraising event bring publicity to your program?

Applying for Grants

Obtaining funding through grants is a great way to procure larger amounts of money for your program. There are several types of institutions that provide grant funds to support charitable activities:

- **Community Foundations:**

Organizations that make grants to promote education, health, or the general welfare in a specific community or region. Over the last 20 years, the number of community foundations has grown rapidly.

- **Corporation- or Company-Sponsored Foundations:** These foundations often direct their grants to communities where their company operates.

- **Corporations:** Companies that contribute to groups in the communities where their plants or offices are located, as well as to groups with similar priorities.

- **Private Foundations:** Non-profit organizations established to award grants to aid social, educational, religious, or other charitable activities.

Where to Start

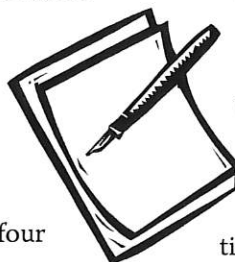
Spend some time in a library or on the Internet researching corporate givers and foundations. Use available reference books, periodicals, and databases. Remember to keep a profile card or database entry for each possible donor. Include the following information (some information will be added as you learn more about the institution):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Name of foundation, address, phone/fax number, and e-mail. | <input type="checkbox"/> Application procedure: Are there forms or guidelines? Should you send a letter of inquiry? Is it usual to meet with staff before filing a proposal? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Name and title of executive officer. (Get the correct title and spelling.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Required number of copies of proposals. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kinds of programs supported by the foundation. | <input type="checkbox"/> Application deadline. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geographic or other restrictions. | <input type="checkbox"/> Amount of time foundation takes to make decisions and notify applicants of those decisions. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Range of award (largest and smallest grant made in past year). | <input type="checkbox"/> All dates and notes regarding contact with the foundation. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Application information. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Name/title of contact. | |

NOTES

Seven Tips for Finding Grant Funds

1. Search for foundations with priorities that match your program's goals and that show an interest in children, education, and literacy issues. Verify which foundations award grants to groups in your state or area.
2. Send out letters of inquiry (sometimes called query letters) to those on your list. In your letter, briefly describe your program, and ask if the foundation (or corporation) would be likely to fund such a program. In closing, ask for a copy of the foundation's guidelines, application procedures, and deadlines.
3. Eliminate institutions that do not meet your program's criteria including: budget, goals, and timeline.
4. Start early. Allow at least four months to prepare your proposal, dispatch it, and then hear back from the foundation. Follow the guidelines and proposal procedures provided by the organization when writing your proposal.
5. Create a standard description of your program to use in all your proposals. The description should include the number of children you serve, your program goals, and demographic information.
6. Have several people proofread the proposal to ensure accuracy and logic.
7. Make a copy for your files, and send the proposal off via certified mail. (Don't forget to log the date in your files.)



Writing a Proposal

After you have contacted the foundation and checked on the application procedures and deadlines, it's time to begin writing your proposal. Be sure to give the foundation a good reason for supporting your program over a one- or two-year period. The following list describes the standard components of a grant proposal (be sure to read carefully and adhere to the guidelines specific to each foundation):

Cover Letter

A one-page letter briefly describing who you are and what you are requesting. A cover letter should also outline the need for the request.

Use your Club RIF or organization's letterhead and direct the letter to the attention of a specific person at the foundation. Have the highest ranking person in your organization sign it, if possible. Always include the name and contact information of the contact person.

Summary

This half-page document describes what Club RIF is, what your program needs, and how the funds will meet Club RIF's objectives. The summary should:

- Introduce your program.
- Briefly explain the need for their assistance.
- Summarize your objectives and steps to meeting them.
- State how much money you are requesting and how long the project will run.
- Describe other support your program receives and how you plan to sustain Club RIF in the future.

Description of Your Organization (Introduction)

This section will establish your program's credibility. In a page or two, share information about your organization and Club RIF and explain:

- Why the community benefits from Club RIF.
- Your program's mission and goals.
- What services Club RIF provides.
- The population and demographics served by Club RIF.
- The qualifications of staff involved in the project.
- Future goals.

Definition of the Situation

Sometimes, this section is called the "Needs Assessment." It is where you state the reason for your proposed project and show how it addresses a critical need.

Some needs assessments begin with a description of the geographic area, the social environment, and the site and then focus on the target group. It cites the numbers and description of children who need the program, why they need it, and who will be served if you receive the grant. In your proposal, you will strive to demonstrate how a grant could change those children's lives. You should include:

- Your target population.
- The community problem addressed. (It should be a specific issue with realistic expectations.)
- How the situation relates to the funding organization's goals.
- Relevant statements, quotes, and statistics. (See p. 59 for literacy statistics.)

Goals and Objectives

This brief statement identifies what you hope to accomplish through the proposal. Remember that objectives must be measurable, must pertain to a distinct audience, and must address a specific issue. Your objectives may include any of the Club RIF goals.

Project Plan

Perhaps the most important part of the proposal is the project plan, which includes specifics on the children, volunteers, and community support. The project plan, is usually embodied in a series of tasks and activities carefully designed to address each of the objectives listed above. It should:

- Describe Club RIF activities.
- Explain why these activities are useful.
- Describe who will be fulfilling activities.
- Set a timeline.

Evaluation

Your Club RIF program as well as your funder will want to know what your project has accomplished at the end of the grant period. In this section, describe how you plan to measure the results of your efforts. Clearly state an evaluation plan, explain how information will be collected, describe the tools to be used (like a questionnaire), and identify who will be evaluating the program. Also, outline a plan for using the evaluation finding for future program improvements.



Future Funding

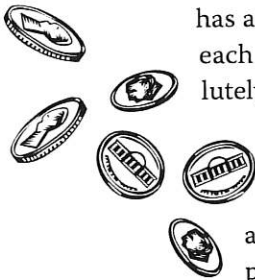
Will your program continue after this funding cycle has ended? Explain future funding plans, including other organizations that support or have been asked to support your program. Your program should have a plan to gain more community financial support as it grows, to prove that it is sustainable. In most cases, grants are one-time requests. Your plan should prove that you do not expect future funding from the foundation beyond your initial agreement.

The Budget

Provide a detailed breakdown of how you intend to spend the money. It should demonstrate that every dollar has an intended purpose, and that each proposed expenditure is absolutely necessary to the success of your program.

Also, list other contributions and in-kind donations that support your program. You may also want to remind the grantmaker that your program has none of the personnel costs that usually appear on budgets since all of your workers are volunteers. Emphasize that parents, teachers, school administrators, and local citizens donate hundreds of hours of their own time each year to run your Club RIF program. Make sure your budget:

- Matches what you propose in your narrative.
- Includes implementation and evaluation costs.
- Is detailed and contains only explained or justified amounts of money.
- Includes all items purchased for the program.
- Provides enough money for your program to run.



Appendix

Include all information that may be relevant to your proposal. Consider that your proposal may be denied if the reviewers feel it is incomplete. Expect to include:

- List of board of directors (if applicable).
- Letters of endorsement from educators, businesses, or service organizations.
- Newspaper clippings and/or general information about Club RIF or RIF.
- Local surveys of teachers, kids, and parents.
- Statistics that support your program's goals. (See p. 59 for literacy statistics).
- Copy of the IRS determination letter showing that you qualify under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code as a tax-exempt organization, if applicable.
- Résumés of key people executing the grant.

Test Yourself

Applying for Grants

1. Why should the funding organization share common goals or values with your program?
2. About how long can you expect a granting organization to support your program?
3. How can contributions from other funders strengthen your grant request?

APPENDIX

**Resources for Selecting Books** (pp. 46-48):

This list offers print and Internet resources to assist Club participants in making book choices.

Books for Ownership Ledger (p. 49):

Photocopy this page and use it to keep track of funds for books for ownership. Or, use it as a model when creating one for your program.

Lending Library Book Ledger (p. 50):

Photocopy this page and use it to keep track of funds for books for lending libraries. Or, use it as a model when creating one for your program.

Book Event Planning Checklist (p. 51):

This list walks users step by step through the event planning process. It complements the Organizing Book Event section on pp. 23-26.

Club RIF Talking Points (p. 52):

Use this list of questions and answers about Club RIF to prepare for media interviews or conversations with funders.

Sample Media Advisory (p. 53):

Customize this media invitation to fit the needs of your event. Specify the *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, and *why* of your event to reporters, editors, and others who may be interested in covering it.

Sample Press Release (p. 54):

Customize this article to announce that your event is happening or has happened recently. Send it to all your media contacts.

Sample Club RIF Fact Sheet (p. 55):

Insert specific information about your program into this one-page handout about Club RIF and RIF national.

Organizations that Support RIF (pp. 56-58):

Use this list of organizations as a springboard in your search for funders.

Literacy-at-a-Glance: Research and Statistics

(pp. 59-60): Use this national data to strengthen your solicitations for funding and your messages to the community.



Resources for Selecting Books

A Mentoring Program For Teens & Kids



General Reference

American Library Association Best of the Best for Children: Books, Software, Magazines, Videos, Audio, Toys, Travel. Edited by Denise Perry Donavin. Random House, New York. 1992.

The Bookfinder. A Guide to Children's Literature about the Needs and Problems of Youth Aged 2-15. Sharon Spredemann Dreyer. American Guidance Service, 1993.

Children and Books. Ninth edition. Zena Sutherland. Longman, New York. 1997.

Children's Books in Print. R.R. Bowker. Revised annually.

Children's Books too Good to Miss. Eighth edition. Ruth Hadlow, et. al. Lucas Communications Group, Inc. 1996.

Children's Literature in the Elementary School. Charlotte S. Huck and Susan Helper. Brown and Benchmark, Madison, Wisconsin. 1996.

Choosing Books for Children: A Commonsense Guide. Third edition. Betsy Gould Hearne and Deborah Stevenson. University of Illinois Press. 1999.

Choosing Books for Kids: How to Choose the Right Books for the Right Child at the Right Time. Ballantine Books, New York. 1986.

For Reading Out Loud! A Guide to Sharing Books with Children. Mary Margaret Kimmel and Elizabeth Segal. Delacorte Press, New York. 1988.

Great Books for Girls: More than 600 Books to Inspire Today's Girls and Tomorrow's Women. Kathleen Odean. Ballantine, 1997.

Great Books for Boys: More than 600 Books for Boys 2 to 14. Kathleen Odean. Ballantine, 1998.

Great Books about Things Kids Love: More than 750 Recommended Books for Children 3 to 14. Kathleen Odean. Ballantine, 2001.

Handbook for the Newbery Medal and Honor Books, 1990-1999. Gale W. Sherman and Bette Ammon. Alleyside, 2000.

The New Read-Aloud Handbook. Fourth edition. Jim Trelease. Penguin, New York. 1995.

Paperback Books for Young People: An Annotated Guide to Publishers and Distributors. Second edition. John T. Gillespie, Books on Demand, Ann Arbor, Michigan. 2000.

Books for Teens

ALA'S Guide to Best Reading, 1999. ALA, 1999.

Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults//Vols. 6,7,8. Washington, D.C.: Beacham Publishing, Inc., 1995.

Best Books for Young Adult Readers. Stephen J. Calvert, ed. Bowker, 1997. Books for the Teen Age, New York Public Library. Annual.

The Best in Children's Books: The University of Chicago's Guide to Children's Literature. Edited by Zena Sutherland. University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Books for You: AN Annotated Guide for Senior High Students. NCTE, 1995.

Building and ESL Collection for Young Adults: A Bibliography of Recommended Fiction and Nonfiction for Schools and Public Libraries. Laura Hibbets McCaffrey. Greenwood, 1997.

Genre Favorites for Young Adults: A Collection of Booklist Columns. Edited by Sally Estes. Booklist/ALA, 1993.

Light'n Lively Reads for ESL, Adult and Teen Readers: A Thematic Bibliography. La Vergne, Rosow. Libraries Unlimited, 1996.

Outstanding Books for the College Bound. Marjorie Lewis. YALSA/ALA, 1996.

Picture Books for Young Adults: A Curriculum-related Annotated Bibliography. Denis I. Matulka. Greenwood, 1997.

Rip-Roaring Reads for Reluctant Teen Readers. Bette Ammon and Gale Sherman. Libraries Unlimited, 1998.

Multicultural Topics

Against Borders: Promoting Books for a Multicultural World. Hazel Rochman. American Library Association, Chicago. 1993.

Children's Books from Other Countries. Carol M. Tomlinson and the U.S. Board on Books for Young People. Scarecrow Press, Lanham, Maryland. 1998.

Our Family, Our Friends, Our World: An Annotated Guide to Significant Multicultural Books for Children and Teenagers. Lyn Miller-Lachmann. R.R. Bowker, New Providence, New Jersey. 1992.

Children with Special Needs

For Younger Readers: Braille and Talking Books. National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Large Type Books in Print. R.R.Bowker, New York. 1999.

Journals and Periodicals

The following periodicals usually are found in public libraries:

Booklist. Journal published twice a month except in July and August by ALA. Reviews of recommended books for children and young adults. Regular sections include young adult and children's books, easy reading, and foreign-language books.

The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books. Journal published monthly except August. University of Illinois Press, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, www.lis.uiuc.edu/puboff/bccb. Critical reviews of books for children and young adults.

The English Journal. Published nine times a year by the NCTE. A section on paperbacks contains reviews of current titles. Articles sometimes include bibliographies.

The Reading Teacher. Published October through May by IRA. Useful articles on reading motivation and ideas.

The Horn Book Magazine. Published bimonthly. Park Square Building, 56 Roland Street, Boston, MA 02129.

Journal of Adolescents and Adult Literacy. IRA journal for middle school and high school teachers.

The New York Times Book Review. Published weekly by the New York Times Company, Times Square, New York, NY 10036, www.nytimes.com. Regularly reviews children's and young adult books and publishes special children's issues in the fall and spring.

Parent's Choice: A Review of Children's Media. Published quarterly. Parent's Choice Foundation, Box 185, Newton, MA 02168. Reviews children's books, interviews authors and illustrators of children's books.

