

bookish

JUDITH'S
READING
ROOM
NEWSLETTER

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St. Luke's Dental van (left); the library at Hispanic Center Lehigh Valley (right)