School Library Journal. Published monthly. R.R. Bowker Co., 249 West 17th Street New York, NY 10011. Reviews by librarians throughout the United States. www.slj.com.

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates). VOYA is published bi-monthly. Scarecrow Press, 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, MD 20706 www.voya.com.

Organizations

American Library Association

50 East Huron Street
Chicago, IL 60611
www.ala.org

Association for Childhood International

17904 Georgia Ave., Suite 215
Olney, MD 20832

Learning Disabilities of America

4156 Library Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15234
www.best.com/~ldanatl/

Children's Book Council, Inc.

568 Broadway
New York, NY 10012
www.cbcbooks.org/

National Center for Learning Disabilities

81 Park Avenue South, Suite 1401
New York, NY 10016
www.ncld.org

International Reading Association

800 Barksdale Road
P.O. Box 8139
Newark, DE 19714
www.reading.org

National Association for the Education of Young Children

1509 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
www.naeyc.org

National Council of Teachers of English

1111 West Kenyon Road
Urbana, IL 61801
www.ncte.org

International Dyslexia Association

Chester Building, Suite 382
8600 LaSalle Road
Baltimore, MD 21286-2044

Reading Is Fundamental, Inc.

1825 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20009-5726
1-877-RIF-READ
www.rif.org

Internet Resources

The Book Bag

Articles, author links, and more about young adult books.
www.teenreads.com

Books Wire Index

Current information about books and publishing.
www.bookwire.com

Chapter-a-day

Two or three chapters of new books are sent to patrons, includes a teen book club.
www.chapter-a-day.com

Genreflecting

Reviews of recent young adult books and links to young adult literature Web sites.
www.genrefluent.com/index.htm

Maggi Rohde's Young Adult Page

Extensive links to young adult book lists.
www.seemore.mi.org/booklists/

Reading Rants! Out of the Ordinary Teen Booklists

Unusual booklist for teens.
www.tln.lib.mi.us/~amutch/jen/

Teen Ink Magazine

Publishes work for and by teens.
www.teenink.com

Teen Voices Magazine

Publishes work for and by teen girls.
www.teenvoices.com

YALSA - Young Adult Library Services Association

The starting point to obtain young adult book lists and to join electronic discussion lists.
www.ala.org/yalsa

Book Event Planning Checklist



☐ **Set a date:** _____

- Consider when the books will arrive.
- Consider a time when parents or volunteers are most likely to be available (e.g. evening, weekend).

☐ **Pick a place:** _____

- Is the place available the day you want to hold your book event?
- Is the room large enough to accommodate the number of anticipated participants and the activities you have planned?
- Is it easily accessible to all parties, including volunteers?

☐ **Select decorations**

- Are there regulations for decorating the space?
- What decorations will help convey your theme or make the room feel festive?

☐ **Coordinate snacks**

- Will you buy or make food?
- Will you buy or bring drinks?
- Are there any regulations against having food or drinks in your space?

☐ **Publicize the event**

- How will you let the community know about your event?
- Who will draft the press release and other information to distribute to the media?
- Will there be a person or committee responsible for contacting media representatives?

☐ **Invite guests**

- How will you let family, friends, government officials, funders, or other guests know about the event?
- When will you invite them?
- Who will be responsible for inviting and greeting guests?

☐ **Plan activities for the children or teens**

- What materials will you need?
- Will the children/teens need someone to lead or help them with the activity?
- Do you need to invite a guest reader or an outside visitor to participate in an activity?

☐ **Determine the length of the book event**

- How long can you be in the space?
- Consider the amount of set-up and clean-up time needed.

☐ **Thank volunteers and guests**

- How will you show your appreciation to those who donated their time and/or support?
- If you are planning on sending photos with thank-you notes, who will take them?
- Who will draft the notes? If the teens and kids will be writing notes, appoint a person to coordinate the effort.

Club RIF Talking Points



1. What does Club RIF do?

- Helps young people discover the joy of reading.
- Gets kids reading more often.
- Gives teens an opportunity to interact with younger children.
- Provides access to books and the motivation to read them.
- Offers teens and children a chance to choose their own free books.

2. What does Club RIF provide teens?

- Books to choose, own, take home, read, and enjoy.
- Opportunities to work with younger children.
- Resources for developing literacy activities.

3. What does Club RIF provide children?

- Teen mentors who care about their literacy development.
- Books to choose, own, and take home to read with their families.
- Fun activities and book events that make reading enjoyable.

4. Why is the Club RIF program so successful?

Club RIF provides key elements that dozens of major studies identify as critical to children's reading development, including books in the home, mentoring, leisure reading (reading for fun), motivation to read, and encouraging children to read early and often.

5. What role does Best Buy Children's Foundation play in Club RIF?

- Best Buy Children's Foundation is the sponsor of Club RIF's three-year pilot phase.
- Funds provided by the foundation will be used for the purchase of books for distribution and lending libraries for teens and children. Funds will also be used to develop program materials.

6. Why is Club RIF necessary in creating a nation of readers?

- From 1983 to 1999, over 10 million Americans reached the 12th grade without having learned to read at a basic level. In the same period, over 6 million Americans dropped out of high school (U.S. Department of Education, 1999).*
- Fourth-graders who reported having 25 books or more at home had higher scores on the NAEP reading test than children who reported they didn't have that many books (NCES, 2001).*
- When adults interact with young children (talking, singing and playing rhyming games) they stimulate language and vocabulary development and build important foundations for learning to read (Hart & Risley, 1995).*
- In 1999, only 53 percent of children aged 3 to 5 were read to daily by a family member. Children in families with incomes below the poverty line are less likely to be read aloud to every day than are children in families with incomes at or above the poverty line (NCES).*

* See p. 60 for complete references.

Sample Media Advisory



Contact: [Your name]
[Your phone number]

MEDIA ADVISORY

[CITY/SCHOOL] CLUB RIF PROGRAM [LAUNCHES/CELEBRATES] READING INITIATIVE

WHO: More than [number] [grade]-graders/teens and community volunteers involved in the [city/school] Reading Is Fundamental Club RIF program. [Mention notable community members if applicable.]

WHAT: On [date], children in the [city/school] will show their enthusiasm for reading by [describe event/activity]. Highlights include [reading-motivation activity] and a book distribution, where children choose new books to keep at no cost to them or their families.

[City/School] Club RIF brings [number] books to more than [number] children each year. The program has [number] teen members who organize successful reading motivational activities and book distributions. Since starting the Club RIF program in [year], children in [city/school] have read more than [number] books. Local Club RIF sponsors include: [name of local business/civic sponsors].

WHERE: [Location and Directions]

WHEN: [Time]

WHY: Studies show that children who read often, read well. Reading Is Fundamental motivates America's children to read through initiatives like Club RIF, which feature fun, reading-motivation activities and books that kids like.

Reading Is Fundamental® is the nation's oldest and largest children's and family literacy organization. RIF develops and delivers literacy programs that help prepare young children for reading and motivate school-age children to read regularly. Through a national grassroots network of over 400,000 volunteers, RIF programs provide new, free books and other essential literacy resources to more than 5 million children throughout the United States and its territories. In 2001, RIF celebrated its 35th anniversary and the milestone of placing more than 200 million books in the hands and homes of America's children. Visit www.rif.org for more information.



Sample Press Release

Contact: [Your name]
[Your phone number]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[CITY/SCHOOL] CLUB RIF PROGRAM [LAUNCHES/CELEBRATES] READING INITIATIVE

[CITY, STATE (date)] — More than [number] students/teens at [school/organization] today celebrated their enthusiasm for books at the Reading Is Fundamental Club RIF [name of event] at [location of event].

[Name of event/activity] is an interactive [program/activity/event] that [describe]. The theme of the [school/ city] Club RIF event, [e.g. "A Day at the Beach"], cleverly emerged in the way the children dressed — [describe] — and in the books on [theme topic]. Like all RIF activities, [name of activity] culminated in a festive book distribution where children sifted through hundreds of books, shared them with friends, and ultimately chose one book to keep at no cost to them or their families.

In addition to helping children understand that reading is fun and fundamental to success in life, [name of activity] highlights the literacy achievement of children, teens, and volunteers in the [city/school] Club RIF program. It also encourages children to become lifelong readers by building self-esteem and involving the most important people in their lives — parents, teachers, and other children — in the learning process.

[City/School] Club RIF brings [number] books to more than [number] children each year through the generous support of Best Buy Children's Foundation. The program has [number] teen volunteers who organize successful reading-motivation activities and book distributions. Since starting the Club RIF program in [year], children in [city/school] have read more than [number] books. Local Club RIF sponsors include: [name of local business/civic sponsor(s)].

Reading Is Fundamental[®] is the nation's oldest and largest children's and family literacy organization. RIF develops and delivers literacy programs that help prepare young children for reading and motivate school-age children to read regularly. Through a national grassroots network of over 400,000 volunteers, RIF programs provide new, free books and other essential literacy resources to more than 5 million children throughout the United States and its territories. In 2001, RIF celebrated its 35th anniversary and the milestone of placing more than 200 million books in the hands and homes of America's children. Visit www.rif.org for more information.

Sample Club RIF Fact Sheet



ABOUT [SCHOOL/CITY] CLUB RIF

Club RIF is a reading-motivation and mentoring program that brings teens, children, and their local communities together around books and fun, literacy-related activities. Teens serve as mentors and share books, reading-motivation activities, and their enthusiasm with younger children in the community. Teens are also encouraged to take on leadership roles and responsibilities of running a Club RIF program, such as ordering books, organizing events, and coordinating volunteer efforts. Participating teens and children receive free books to keep and use on their journey to becoming lifelong readers.

[School/City] Club RIF provides [number] books to more than [number] children each year. This includes books distributed to children for ownership and books placed in lending libraries at each program site. The [city/school] Club RIF program has [number] teen volunteers who organize successful reading-motivation activities and book distributions. Since starting the Club RIF program in [year], children in [city/school] have read more than [number] books.

The concept of Club RIF is built upon the best practices of innovative teen-based RIF programs and the success of the Club RIF program in Mesa, Arizona. Pat Heck (1999-2000 RIF Volunteer of the Year) founded the Red Mountain Club RIF in 1988 to encourage her students to develop a love for reading. The program's success has spread throughout the school, with its annual membership now reaching 1,800.

[City/School] Club RIF is one of two sites participating in a three-year program pilot, sponsored by Best Buy Children's Foundation. During this period, RIF will assess the program's potential for replication as a national model.

ABOUT RIF

Founded in 1966, **Reading Is Fundamental, Inc.**[®] develops and delivers children's and family literacy programs that help prepare young children for reading and motivate older children to read regularly, focusing on the nation's neediest children, from infancy through age 11. RIF operates through a national, grassroots network of 400,000 volunteers at more than 20,000 sites, which include schools, libraries, community centers, child-care centers, hospitals, migrant worker camps, Head Start and Even Start programs, homeless shelters, and detention centers. In 2001, RIF programs provided 15 million new, free books and other essential literacy resources to nearly 5 million children. RIF has recently celebrated its 35th anniversary and the milestone of placing more than 200 million books in the hands and homes of children who need them most.

Through a contract with the U.S. Department of Education, RIF provides federal matching funds to thousands of school and community-based organizations that sponsor RIF programs. RIF also receives private support from hundreds of corporations and foundations, thousands of local organizations and businesses, and countless individuals.

ABOUT BEST BUY CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION

Best Buy Children's Foundation supports many life skills programs that help kids reach their full potential and that get young people involved in their communities. BBCF awards grants to nonprofit organizations that take an innovative approach to preparing young people for the future through mentoring, leadership development, and education.

For more information about Club RIF, please contact [name and phone number]. For general RIF information, call the Club RIF program manager at RIF's national office at 1-877-RIF-READ or visit www.rif.org.

Literacy-at-a-Glance: Research and Statistics



Use the following current statistics and statements to strengthen your solicitations and proposals ("cut and paste" them into your letters or literature). They are drawn from national studies, publications, and prominent figures in the education field. Two or three are all you need to make a strong case in a solicitation letter or foundation proposal. If available, try to use a few local statistics to strengthen your point.

A great number of children and adults struggle with reading.

- 37 percent of American fourth-graders read below the "Basic" level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading test (NCES, 2001).
- The achievement gap is widening. Since 1992, NAEP average reading scores for high-performing students have improved while those for low-performing students have dropped (NCES, 2001).
- A child from a low-income family enters kindergarten with a listening vocabulary of 3,000 words, while a child of a middle-income family enters with a listening vocabulary of 20,000 words (Hart & Risley, 1995).
- 40 million adults in the U.S. cannot read well enough to read a simple story to a child (NCES, 1992).
- From 1983 to 1999, over 10 million Americans reached the 12th grade without having learned to read at a basic level. In the same period, over 6 million Americans dropped out of high school (U.S. Department of Education, 1999).

Children need access to books and increased reading motivation.

- Only 43 percent of fourth-graders report that they read for fun on a daily basis. Among eighth-graders, only 19 percent report daily reading for fun (NCES, 2001; NCES, 1999).
- Fourth-graders who reported daily reading for fun scored higher on the NAEP reading test than peers who reported less reading for fun (NCES, 2001).
- Children who score at the 90th percentile on a reading test spent five times as many minutes per day reading books as children at the 50th percentile (Anderson, Wilson & Fielding, 1988).

- Two-thirds of American classrooms have fewer than 50 children's books, and almost 60 percent of childcare centers buy fewer than one book per child a year (Neuman et. al, 2001).
- Fourth-graders who reported having 25 books or more at home had higher scores on the NAEP reading test than children who reported they didn't have that many books (NCES, 2001).

Youth need ongoing relationships with adults to engage them in the community.

- 64 percent of students developed a more positive attitude toward school.
- Middle and high school students who engage in quality service-learning programs show increases in measures of personal, social responsibility, communication, and sense of educational competence. (Weiler, LaGoy, Crane and Rovner, 1998).
- When adults interact with young children (talking, singing, and playing rhyming games) they stimulate language and vocabulary development and build important foundations for learning to read (Hart & Risley, 1995).
- Reading to preschoolers is the most important thing families can do to prepare them for reading (Adams, 1990).
- Less than half of families read to their kindergarten-age children on a daily basis (West et al., 2000).
- In 1999, only 53 percent of children aged 3 to 5 were read to daily by a family member. Children in families with incomes below the poverty line are less likely to be read aloud to every day than are children in families with incomes at or above the poverty line (NCES).

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Anderson, R., Wilson, P., and Fielding, L. (1983). "Growth in Reading and How Children Spend Their Time Outside School." *Reading Research Quarterly*, 23, pp. 285-303.

Hart, B., & Risley, T. R. (1995). *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*. Baltimore, MD.

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National Center for Education Statistics (1999). *NAEP 1998 Reading Report Card for the States*. Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

National Center for Education Statistics (1992). *National Adult Literacy Survey*. Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

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Reading Is Fundamental, Inc.

Club RIF • Advisor's Guide



A Mentoring Program For Teens & Kids



Reading Is Fundamental, Inc.

Club RIF

Advisor's Guide



A Mentoring Program For Teens & Kids



About RIF

Founded in 1966, **Reading Is Fundamental, Inc.** develops and delivers children's and family literacy programs that help prepare young children for reading and motivate older children to read regularly, focusing on the nation's neediest children, from infancy through age 11. RIF operates through a national, grass-roots network of 400,000 volunteers at more than 20,000 sites, which include schools, libraries, community centers, child-care centers, hospitals, migrant worker camps, Head Start and Even Start programs, homeless shelters, and detention centers. In 2001, RIF programs provided 15 million new, free books and other essential literacy resources to nearly 5 million children. RIF has recently celebrated its 35th anniversary and the milestone of placing more than 200 million books in the hands and homes of children who need them most.



Through a contract with the U.S. Department of Education, RIF provides federal matching funds to thousands of school and community-based organizations that sponsor RIF programs. RIF also receives private support from hundreds of corporations and foundations, thousands of local organizations and businesses, and countless individuals.

For more information, visit www.rif.org, or contact RIF at:

Reading Is Fundamental, Inc.
1825 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20009-5726
Toll free: 1-877-RIF-READ

About Best Buy Children's Foundation



Best Buy Children's Foundation has partnered with Reading Is Fundamental to pilot the Club RIF program. BBCF supports many life skills programs that help kids reach their full potential and that get young people involved in their communities. BBCF awards grants to nonprofit organizations that take an innovative approach to preparing young people for the future through mentoring, leadership development, and education.

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Dear Club RIF Advisor:

Reading Is Fundamental is excited to welcome you to Club RIF, a program that pairs teens (Club RIF members) with younger children in the community. Club RIF offers teens the opportunity to take on many of the responsibilities of running a RIF® program, such as book ordering and organizing activities, while serving as a mentor to the younger children. These activities empower the teens you work with and benefit the local community. The younger children benefit as well, by receiving support and encouragement from their teenage mentors. All participants receive free books through RIF and gain an increased interest and excitement for reading.

Your role as a Club RIF advisor is much like that of a coach. You will coordinate the efforts of your Club members, encourage them to work as a team, and provide them with support and guidance to achieve individual and Club RIF goals. Your leadership will play a large role in your program's success.

This guide provides you with all of the information and tools you will need to run a successful Club RIF program including: planning tools, sample orientations, and reproducible handouts.

We appreciate the effort it takes to plan and implement a Club RIF program, and we recommend you make full use of your Club RIF members. By giving them primary ownership and responsibility of the program, they will acquire skills and a sense of accomplishment beyond any other club experience. We also encourage you to personalize the program to the needs of your community. Our national office staff is available to support and encourage the success of your program. To contact the Club RIF manager, call 1-877-RIF-READ, or send e-mail to specialliteracy@rif.org.

Thank you for lending your initiative, leadership, and energy to this rewarding program.

Sincerely,

Reading Is Fundamental, Inc.

"I like being involved
in reading buddies
because we are
making a change
in someone's life."

Gryda, Club RIF member

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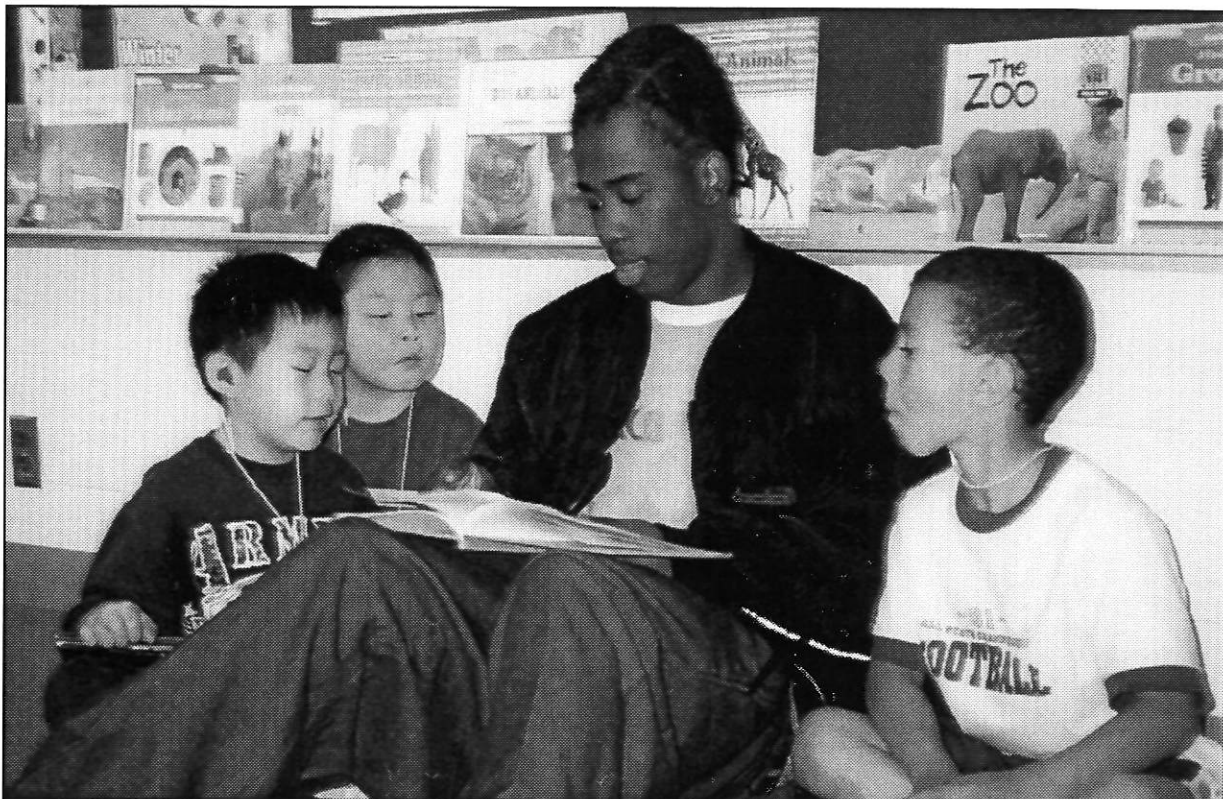
"I have learned that helping children is so much fun, and that the community is full of wonderful people."

Sarah, Club RIF member

A Mentoring Program For Teens & Kids



PART I: INTRODUCTION



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

A Mentoring Program For Teens & Kids



What Is Club RIF?

The concept of Club RIF is built upon the best practices of innovative teen-based RIF programs and the success of the Club RIF program at Red Mountain High School in Mesa, Arizona. Pat Heck (1999-2000 RIF Volunteer of the Year) founded the Red Mountain Club RIF in 1988 to encourage her reluctant reading students to develop a love for reading. The program's success has spread throughout the school, with its annual membership now reaching 1,800 students.

Club RIF is a reading-motivation and mentoring program that brings teens, children, and their local communities together around books and fun, literacy activities. Teens who become Club members serve as mentors for the younger children. They share books, reading-motivation activities, and their enthusiasm with elementary school students or other children in the community. Club members are encouraged to take on responsibilities associated with running a RIF program, such as ordering books, organizing activities, and coordinating volunteer efforts. Participating Club members and children also receive free books to keep and take with them on their journey to becoming lifelong readers.

"I've learned that I can accomplish more than I ever thought I could handle. It has made me realize what leadership is and how to use that in my community."

Lavetta,
Club RIF member

The Club RIF Pilot

The Club RIF pilot is a three-year trial period, during which RIF will assess the program's potential for replication as a national model. The first year of the pilot phase includes the development of program materials and the identification of participating sites. Selected sites will run Club RIF programs during years two and three, with the financial support of Best Buy Children's Foundation. Sites will also receive fundraising training and will be encouraged to become more self-sustaining through a combination of grants and local support.

Your participation and feedback during this pilot is essential. Your efforts will help establish the foundation of this new initiative and shape a national program model.



Program Goals

All Club RIF programs will:

- Increase the amount of time children spend reading and engaging in fun, literacy-related activities.
- Promote mentoring relationships between teens and children.
- Increase the confidence and self-esteem of teens as readers and mentors.
- Encourage teens to develop managerial and communication skills, while using technology as a resource.
- Make reading a highly visible activity in schools and communities.
- Promote partnering opportunities among teachers at various levels.

Program Components

Book Distributions

Each year, Club RIF members and participating children select three free books to keep. Club members are responsible for planning and attending their own distributions as well as those for the children. Distribution events include fun, motivational activities to encourage a love of reading.

Lending Libraries

A collection of books is located at each site, increasing the resources available to children and teens for paired reading activities. Children can check out the the lending library books to take home and share with their families or to enjoy during the day. Club members can use these libraries to familiarize themselves with children's literature and to help them plan activities. Teens are primarily responsible for ordering books and maintaining lending libraries.

Paired Readings

Club members read and conduct literacy-related activities with younger children to generate excitement about reading.

Program Management

Club RIF members are encouraged to take on many of the responsibilities of running a RIF program. Under the guidance of their Club RIF advisor, members gain managerial skills as they schedule and organize events, maintain budgets, and encourage volunteerism in the community.

Reflection

Club members are encouraged to use a combination of reading, writing, creating, and sharing to reflect upon their Club RIF experience throughout the program year. Younger children are also encouraged to share what they are learning and enjoying.

Club RIF Support Materials



Advisor's Guide

This resource provides a program overview and gives Club RIF advisors the project management tools needed to run a successful program.

Resource Guide

Advisors, Club members, and volunteers will find this user-friendly guide an invaluable resource for running a Club RIF program. Each task is broken down into easy-to-follow steps, making book ordering, activity planning, and invoice payment simple for teens and adults.

Member's Guide

This guide is filled with reading-motivation activities, reproducibles, and literacy resources to assist Club members in their work with children.

CD-ROM

This interactive tool provides Club members and project coordinators with guidance and support. It offers materials to help them run the program such as worksheets for ordering books. It also includes activity ideas to use in preparation for paired reading sessions.

Bookplates

Programs receive Club RIF bookplates to affix to lending library books and hand out at book distributions.

Membership Cards

All Club members receive a card identifying their affiliation with Club RIF.

Who's Who? Roles and Responsibilities

It takes more than an advisor's strong leadership to make a program successful. It takes a team of dedicated individuals including:

- An **authorizing official** to accept program guidelines and sign appropriate documents.
- An adult, teen, or team of Club members to serve as the **project coordinator(s)** at each site to plan, implement, or supervise day-to-day activities.
- **Club members** to help develop and participate in paired reading activities with younger children.
- A **supervisor for younger children** to oversee paired readings and book distributions and communicate with parents.
- **Children** from a local elementary school, prekindergarten program, or community center to participate in paired reading activities with Club members.

Club RIF Advisor Job Description

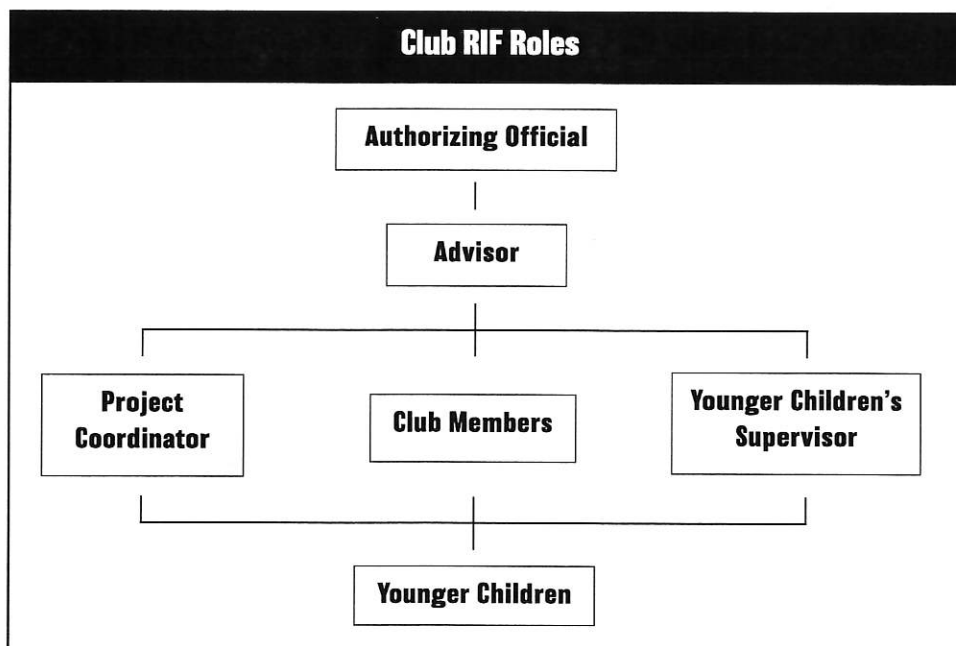
Club RIF can run in a variety of settings. Therefore, the Club RIF advisor may be a principal, teacher, center director, or staff member.

The advisor's main role is to build a strong team by defining participants' roles and working with them to achieve Club objectives. He or she supervises the work of Club members, reviews the day-to-day running of the program, and ensures that delegated tasks are completed. For example, an advisor should oversee the book events — not organize them single-handedly.

A Club RIF advisor also encourages members to reflect upon their experiences and serves as a liaison between the Club members and the younger children's supervisor, as well as between the Club and RIF national. Fulfilling these duties not only contributes to the success of the program but also ensures the program's smooth transition from year to year.

"We get training on how to read to kids in small and large groups. We also learn oral reading skills. This is accomplished by actually practicing reading children's books to our class and we also do the activities."

Brian, Club RIF member



Club RIF Guidelines

- A minimum of three people (including teens and community members) must serve on each book selection committee. These committees are responsible for choosing appropriate books to place in lending libraries and to distribute to children and teens for ownership.
- All book distributions must be conducted within the contract year, which begins with the effective date and ends on the termination date.
- All distributions must be held at least one month apart.
- Club members must be able to choose one free book at each of three distributions. Motivational activities should occur in conjunction with each book distribution.
- Younger children must be able to choose one free book at each of three distributions. Motivational activities should occur in conjunction with each book distribution.
- Participants who are absent during a distribution should have the opportunity to select a book at another time. An alternate may not choose a book for the absent person.
- Only Club RIF participants (teens and children) may receive RIF books.
- Books intended for ownership may not be distributed to adults or placed in classroom collections.
- Books purchased for lending libraries must be accessible to all participants at each site.
- Lending library books may not be distributed for ownership.
- Club members must be involved in the management of the program.
- All funds allocated from RIF must be spent on books for the Club RIF program, and these funds from RIF should be spent entirely. Any remaining funds must be returned to RIF and may result in a decrease in the program's future funding.
- All paperwork must be submitted to RIF according to the following timeline:
 1. Distribution reports within 30 days of each book distribution.
 2. Renewal documents (proposal, subcontract agreement, performance report, and guidelines checklist) no later than the termination date. We recommend sending documents one month prior to the termination date.
- Books may not be ordered until the program is approved and has received authorization from RIF.

NOTES

Using This Guide

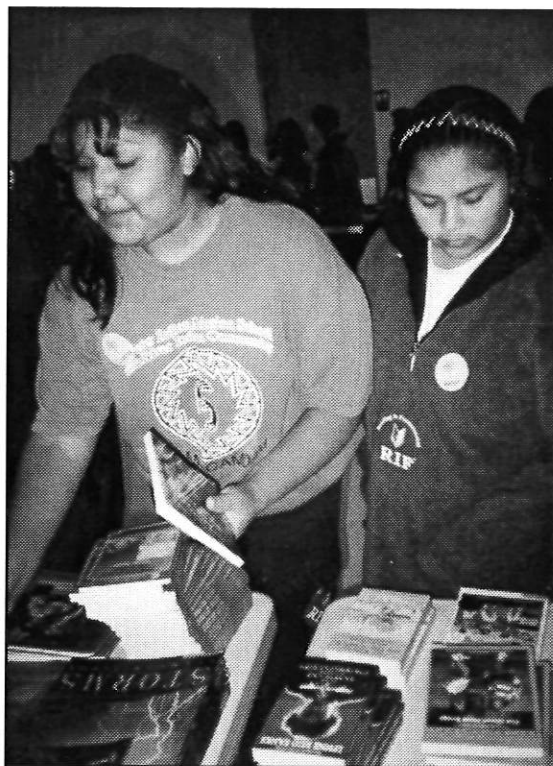
Your opinion really matters to us — especially during the pilot phase of this program. As you use this guide, feel free to note any comments, wishes, or inconsistencies in the “Notes” space provided on each page. Please indicate if you find a section helpful or unnecessary, or if a suggestion sets an unrealistic expectation.

We would like to provide a feasible Club RIF model. Your feedback will help shape the further development of this program, and we will look to your comments when we revise and adapt future Club RIF publications.

A Mentoring Program For Teens & Kids



PART II: MANAGING YOUR PROGRAM



PLANNING AHEAD



Defining Goals

Planning is crucial to the success of your Club RIF program. Clearly defining the scope of your program will not only help you lay a foundation from which to build, it will also enable you to outline its purpose and benefits as you work to garner community support. As you begin planning your program, consider how Club RIF will:

Meet Your Organization's Goals

Whether it is fulfilling a service-learning requirement or enhancing a civics class, Club RIF can help your organization meet one or more of its goals. Indicating which goal the program will achieve will help you gain organization-wide support and be perceived as part of the organization's overall definition of success.

Help Your Community

Club RIF allows teens to contribute to the overall literacy goals of the community while developing skills in leadership and collaboration. If service learning is not a requirement for teen students in your area, volunteerism and Club participation can still enrich school experiences and enhance future opportunities.

Enhance Your Current Initiatives

Think about how the Club RIF components would enhance your work with teens and children. Identify the specific reasons why these components will complement your organization and serve the populations with which you work.

Benefit Teens

Determine what teens will get out of the program before you invite them to join. This will allow you to create a more accurate picture of what being a Club RIF member means and the benefits that come with it. For

instance, if Club RIF is a part of a business class, your organization would strive to involve teens in many of the program management aspects; if Club RIF were an after-school club, you may focus more on the teens' mentoring role with the children.

Ideally, you will be able to adapt your Club RIF program to meet the goals of your organization while also meeting the needs of the teens.

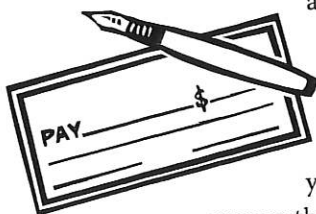
Benefit Children

Club RIF offers children an opportunity to spend more time with books through literacy-related activities and paired readings with their teen mentors. Their sites will purchase high-quality lending libraries from which they can choose books to read with their mentors. They can also check these books out, and take them home to share with their families. Children will attend three book events, allowing them to participate in fun, literacy activities and select free books of their choice to keep.



NOTES

Understanding Funding



Through the generous support of Best Buy Children's Foundation, RIF is able to provide funding to your Club RIF site for the duration of the pilot period. The funds will enable your program to purchase books for ownership and lending libraries. These funds also allow RIF to provide you with additional resources to assist you in running your program. While RIF will make every effort to secure funds for future years, we recommend that you begin thinking of fundraising strategies to ensure the sustainability and success of your program.

Managing Grant Funds

Often, programs will receive funds from the national RIF office through corporate or foundation grants or federal funds. Aside from the financial support offered by Best Buy Children's Foundation, your program may also receive local donations or grants specifically for your Club RIF program. The regulations for spending those funds may vary. Therefore, you should be aware of the restrictions within your own organization in order to avoid confusion and misuse of funds. We suggest the following tactics regarding funding:

- Appoint one person to handle and sign off on all funding matters.
- Open a separate account to hold only Club RIF funds.
- Find out what restrictions your organization has about procurement of funds and resources.
- Create a ledger that clearly identifies how funds are spent. Use the following categories: books for ownership; books for lending libraries; and additional activities. (See sample ledgers in the *Resource Guide*.)

Additional Fundraising

While RIF provides financial support during this pilot phase, we encourage programs to build relationships within their community in order to ensure sustainability and success for the future.

Rules and Regulations

Regulations for spending and raising funds vary from organization to organization. Some, for example, have restrictions on fundraising or require that a percentage of funds raised be contributed to overhead expenses. It is important to inquire about your organization's policies to avoid confusion and misuse of funds. RIF will require information about the funds you raise and spend as it relates to Club RIF, but RIF does not have any regulations that prohibit fundraising.

Involving Club Members

Fundraising and community outreach efforts require a great amount of planning and resources. They also offer teens a wide-range of educational experiences. Why not give your Club members an opportunity to develop strategic planning skills and learn how a budget works? Let them organize a candy or bake sale or help research and write a grant proposal. Teens can also reach out to the community and establish partnerships with local businesses. Such experiences will teach Club members valuable lessons as they help your program gain community and financial support.

Recruiting Club RIF Participants

All Club RIF programs may operate differently because of their size, the number of sites they serve, and the level of Club member involvement. Certain key roles and responsibilities, however, remain the same. The following Club RIF position descriptions will help you fill each post with the right person.

POSITION TO RECRUIT	PERSON(S)	RESPONSIBILITIES
Authorizing Official (One per program)	Superintendent, Principal, Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agrees to program guidelines and signs appropriate documents. ● Determines who the program will serve and gains their support. ● Helps inform community of Club RIF initiatives. ● Conducts periodic review of program's progress.
Advisor (One per program)	Principal, Teacher, Director, Staff member	See the Advisor Job Description on p. 5.
Project Coordinator (One coordinator or committee per site)	Teacher, Staff member, Club member, or Committee of Club members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plans day-to-day activities. ● Organizes book selection committee. ● Orders books and follows payment procedures. ● Organizes book events and motivational activities for younger and older children. ● Tracks programmatic information for RIF national. ● Promotes program to community. ● Employs reflection activities for growth and improvement. ● Uses technology components.
Club Members (Varies per site)	Middle- or high-school students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in paired reading activities. ● Develop activities using technology. ● Attend book distributions. ● Reflect on program participation.
Younger Children's Supervisor (One per site)	Teacher, Child-care provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Schedules time for paired reading. ● Oversees paired reading and distributions. ● Communicates with younger children's parents. ● Develops a way for younger children to reflect upon Club RIF experience and communicate appreciation to Club members.
Younger Children (Varies per site)	Elementary or preschool students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in paired reading. ● Attend distributions. ● Thank Club members.

NOTES

Getting Teens Involved

If you are integrating Club RIF into an existing club, class, or program, you may not need to recruit participants. But if you are starting a Club RIF program from scratch, you will need to attract teen Club members.

First Things First

Identify eligibility requirements for Club members such as age, interest level, or other criteria you deem appropriate. This will help you target your efforts and market your program in the right places. For example, if you only want freshmen to participate, be sure to pass out Club RIF flyers at events where these students will be present. Remember to check if your school has requirements that affect who is eligible to participate at your site.



Craft a Meaningful Message

Whether you choose to create a poster, flyer, or newspaper advertisement to inform teens about Club RIF, it's important to develop a message that speaks to them. Find an angle that will appeal to their interests and needs. For example, teens may see Club RIF as an opportunity to work with children, learn new skills, or spend time with friends.

Offer Incentives

While there are intrinsic rewards for participating in Club RIF, like the joy of mentoring children and working with the community, offering tangible rewards for accomplishments may increase student interest. Encourage your organization to support Club membership by providing teens with incentives such as:

- Service Learning Credit
- Varsity Letters
- Club Trips
- Academic Credit or Grades
- College Scholarship Opportunities
- Résumé Building

It is important to help teens recognize how being a Club member may benefit them in the future. Aside from the fact that many schools and organizations look favorably on volunteering, Club RIF members will have had valuable experience in mentoring/teaching and preparing for sessions with younger children. They will also have proven their responsibility and accountability. Some members will also have had experience with managing aspects of the project like selecting and ordering books and managing a budget.

Get the Word Out

Once you determine which teens you want to reach and what you want to say to them, it's time to get your message out. Here are a few ways to let teens know about Club RIF:

- Create posters about the program. Post them in high-traffic areas around the school, library, or community center.
- Ask the school or community newspaper, or other local paper, to run an article or an advertisement about Club RIF.
- Distribute flyers at sporting events and other school-sponsored activities.
- Send invitations to students to join Club RIF.
- Ask for time to make a brief announcement over the school's public address system.

Securing the Interest and Support of Younger Children's Sites

The pairing of teens with children is the foundation of Club RIF. Therefore, it's important to create a supportive relationship with the local site and the younger children's supervisors. Your sites must be confirmed when you submit your Club RIF proposal, so preliminary discussions should take place several months before you apply.

Identify Potential Partners

First, consider those sites with which your organization has a relationship. This will make it easier to communicate and find the appropriate person to approve your Club's involvement with their children.



If your organization does not already have a relationship with a site that serves young children, you should determine what qualities are important for you to work with a site. Consider the ages of the children, the proximity to the site, the number of children, and the needs of the children. Non-traditional sites such as daycare facilities, homeless shelters, or Indian reservations can serve as Club RIF sites and create rewarding experiences.

Pitch Club RIF to Children's Sites

Send each site's authorizing official (e.g. director, principal, or president) a letter of introduction with a copy of the Club RIF Overview found on pp. 41-42. Follow up with a request for an informal meeting with the authorizing official and the children's supervisors to discuss their interest in joining the program. Your main goal in that meeting is to gain the interest of those who work at the site. You do not need to focus on details such as planning meetings or outlining specific roles at this time.

Once the site has been confirmed and your program has been approved, you will hold an orientation for the younger children's supervisors to address these issues. You should, however, be prepared to present the following:

- Club RIF benefits specifically for the children involved.
 - The free materials and resources that would be provided to the site.
 - How often you would like the teens to meet with the children.
 - How many children/classes you would like to serve.
 - The role of the Club RIF members in the program.
- Craft your message in a way that will emphasize the minimal amount of work and time that will be required of the younger children's supervisors. It is very important that you convey that this program is run and supported by the Club members. No one wants to add more work to their already busy schedules, but if the supervisors understand that the program requires very little work on their part and enhances their children's experiences and their site's resources, they may be very willing to partner with your Club members.

Create a Lasting Partnership

Your efforts will be rewarded if you can incorporate your sites into your program as much as possible. Keep the authorizing official and the younger children's supervisors informed about the program, and set clear, realistic expectations. The key is to create a relationship with this site and the children within it, to encourage sharing and mentoring of the Club members as well as the children, and to have a program that the community holds in high esteem.

NOTES

Recruiting Volunteers

It takes lots of time and energy to make Club RIF work. And sometimes, Club members need a little help. Why not reach out to your community and recruit volunteers?

How Can Volunteers Help?

Volunteers can offer support at book distributions, on book selection committees, at fundraisers, and at other Club RIF functions. They can even provide refreshments or make decorations for an event. It's completely up to you and your Club members to determine how volunteers can best serve your program.

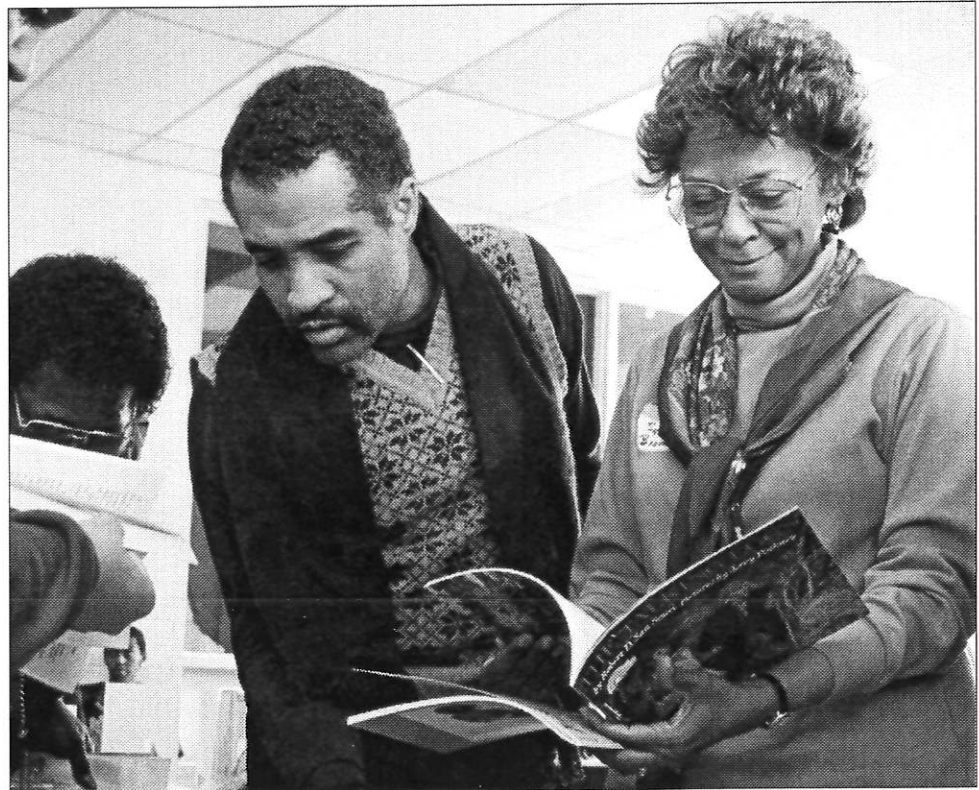
Club Members and Volunteers

Club members are in charge at their sites and are responsible for assigning volunteers tasks, providing them with instructions, and ensuring that proper paperwork is completed. It is important to remind volunteers of this up front and encourage them to turn to Club members for guidance.

You may wish to designate all volunteer-coordinating responsibilities to a single Club member. This person could then assign a Club member to work with each adult volunteer, reinforcing that the Club members play the primary roles in the program. (See the *Resource Guide* for detailed volunteer information.)

Screening Volunteers

Many community members who express interest in volunteering for your program may have worked with children before, or they may be parents themselves. However, since they will be working with children in an organized setting, it is important to make sure they feel at ease in this environment. It is also important that you, the Club members, the children's supervisor, and the children feel comfortable working with them. For further guidance in getting to know or screening volunteers, consult your principal or the director of your program. (See the *Resource Guide* for additional information.)



GETTING STARTED



Once RIF has approved your program and you have defined what it will look like, you will want to inform all parties about Club RIF and their roles. The following pages provide sample agendas and training models for teen members, supervisors of younger children, and volunteers.

The orientations are a great way for all Club RIF participants to get to know one another. Including Club members in the various orientations offers them an opportunity to establish relationships with the supervisors and volunteers with whom they will be working. Though it is optional to include teens in all of the orientations, we encourage you to find ways for them to interact with and get to know the others who will be supporting Club RIF.

In addition to conducting orientations, this is a good time to organize your calendar of events for the year. The Program Timeline provided on p. 36 can help direct you through your program year.

Orientations

Introducing Teens to Club RIF



All Club members should be included in an orientation that outlines the program and identifies what they can expect during their membership. The orientation should be an overview rather than a comprehensive description of individual roles. Club members will have an opportunity to learn more about Club RIF, their responsibilities, and how to work with children in their *Member's Guide*.

Preparing for the Orientation

1. Create an interesting title for the orientation, such as "Making a Difference."
2. Schedule at least an hour for the meeting. This will allow enough time for you to fully explain the program and for Club members to ask questions.

3. Set objectives for your presentation such as:
 - To provide an image of what is expected of Club members.
 - To create a sense of ownership in Club members so that they take on many of the responsibilities of the program.
4. Prepare an agenda, allowing time for questions. (See Sample Club Member Orientation on p. 16.)
5. Gather supplies such as *Member's Guides*, membership cards, and materials needed for icebreakers.
6. Set up the meeting room in advance. If possible, adjust the furniture to allow people to see each other and move around easily. If you are using audio/visual equipment, be sure to set it up before the meeting.

NOTES

Sample Club Member Orientation

Icebreaker: 15 minutes	<p>Choose an exercise that will give teens a chance to get to know one another. Here are a few suggestions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask members to write one of their talents on a piece of paper. Collect responses, mix them up, and read each one aloud. Have members try to identify who matches each skill. 2. Write the following prompt on the board: "I am in Club RIF because I hope to..." Have each member write a response and then share it with the group.
Introduction to Club RIF: 20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe leadership opportunities and other program incentives. ● Tell Club members how each of the program components will apply to them. ● Identify individuals or groups to take on various tasks. ● Share strategies about working with children.
Activity: 20 minutes	<p>Use this time to have teens determine how they want to include reading in their own lives. (See p. 22 for activity ideas, or have teens brainstorm their own.)</p>
Wrap Up: 5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Give ample time for them to express their concerns or excitement. ● Distribute <i>Member's Guides</i> and membership cards. ● Have teens complete the Club Member Application. (See p. 38.)
Follow Up:	<p>If you have Club officers, committee chairs, or teen leaders, these members should be apprised of their specific roles and responsibilities in separate orientations.</p> <p>Separate meetings also give them an opportunity to have all of their questions answered. (See the <i>Resource Guide</i> for specific Club member roles.)</p>

Delegating Tasks and Assigning Roles

Allowing Club members to take on primary responsibilities will provide them with rewarding learning experiences and a chance to prove their capabilities and boost their self-esteem. Consider sharing the workload as much as possible, first with Club members and then with other volunteers. Keep the following points in mind before delegating tasks:

- Remember, you are ultimately responsible for your program and its fulfillment of Club RIF guidelines.
- Be mindful of teens' strengths and limitations.

- Make yourself accessible as a guide and a resource as your Club members strive to accomplish challenging tasks.

Use the reproducible task list (p. 37) as a guide when assigning responsibilities. You may wish to allow Club members or other volunteers to select the tasks that interest them most. You can also reproduce sections of the *Resource Guide* that offer detailed information about each responsibility and distribute them to designated members. Or, if you choose to keep the *Resource Guide* in a central location, such as a lending library, remind Club members that it is available for their reference.

Orienting Younger Children's Supervisors

Again, a younger children's supervisor can be a teacher, daycare professional, librarian, or any adult who oversees an organized group of young children. Their role in Club RIF will be minimal in the overall execution of your program, but it is essential to have their support. After all, they are the ones who make it possible for Club members to work with children. Take this opportunity to introduce these supervisors — and anyone else who will be overseeing the children during Club RIF activities or communicating with parents — the program.

Preparing for the Orientation

1. Create an interesting title for the orientation, such as "Teens Mentoring Young Readers."
2. Choose a meeting location convenient for the supervisors and schedule no more than 30 minutes for the orientation. Keeping this meeting brief will reassure supervisors that their involvement with Club RIF requires a minimal time commitment.
3. Set objectives for your presentation such as:
 - To inform children's supervisors about Club RIF and their roles in the program.
 - To demonstrate how Club RIF will enhance the resources and opportunities for the children they serve.
4. Prepare an agenda, allowing time for questions. (See Sample Children's Supervisor Orientation on p. 18.)
5. Gather supplies such as handouts (pp. 39-43) and materials needed for icebreakers.
6. Set up the meeting room in advance. If possible, adjust the furniture to allow people to see each other and move around easily. If you are using audio/visual equipment, be sure to set it up before the meeting.

NOTES



Sample Children's Supervisor Orientation

Icebreaker: 10 minutes	<p>Since this may be the first opportunity for you and other Club participants to meet the supervisors, you should conduct an icebreaker that allows everyone to get to know each other. One suggestion is to have each participant select a colored candy and then answer a question based on its color. For example, the candy and corresponding questions could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● RED - What is your favorite children's book? ● BLUE - Where is the craziest place you have read a book? ● ORANGE - What is your best read-aloud memory? ● YELLOW - Who is the biggest fan of your reading? ● BROWN - How does reading aloud make you feel? ● GREEN - Respond to your choice of the above questions.
Introduction to Club RIF: 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Share Club RIF's goals. ● Describe the program components and explain how Club RIF will enhance their current work with children. ● Explain the Club RIF members' roles. ● Define supervisors' roles.
Activity:	If time allows, show them the program materials or walk them through portions of the CD-ROM.
Wrap Up: 5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take questions. ● Distribute Club RIF handouts. (See pp. 39-43.) ● Have supervisors complete a Supervisor Summary form. (See p. 40.)
Follow Up:	Schedule time for paired reading sessions, book selection committee meetings, or book events.

Additional Agenda Items

A meeting with the younger children's supervisors can do more than simply provide them with a program overview. Use the orientation to address logistical issues such as how Club members will schedule paired reading sessions and how to screen volunteers who work with the children. If time permits, you may want to include the following items in your orientation itinerary:

Scheduling

You and your Club members will have to work with the children's supervisors to schedule paired readings and book distributions. Take time to set up procedures for scheduling these events. If you choose to discuss specific dates or determine the frequency of paired readings at this time, consider distributing a calendar of events — it's a great way to make relevant information accessible to everyone.

Transportation

We recommend the partnering organizations be located as close to one another as possible to minimize transportation costs and other logistical issues. If transportation is necessary, determine which group will travel, whether permission slips are necessary, and who will pay transportation costs.

Volunteers and Visitor Regulations

RIF encourages volunteerism in all of our programs. Confirm that community volunteers are welcome in the centers serving the younger children. Many agencies that provide care to younger children have strict regulations on visitors. Find out what is required of your teen Club members and other adult volunteers that will interact with the children.

Grouping Children with Mentors

Decide how to group the children with Club members. For the greatest individual impact, one-on-one pairing is always the best scenario. However, having up to four children per Club member is okay.

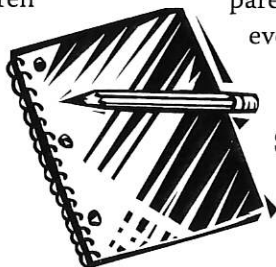
Mentoring Club Members

It is important to acknowledge that the supervisors know their children best. This makes them a valuable resource for Club members. They offer a wealth of knowledge about reading to and interacting with children. While supervisors are not required by Club RIF guidelines to serve as mentors, encourage them to offer suggestions and guidance to Club members as much as possible. Doing so will only contribute to the program's success.

Preparing the Children

Younger children's supervisors will be expected to prepare the children for their interactions with the Club members. They will be responsible for communicating with parents on a regular basis. They should also inform parents in writing that their child has been selected to participate in Club RIF. The letter should explain the program's purpose and benefits. (See p. 43 for a sample letter.)

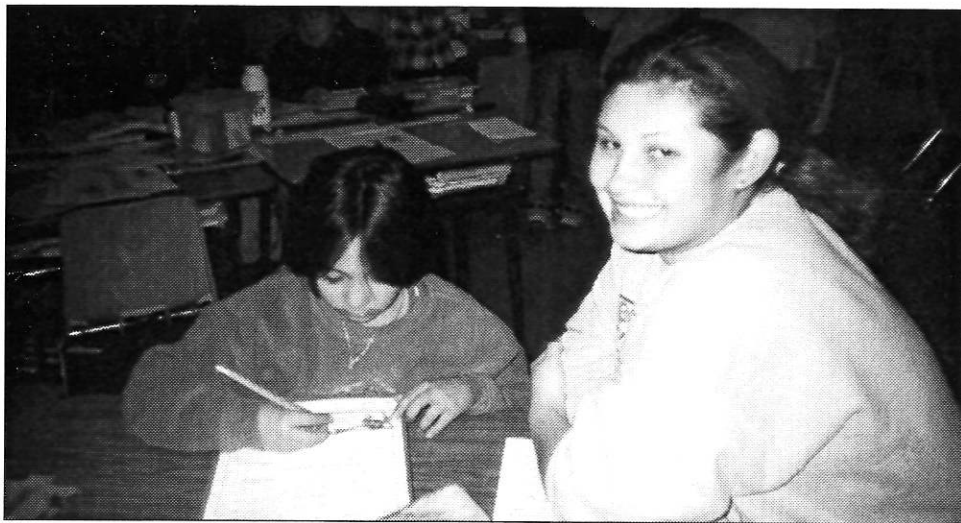
Encourage the supervisors to keep parents updated on Club RIF events and activities as well as their child's progress.



Sharing Results

During the pilot phase of this program, supervisors may be asked to complete assessments about their Club RIF experience. Consider asking them to share this valuable feedback with you. Their comments may help you to make programmatic improvements, and their anecdotes will drive the enthusiasm of volunteers. Encourage supervisors to get feedback from the children by asking them to write thank-you notes to their mentors, volunteers, or funders. These notes along with positive stories from supervisors are powerful examples of a program's success.

NOTES



Familiarizing Volunteers with Club RIF

No two volunteer orientations will be alike. The meetings should accommodate the specific needs of your program, and the orientation should be structured around how you and your Club members choose to use volunteers.

Preparing for the Orientation

1. Create an interesting title for the orientation such as "Teens Serving the Community."
2. Limit your presentation to 15 minutes for sharing general information, and allow time for more detailed information as you see fit.
3. Set objectives for your presentation such as:
 - To inform our community members about Club RIF and their roles as volunteers.
 - To generate enthusiasm and interest for Club RIF by sharing information about the project.
4. Prepare an outline (see Sample Volunteer Orientation below).
5. Gather supplies such as handouts (See pp. 44-46).
6. Set up the meeting room in advance. If possible, adjust the furniture to create an environment that allows guests to move around and get into groups easily.

Sample Volunteer Orientation

Icebreaker:
5 minutes

List the following questions on a chalkboard or flipchart, and keep the last question covered.

- Why is youth success important to our community?
- Why is it important to foster literacy skills?
- Why is it important to generate excitement about reading among teens and children?
- Why should teens participate in a literacy program with younger children?
- Why do we need a Club RIF program?

Divide volunteers into groups. Have each group discuss one of the first four questions and then share their responses with everyone. Uncover the final question and note that all responses to the previous questions answer why your community needs Club RIF.

Introduction
Club RIF:
5 minutes

- Explain how Club RIF will help your organization meet its goals.
- Share Club RIF's goals.
- Describe the program components and how they will improve your existing work.
- Describe duties and request volunteers.

Activity:

If time allows, have Club members share what drew them to the program or what they hope to get out of it.

Wrap Up:
5 minutes

- Take questions.
- Distribute Club RIF handouts. (See pp. 44-46.)
- Have community members complete a Volunteer Application. (See p. 44.)

Follow Up:

Send e-mails, post flyers, and distribute invitations for upcoming Club RIF events. Encourage continued participation and interest in the program.

Club Member Meetings and Structure

Club RIF is flexible and can work in a wide variety of settings. Use the following questions as a guide as you create an environment just right for your program.

What Will Club Meetings Look Like?

If your program is based in a school, you may choose to run Club RIF as an after-school program, a special class, or as a component to an existing class. If your program operates within a community center or library, ensure that there is a consistent population of interested teens to sustain the program, possibly through pre-registration or tracking attendance. Remember to also determine how often your Club will meet.



How Will We Organize Our Group?

If your Club members will be handling programmatic responsibilities in addition to their paired reading activities, then you should decide how to organize your teens. Here are some options to consider:

Teams

Have Club members sign up for different task teams. Each team is responsible for carrying out all duties associated with that task. This set-up works particularly well with large groups and allows members to specialize in a specific part of the program. For instance, the Lending Library Team would be required to prepare a budget for the purchasing of books, participate in book selection, order the books, distribute libraries to the sites, determine lending procedures, and track any lost or damaged books.

Rotating Teams

Create a team of Club members for each task associated with a book distribution. Teams rotate responsibilities after each book distribution. For example, a team in charge of setting up the first children's book distribution may be responsible for creating motivational activities for the second distribution. Remember to rotate responsibilities for all children's and teen distributions. This way each group gets exposure to the different tasks involved in running the event.

Appointed Parties

As the advisor, you may wish to appoint Club members to certain tasks based on your knowledge of their skills. While this gives the Club members less autonomy and ownership, it may be useful when dividing members into teams is not feasible. This model requires more advisor involvement.

Elected Officials

Your Club RIF program can also have an elected board of officers. Each position should be clearly defined, with its roles and responsibilities outlined. Members can campaign for leadership positions. Officers should be elected prior to the program year so that they have ample time to prepare for the year ahead.

NOTES

How Can We Use Club Meetings to Encourage Teen Reading?

The teens in your Club RIF program have undertaken the task of motivating children to read. Many of them will share the message but may never take their own advice. Use Club RIF meetings to help teens develop a love for literacy and persuade them to participate in one or more of the activities listed below.



Book-a-month

Instead of assigning one book for a group to read, allow teens to choose a book on their own. Encourage them to read at least one new book a month for their own enjoyment. Then have them share their comments about the books with others.

Book Clubs

Encourage the reading and discussion of interesting books by having teens start their own book clubs. Allow them to choose the books, set up discussions, and create activities that relate to book themes or subjects.

Book Sharing/ Recommendations

Have teens recommend books to one another. Teens can record each book title and their impressions in a journal for themselves or to share with the group.

Bad Book Awards

Host a ceremony for the bad books that teens have read for pleasure or been assigned to read. Remind teens that it is okay to stop reading a book (that hasn't been assigned for a class) that does not bring them pleasure. They should simply note why they did not enjoy the book and nominate it for the award. Teens can then select a winner.

Designated Reading Time

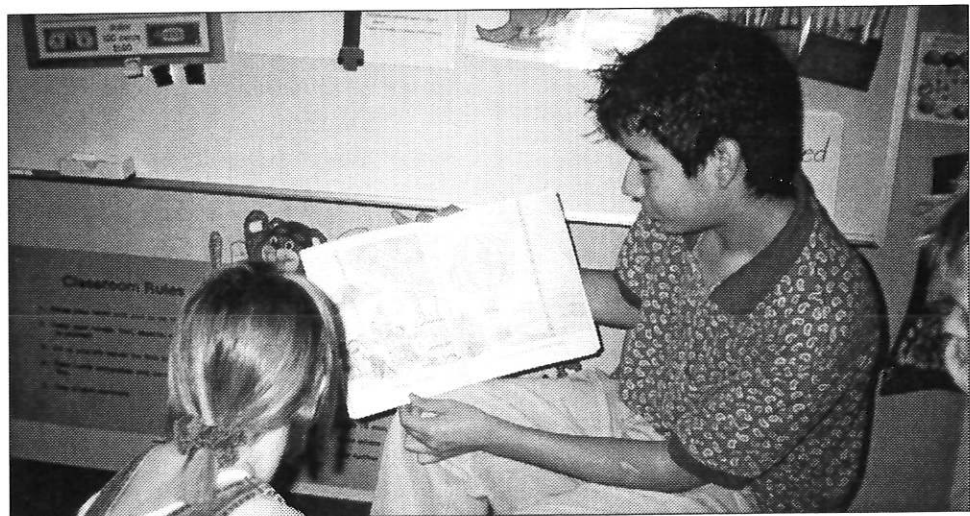
Encourage teens to designate uninterrupted time to read every day. Have them look at their schedules and plan at least 30 minutes when reading for fun can be a priority.

Personal Preferences

Ask teens to compile a list of the types of books they enjoy. Having a list available can help them make book selections.

Read-Alouds

Read-alouds are not just for young children. Teens enjoy having books read to them, too. Members might enjoy reading books, magazines, or newspaper articles aloud to each other, listening to you share a chapter from a novel, or reading children's books for fun.



Paired Reading Sessions

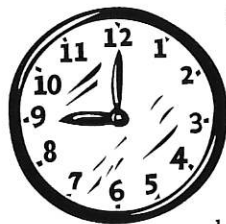
Paired reading between children and teens is the heart and soul of Club RIF. The children look forward to having time with their older role models while the teens are given the opportunity to put their planning skills into practice and are rewarded with the respect and admiration of the younger children.

As the advisor, there are a few things you can do to help make these meaningful sessions run smoothly. The first is coordinating with the younger children's supervisor. Making sure the supervisor is ready for the Club members and is supportive of their visit is essential to the success of the program. Second, helping to prepare Club members for their work with the children is vital. Talking with them about age-appropriate activities and offering techniques for keeping the children's attention will make the sessions more fun for all involved. (See the *Member's Guide* for more information.)

Select a Time and Place

If you did not determine the location or frequency of these sessions at an earlier meeting with the children's supervisor, now is the time to make those decisions.

Read-aloud sessions can occur weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or whatever best fits the schedules of Club RIF participants and the children. After determining when all parties involved are free, create a schedule. Be sure to account for holidays and special events. Having a master calendar accessible to all involved will keep things running smoothly and will also help Club members as they plan activities and book distributions.



The supervisor should also inform Club RIF participants of any regulations, dress codes, or policies regarding visitors.

Make Communicating a Habit

Keep the younger children's supervisor informed of any changes in planned activities or your program's structure to alleviate confusion.

Similarly, you should encourage the children's supervisor to share information about school events and lesson plans with Club members. This will enable members to develop activities that support work going on in the classroom.

When choosing a site for paired reading sessions, consider the size of the space where the children and teens will meet, and the distance participants must travel to get to the site. The space should be large enough to accommodate all participants as they engage in a variety of activities. If participants must travel to the site, you will need to address transportation issues, such as cost and liability. Be sure the site supervisor agrees to the use of the space you choose.

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Lending Libraries

Lending libraries offer Club members an opportunity to familiarize themselves with children's literature and resources to help them plan paired reading sessions. The libraries also give younger children a chance to check out books and bring them home to share with their families or enjoy during the day. For more information on choosing, ordering, and tracking lending library books, see the *Resource Guide*.



Choosing the Books

You will form a book selection committee of at least three people to choose books for the libraries. You may wish to include Club members, librarians, the younger children's supervisor, a local bookstore owner, or other volunteers in your committee to ensure that lending library books represent the community you are serving.

Ordering the Books

After the committee has chosen the books, you, a Club member, or a volunteer can order the books from the book company of your choice using the *Book Supplier Profile* provided by RIF. It is important to keep records of all paperwork/correspondence between your Club and the book company.

Setting Up the Libraries

It is important to house the libraries in areas that are easily accessible to all Club RIF participants. In the younger children's site, you may suggest setting the libraries apart from other available books. This way, the children will know that the Club RIF library is especially for the paired reading sessions. Children should be encouraged, however, to borrow and read the books outside the paired reading times.

Club members should also use the lending libraries frequently to help them develop original activities that complement the children's stories. A separate Club member library may be placed at your meeting site. The library should contain children's books as well as literacy resources and a copy of the *Resource Guide*.

Tracking the Library Books

Be sure to stamp each book or attach a bookplate identifying each one as a Club RIF book. This will help Club members keep an inventory of the books. If your program chooses to allow children to take books home there are a few tracking suggestions listed in the *Member's Guide*.

Using the Lending Libraries

Encouraging Club members and children to use the lending libraries should be fundamental to the program. They provide teens with access to children's books and information on children's literature to use in their activity planning. They also give younger children access to high-quality, hardcover books. The lending libraries should not only be useful, but also fun to use.

Here are some ideas for using lending libraries:

- Develop activity bags based on a particular book. (See the *Member's Guide* for more information.)
- Create a chart of favorite books.
- Encourage teens to keep reading journals.
- Have Club members and children develop question cards for the books they read.
- Create book reviews for a classroom collection newsletter.
- Videotape member/child book reviews for others to view.
- Design a reading challenge where the pairs work together to read a certain number of books alone or together during the paired readings.

Book Events

Book events for the Club RIF members will look very different from the events for the younger children, but they share the same primary goal: offering free, new books to young people. During the program year, Club RIF members will organize and hold three book events for the younger children as well as three book events where they choose books for themselves. Specific details for organizing book events can be found in the *Resource Guide*.

When Will Book Events Occur?

You may order books and hold distributions any time after you receive the signed contract from RIF until your program's termination date. RIF guidelines require that all book events be held at least 30 days apart. Determining the dates of the events early in your program year will help to keep things running smoothly. Remember to find dates for book events for both the younger children and the teens.



Here are a few ways to break up the work:

- Two months prior to the first event, have a book selection committee choose the books for distribution.
- A set-up committee can organize and set the books out for distribution.
- An activity-planning committee can develop and organize motivational activities for the event.
- If you plan to have additional volunteer support, publicizing your book event can be the work of a communication committee. (See the Volunteer Involvement and Publicizing sections of the *Resource Guide*.)

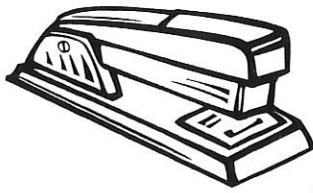
Who Will Plan Book Events?

It takes many people to organize and hold a successful book event. As the advisor, you should consider dividing the tasks among committees of Club members and volunteers.

NOTES

What Happens at the Younger Children's Book Events?

Book events give the younger children a chance to select a free book and participate in fun, motivational activities. These events help kids associate books and reading with positive experiences and excite their interest in reading. The activities do not have to be costly or elaborate. They can range anywhere from having celebrity readers, to decorating the room in a theme of a favorite



book, to participating in cut-and-paste activities relating to a story, to taking a field trip. Wherever and whenever the book events happen, allowing the children to choose a free book that interests them and participate in a fun activity is key. (See the *Resource Guide* for more activities.)

What Happens at the Club Members' Book Events?

Book events should be equally as fun for the Club members as they are for the younger children. At each event, the teens are given an opportunity to select new books to keep and participate in a fun, literacy activity.

There are a number of activities the teens might enjoy. Again, there is no need to get too elaborate or costly. Activities might include acting out a skit where two characters from different books meet and role-play an imaginary conversation. Club members might choose to hold their book event and book club meeting simultaneously, giving them an opportunity to share and discuss books they are reading outside of school. Guest speakers could also be invited to speak about careers or college preparation topics. (See the *Resource Guide* for more activity ideas.)

Can We Hold Teen and Children's Book Events Together?

Book events can be held on the same day, but not at the same time. If the two events take place together, the focus is likely to be directed toward the younger children. It is important to instill a renewed interest in reading in teens; thus the teen events should be treated with the same energy as those for the younger children. By linking the teen book distribution to fun, literacy-related activities for older readers, Club members will see that their enjoyment of reading is just as important as the children's.

When Do We Tell National RIF About Our Events?

A separate Distribution Report must be filled out following each children's and Club members' book distribution. Encourage active Club members to take on the reporting responsibilities, which are minimal. Distribution Reports are due to national RIF within 30 days of each book distribution. The report includes information such as the total number of participants; the number of books available, chosen, and remaining; and the motivational activities conducted.



Communication

As the advisor, you will need to keep your authorizing official, Club members, community members, younger children's supervisors, and RIF's national office informed about your program. Good and consistent communication is particularly important when coordinating the efforts of multiple parties. Much of this communication can be done through regular e-mail updates, mailings, flyers, or personal meetings.

Keeping in Touch with Club RIF Participants

There should be at least one orientation for each group of participants (e.g. Club members, young children's supervisors, community volunteers).

This meeting will help participants understand Club RIF, their roles within the program, and the time frame for which they are needed. (See pp. 15-20 for suggestions on running these sessions.)

It is important that you continue to be accessible and remain in contact with participants frequently. Setting periodic check-in times for them to brief you on the progress of their projects will help ensure that Club RIF guidelines are being met. It will also alert you to any confusion that may need to be clarified. If participants are working in teams, consider meeting with the team or a designated team leader to reduce the number of individual meetings.



Keeping in Touch with the Community

Whether your Club operates in a school, community center, or elsewhere, it is important that you educate those around you about Club RIF. Let members of your

organization and the community know about all the great things your program is doing for the community and how they can support the program or get involved. We recommend you find ways to share information about your activities and accomplishments regularly. You may wish to post flyers or bulletin board notices inviting community members to a Club RIF event or orientation meeting. You should plan to share information about your Club RIF initiative and how it supports the goals of your organization. (For tips on publicizing your program, see the Publicizing section of the *Resource Guide*.)

NOTES

Reflection

Throughout the program year, it is important to find ways to help Club members pause and reflect upon what they are gaining from their work. Taking a moment to process the Club RIF activities with which they are involved allows them to look back on, think critically about, and learn from their experiences. If your organization has already established a service learning curriculum, their ideas may fit nicely with your Club RIF program.

What Is Reflection?

Reflection includes sharing reactions, observations, and ideas about working with children during paired reading sessions or during group work with other Club members. Reflection can happen through writing, speaking, listening, reading, drawing, acting, and any other way that you or your Club members devise.

Why Is Reflection Important to Our Organization?

Besides providing valuable feedback, reflection allows the organization to modify the program to suit the needs of its participants. The time your teens spend reflecting will let you know if Club RIF is really working for them, as well as highlight areas for improvement. This will create a pattern for learning and program enhancement. Furthermore, it allows teens to think introspectively and set personal learning goals and benchmarks. The organization can then accurately report what benefits and rewards Club RIF has for the teens — thereby reinforcing that Club RIF is meeting organizational goals and is a worthwhile venture.



Why Is it Important for Our Teens?

Structuring time for students to reflect upon their service experience helps them process and begin to understand many issues in their broader social, political, and economic contexts. Reflection also helps to reinforce the connection between the students' activities and the curriculum they are studying.

Club members may not feel they are seeing immediate results from their interactions with the younger children. Finding creative ways to process what is taking place between the Club members and the younger children may help create a sense of accomplishment. Through reflection, the Club members will discover they have learned new skills, improved existing skills, or gained self-confidence. As they examine the effects of their behavior, they will discover ways to improve the quality of their service, thus improving Club RIF!

How Will We Reflect?

Reflection projects are great tools that enable Club members to measure their own growth. Any number of projects can help teens make connections between the skills they are gaining in their work with children and their roles as mentors. Some suggested activities include: interviewing each other, creating photo collages, participating in discussions, performing skits, and making public or multi-media presentations.

NOTES

A Few Reflection Activities

The following ideas are adapted from the Service Reflection Toolkit, www.northwestserviceacademy.org:

One successful model to assist you in designing activities revolves around three questions: *What? So What? and Now What?* Focusing on all three questions as a whole will help keep Club members from getting stuck on just the “facts” or just the “feelings.” These questions are helpful when leading discussions or journal writing. Keep in mind there are many ways to reflect. This is just one of them.

WHAT? (Reporting the facts of what happened.) Without judgment, participants describe in detail the facts and events of their experience. Questions might include: What did you observe? What events occurred? What were the results of the project?

SO WHAT? (What was learned and what difference did the event make?) Participants discuss their feelings and ideas, and analyze the experience. Questions might include: Did you learn a new skill or clarify an interest? How was your experience different from what you expected? What did you like/dislike about the experience?



NOW WHAT? (How will they think or act in the future as a result of this experience?)

Participants consider the broader impact of their actions and process what they are learning. Questions might include: What contributes to the success of this program? What hinders success? What learning occurred for you in this experience? What would you like to learn more about, related to these activities? What follow-up is needed to address any challenges or difficulties you faced? Typically one question will lead to another, which can lead to a great discussion.

Remember, it is important for you to maintain focus and offer “so what, now what” questions before leaving a topic. If you decide to conduct activities beyond journaling and discussions, keep in mind that an effective reflection activity should be directly linked to the project or experience and have an outcome in mind. The activity should also be varied for different learning styles and actively involve the Club members.

Here are other activity ideas that encourage reflection. These activities can be accomplished in a variety of settings during short and long periods of time.

15 to 60 second activities

Capturing: Each Club member makes a face, a sound, or a movement capturing how they felt about their time with the younger children.

Snapshot: Create a silent snapshot of a paired reading session. One person starts with a pose or action related to the session and everybody else joins in the “snapshot.”

1 to 5 minute activities

One to Three Words: Each person shares one to three words that describe the paired reading and how they feel/felt about it or anything relating to Club RIF.

Sculptor: One participant chooses a topic and asks for volunteers to be the clay. The clay people let the sculptor mold them into his or her vision of their topic (e.g. trying to keep a child’s attention during a read-aloud.)

5 to 30 minute activities

What? So What? Now What?:

(Described on p. 30) Allow 5 to 30 minutes for group processing.

The Image: Prior to the project, each person writes or draws an image about the children with whom they will be working, or their feelings about Club RIF activities. Have each person revisit or rewrite/redraw the experience at the end of the day, at a midpoint, or the end of the program year. Discuss differences or changes that took place.

Letter to Self: Prior to the project, have Club members write a letter to themselves about their personal and career goals. Place it in a sealed envelope. Mail it to each member or hand it out again after six months.

Cartoon: Draw a short cartoon that shows something important happening as a result of Club RIF.

Big Book: Have Club members create a large book prior to meeting with a child. Have them write characteristics of what makes a good mentor/teacher in the book. At the end of the day, revisit the book and have Club members discuss what they did well and how they think they could improve as a mentor/teacher.

Yarn Web: Stand in a circle with a ball of yarn. Holding the loose strand, the first person throws the yarn across the circle saying one word that explains what qualities or knowledge they will bring to the next project or what they learned, appreciated, etc. As the yarn is tossed from person to person, it forms a web, supported by the group. The facilitator can lead a discussion debriefing the activity.

All on the Wall: Put a large piece of paper up on a wall — or around the room. Club members write or draw feelings/thoughts/insights on the paper. The facilitator leads a discussion based on the writings.

Writing as Reflection

A journal is an effective tool for reflection. Encourage Club members to spend 10 to 15 minutes after each paired reading processing their experience. Provide a structure for Club members to follow when writing in their journal — including where, when, and how frequently they should write. Be sure to set realistic goals to ensure quality. It may be even more helpful if you keep a journal yourself!



Generate a list of journaling topics or questions together, or try one of these:

Clusters: Have people shout out words or phrases that describe the day. Ask each person to take two minutes to write five or six words in random spaces on their journaling page. Ask them to do a free write focusing on those five or six items and how they are related.

The Fly on the Wall: Ask Club members to take a couple of minutes to reflect on the day (what they did, who they worked with, etc.) Then ask them to pretend they were a fly on the wall, observing rather than participating in the scene, and write an entry based on their observations.

See the *Member's Guide* for more journal starters.

NOTES

WRAPPING UP



Assessing Your Program

Throughout your program year you will have made adjustments as needed, based on day-to-day assessment. However, as the program's termination date draws near, you should begin looking more closely at how your Club RIF program ran overall. National RIF will want you to compile quantitative information from your Distribution Reports that track how many children you served and how many books were purchased, as well as more qualitative information, such as your Club members' satisfaction and your own. In addition, because Club RIF is in a pilot stage, an evaluation team hired through RIF will be conducting surveys and compiling information that will help give a clear picture of Club RIF successes and where improvement may be needed.



In order to have an accurate view of Club RIF from all participants, it is important that the Club members are given an opportunity to assess their contributions as well as the structure and implementation of the program. There are a number of ways they can help to assess these aspects. You may find that having the Club members highlight the program year through pictures and quotes on a bulletin board, writing a summary in a newsletter, filling out surveys (anonymously or with their names), or interviewing each other and reporting will help you glean the necessary information in a creative and fun way.

To further round out the assessment, ask the younger children's supervisors to contribute their thoughts. They may have seen improvement in a child's reading skills or an increased interest in reading. They may have also heard feedback from parents that would be helpful in your assessment.



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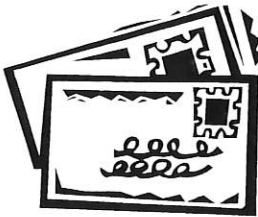
Thanking Contributing Parties

Throughout the duration of your program, numerous people will have offered time, expertise, and possibly funds. Once you have this support you will want to carry it over from year to year and use it as a base to build upon. Making contributors feel they are an important part of your program will help to ensure their continued interest.

There are a variety of creative ways to let people know that their contributions were appreciated. Here are a few suggestions:

- Send a personalized “thank-you.”

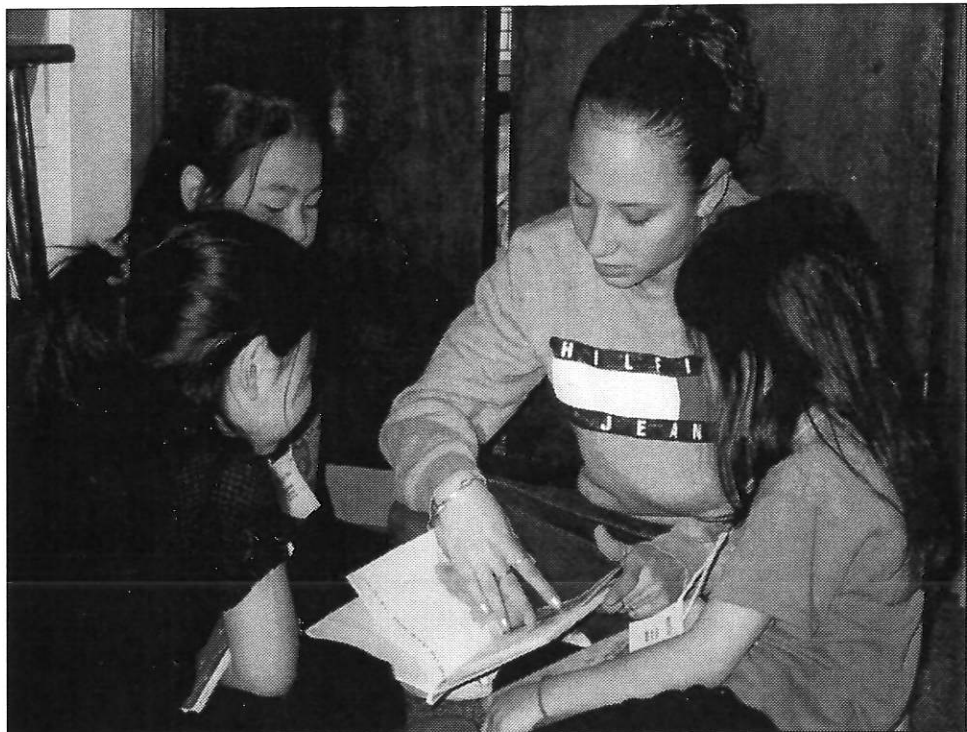
The best kind of thank-yous are a sampling of unedited children’s letters and artwork — though letters from the teens would go a long way as well.



- Present volunteers with a personalized certificate of appreciation. This is an effective way to recognize someone and can become even more special when presented by a school official or representative of local or state government.

- Display a large poster or banner signed by all individuals involved in Club RIF. Or, thank volunteers in a public place such as a community bulletin board or message board in front of the school.
- Mention your volunteers’ service in a school or local newspaper.
- Take photos during a Club RIF activity, and create a bulletin board in a visible place highlighting the volunteers’ help. (Sending copies of these photos to the volunteers is also appreciated.)

Not only will expressing your gratitude for these individuals’ assistance make them feel that it was time well spent, but they will look forward to returning the following year!





PART III: APPENDIX

The following reproducibles are provided to assist you in planning your Club RIF program. The section includes checklists as well as handouts for Club members, younger children's supervisors, and volunteers.

Program Timeline (p. 36):

This timeline outlines various tasks you and Club members will complete during your program year. Space is provided for you to fill in dates as they are determined.

Task Delegation Checklist (p. 37):

This checklist walks you through each of the phases of running a Club RIF program and provides you with space to indicate who will be completing each task.

Club Member Application (p. 38):

Use this form, or modify it for your own population, to get a sense of your members' interests and backgrounds.

Welcome Letter (p. 39):

This letter can be customized and given to the supervisor(s) whose children will be served by Club RIF members. It briefly outlines their role and responsibilities in working with Club RIF.

Supervisor Summary (p. 40):

Use this form, or adapt it, to collect contact information and establish a means of communicating with the younger children's supervisor.

An Overview for Children's Supervisors (pp. 41-42):

This information sheet offers children's supervisors an overview of the Club RIF program, its goals, and its components.

Parent Letter (p. 43):

Supervisors can adapt this letter to provide information to parents about Club RIF and their child's involvement in the program.

Volunteer Application (p. 44):

Use this form, or adapt it, to gather information from your volunteers about their availability and interests. (Your organization may already have a form you are required to use.)

Program Overview (p. 45-46):

This general information sheet can be reproduced and distributed to interested students, volunteers, parents, and others. It highlights the goals and components of Club RIF.

Program Timeline



STAGE	TASK	NOTES
Beginning Once funding, paperwork, and support elements are in place, the program can begin.	<input type="checkbox"/> Receive signed contract from RIF	Date Received: _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Receive grant funds	Date Received: _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Orient staff and service community <input type="checkbox"/> Orient Club members <input type="checkbox"/> Orient younger children's supervisors	
Planning This stage may be accomplished in one meeting in which all the appropriate parties are involved. Note: Most book orders take four to six weeks for delivery.	<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule paired reading sessions	# _____ times per _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule book events for children	Dates: Book event 1 _____ Book event 2 _____ Book event 3 _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule book events for Club members	Dates: Book event 1 _____ Book event 2 _____ Book event 3 _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Assemble book selection committee(s)	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Book selection committee orders lending library books	Date ordered: _____ Date received: _____ Date of payment: _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Book selection committee orders books for distribution	Date ordered: _____ Date received: _____ Date of payment: _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan activities for children's events	Activities/Themes: Book event 1 _____ Book event 2 _____ Book event 3 _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan activities for Club members' events	Activities/Themes: Book event 1 _____ Book event 2 _____ Book event 3 _____
Implementation Club members should be actively involved in this stage. All activities must be completed by the program's termination date.	<input type="checkbox"/> Catalogue lending libraries <input type="checkbox"/> Hold paired readings <input type="checkbox"/> Organize books for distribution <input type="checkbox"/> Host three events for children <input type="checkbox"/> Host three events for Club members <input type="checkbox"/> Send Distribution Reports to RIF <input type="checkbox"/> Purchase additional books – if necessary	
Completion At least one month before the program's termination date, tie up the current year and plan for the year ahead.	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete Performance Report <input type="checkbox"/> Identify next group of Club members <input type="checkbox"/> Identify next group of children <input type="checkbox"/> Identify funding source(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Submit proposal for next year	Date Sent: _____



Task Delegation Checklist

PHASE	TASK	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)
Book Selection and Ordering for Distribution books	<input type="checkbox"/> Select books for distribution <input type="checkbox"/> Order books for distribution <input type="checkbox"/> Pay for distribution books <input type="checkbox"/> Purchase additional books, if necessary <input type="checkbox"/> Orient younger children's supervisors	
Book Selection and Ordering for Lending Libraries	<input type="checkbox"/> Select books for lending libraries <input type="checkbox"/> Order lending library books <input type="checkbox"/> Pay for lending library books <input type="checkbox"/> Purchase additional books, if necessary	
Children's Book Event #1	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan activities for children's events <input type="checkbox"/> Set up (decorations, snacks) <input type="checkbox"/> Replenish books <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct motivational activities <input type="checkbox"/> Clean up <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Distribution Report	
Club Members' Book Event #1	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan activities for Club members' events <input type="checkbox"/> Set up (decorations, snacks) <input type="checkbox"/> Replenish books <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct motivational activities <input type="checkbox"/> Clean up <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Distribution Report	
Children's Book Event #2	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan activities for children's events <input type="checkbox"/> Set up (decorations, snacks) <input type="checkbox"/> Replenish books <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct motivational activities <input type="checkbox"/> Clean up <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Distribution Report	
Club Members' Book Event #2	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan activities for Club members' events <input type="checkbox"/> Set up (decorations, snacks) <input type="checkbox"/> Replenish books <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct motivational activities <input type="checkbox"/> Clean up <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Distribution Report	
Children's Book Event #3	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan activities for children's events <input type="checkbox"/> Set up (decorations, snacks) <input type="checkbox"/> Replenish books <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct motivational activities <input type="checkbox"/> Clean up <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Distribution Report	
Club Members' Book Event #3	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan activities for Club members' events <input type="checkbox"/> Set up (decorations, snacks) <input type="checkbox"/> Replenish books <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct motivational activities <input type="checkbox"/> Clean up <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Distribution Report	
Reporting	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete Performance Report <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that all funds have been spent <input type="checkbox"/> Submit proposal for renewal	

Club Member Application



Our Club RIF program needs volunteers like you!

If you are interested in volunteering, please complete the form below.

Name		Phone Number	
Address			
City	State	Zip	
E-mail Address			
Why does Club RIF appeal to you?			
List other community projects you are involved in.			
How many hours per month are you available?			
Which days are you available to volunteer? M T W Th F Sa Su Time of day _____			
Have you worked with younger children before? Yes _____ No _____			
In what capacity?			
Listed below are some exciting Club RIF volunteer opportunities. Please specify your top three preferences:			
	Selecting and Ordering Books		Reading with Younger Children
	Helping at Distributions		Helping with Paperwork
	Creating Motivational Activities		Raising Funds
	Publicizing the Club RIF Program		I'll Do Anything
<p>NOTE: Feel free to tell us more about yourself, such as your hobbies, favorite books, or if you play any sports or musical instruments.</p>			

Welcome Letter



[DATE]

[SUPERVISOR'S NAME]

[SITE NAME]

[SITE ADDRESS]

Dear [SUPERVISOR'S NAME]:

Reading Is Fundamental is excited to welcome you to this program that pairs teens (Club RIF members) with younger children in the community. Club RIF offers these children the opportunity to engage with their older mentors through fun, literacy-based activities and paired reading sessions. The Club members are encouraged to take on many of the responsibilities of running a Club RIF program such as book ordering and planning activities. The younger children are simply encouraged to have fun reading! The teens and the children all receive free books through RIF and gain an increased interest and excitement for reading.

Your role in Club RIF is important to the success of the program, yet does not require a great deal of time. After your initial planning and coordinating with the Club's advisor, your main responsibility is to make sure the younger children are able to attend their paired reading sessions and book distributions. Communicating with the Club members and their advisor about scheduling as well as material being covered in class will help the teens plan activities that relate to what the children are already learning. Sharing the children's interests or techniques that may help keep their attention will also enhance the program.

I appreciate your commitment to literacy and recommend you make full use of your Club members and their mentoring capabilities. Please feel free to contact me directly with any questions.

[LOCAL CONTACT INFO]

Sincerely,

[ADVISOR'S NAME]

Club RIF Advisor



Supervisor Summary

Name		Phone Number
Address		
City	State	Zip
E-mail Address		Work Number (If applicable)
Would you mind if Club members contacted you directly about the program? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
What is the best way to contact you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone	<input type="checkbox"/> E-mail
What is the best time to contact you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Day	<input type="checkbox"/> Evening
Have you worked with younger children before? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes		<input type="checkbox"/> No
Why would you like Club members to work with your children?		
How many children will be participating? How old are they?		
Do any of the children you supervise have special needs or considerations?		
How often and for how long would you like interactions with the Club members to last?		
Please indicate times that will not be convenient for Club members to work with the children.		
Would you like to be a part of a book selection committee for lending library or distribution books?		

An Overview for Younger Children's Supervisors



What Is Your Role as a Club RIF?

Club RIF is a Reading Is Fundamental program that pairs teens (Club RIF members) with elementary school students or other young children. Club RIF members take on many of the responsibilities of running a RIF program for younger children, and in the process gain program management skills, utilize technology, and interact with the community. Additionally, Club RIF members plan and participate in paired reading activities with the younger children. All participants receive free RIF books encouraging an interest in reading. Club RIF incorporates fun, literacy-related activities for children and teens to do together, motivating children to read and learn through a positive mentoring relationship.

What Is Your Role as a Club RIF Children's Supervisor?

You will:

- Facilitate the planning and pairing of members with children.
- Share pertinent information with parents.
- Supervise paired reading activities and distributions.
- Encourage the children to reflect on their sessions.

You may choose to take on a greater role by providing guidance to Club members or volunteering to select books, for example. Your support is essential to the smooth execution of the program.

PROGRAM GOALS

- Increase the amount of time children spend reading and engaging in fun, literacy-related activities.
- Promote mentoring relationships between teens and children.
- Increase the confidence and self-esteem of teens as readers and mentors.
- Encourage Club RIF members to develop managerial and communication skills, while using technology resources in their planning.
- Make reading a highly visible activity in schools and the community.
- Promote partnering opportunities among teachers at various levels.

COMPONENTS

Book Distributions:

Each teen and child will select three, free books for ownership through these distributions. Club members will conduct three book events for the children at your site, which will include a book distribution along with fun, motivational activities.

Lending Libraries:

Lending libraries of children's books will be available for children at your site and at the Club members' site. These books can be checked out, taken home and shared with families, and used during paired reading sessions between your children and the Club members, at no cost to you or your site.

Paired Readings:

Club members will meet regularly with your children to read together. These readings will be accompanied by fun extension activities created by the Club members.

Program Management:

Club RIF members are encouraged to take on many of the responsibilities of running a RIF program under the guidance of an adult. Club members will learn valuable skills in managing the program, organizing events, budgeting, and encouraging community volunteerism.

Reflection:

Teens and children will be encouraged to reflect and assess the time they spend together.

TEENS AT YOUR SITE

Club RIF allows teens to contribute to the overall literacy goals of the community while gaining skills in leadership, working collaboratively, and developing project-specific skills. The teens will have resources at their disposal as they develop activity ideas and prepare for the paired readings they will be conducting. Sharing your curriculum plans with the teens may help them focus and provide direction for their reading sessions. However, your role in the paired reading sessions and activities should be minimal.

READING IS FUNDAMENTAL, INC.

Founded in 1966, RIF develops and delivers children's and family literacy programs that help prepare young children for reading and motivate older children to read regularly, focusing on the nation's neediest children, from infancy through age 11. RIF operates through a national grassroots network of 400,000 volunteers at more than 20,000 sites, which include schools, libraries, community centers, child-care centers, hospitals, migrant worker camps, Head Start and Even Start programs, homeless shelters, and detention centers. In 2001, RIF programs provided 15 million new, free books and other essential literacy resources to nearly 5 million children. For more information about RIF, visit www.rif.org.



Parent Letter

Dear Parent:

Your child has been chosen to be a part of Reading Is Fundamental's Club RIF program! Club RIF is a program that pairs teens (Club RIF members) with younger children to read together and do fun, literacy-related activities. The teens will also organize three book events during the year, where your child will get to choose a free book to bring home and keep.

Your child's teacher or supervisor has decided how often the teens and children will read together, and when the book events will take place. You can play an important role in helping your child develop a love for reading by spending a few minutes each night reading to your child, asking your child to read to you, or letting your child choose the books you read together. Your child's teacher or supervisor may also have ideas for ways you can help support your child's literacy and the Club RIF program.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

[SUPERVISOR'S NAME]

Child's Supervisor

[ADVISOR'S NAME]

Club RIF Advisor

Volunteer Application



Our Club RIF program needs volunteers like you!

If you are interested in volunteering, please complete the form below.

Name		Phone Number	
Address			
City	State	Zip	
E-mail Address			
Why does Club RIF appeal to you?			
List other community projects you are involved in.			
How many hours per month are you available?			
Which days are you available to volunteer? M T W Th F Sa Su Time of day _____			
Do you have preferences regarding when you would like to volunteer?			
Have you volunteered with this organization in the past?			
Please list one character reference and his/her contact information.			
Name of Reference		Daytime Phone	
Listed below are some exciting Club RIF volunteer opportunities. Please specify your top three preferences:			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Selecting and Ordering Books	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reading with Younger Children
<input type="checkbox"/>	Helping at Distributions	<input type="checkbox"/>	Helping with Paperwork
<input type="checkbox"/>	Creating Motivational Activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Raising Funds
<input type="checkbox"/>	Publicizing the Club RIF Program	<input type="checkbox"/>	I'll Do Anything

Program Overview



Club RIF is a Reading Is Fundamental program that pairs teens (Club RIF members) with elementary school students or other young children. Club RIF members take on many of the responsibilities of running a RIF program for younger children, and in the process gain program management skills, utilize technology, and interact with the community. Additionally, Club RIF members plan and participate in paired reading activities with the younger children. All participants receive free RIF books encouraging an interest in reading. Club RIF incorporates fun, literacy-related activities for young children and teens to do together, motivating children to read and learn through a positive mentoring relationship.

PROGRAM GOALS

- Increase the amount of time children spend reading and engaging in fun, literacy-related activities.
- Promote mentoring relationships between teens and children.
- Increase the confidence and self-esteem of teens as readers and mentors.
- Encourage Club RIF members to develop managerial and communication skills, while using technology resources in their planning.
- Make reading a highly visible activity in schools and the community.
- Promote partnering opportunities among teachers at various levels.

COMPONENTS

Book Distributions:

Each teen and child will select three, free books for ownership through distributions. Each distribution will include fun, literacy-based motivational activities to encourage a love of reading.

Lending Libraries:

Funds will be available so sites may purchase children's books for lending libraries. These libraries will be placed at both the teen and children's sites. Lending library books will be used for paired reading activities. Sites will also purchase literacy resources to store in the libraries. These materials will help Club members plan activities and select books for the younger children.

Paired Readings:

Club members will enhance their planning skills as they create stimulating extension activities to engage and excite younger children about reading.

Program Management:

Club RIF members take on many of the responsibilities of running a RIF program under the guidance of an adult. Club members will learn valuable skills in managing the program, organizing events, budgeting, and encouraging community volunteerism.

Reflection:

Teens will reflect on their work with children. Through a combination of reading, writing, creating, and sharing, students will process what they are learning and discover how volunteer service is reciprocal. Younger children will also be encouraged to share what they are learning and enjoying.

TEENS SERVING THE COMMUNITY

In recent years, involvement of teens in community-based projects has increased. Many states now include a community service component in their educational standards, benchmarks, or graduation requirements. Club RIF allows teens to contribute to the overall literacy goals of the community while giving them an opportunity to utilize skills in leadership, work collaboratively, and develop project-specific skills. Although service-learning may not currently be a requirement for teen students in your area, volunteerism and club participation can enhance their opportunities in future endeavors and enrich their school and work experiences.

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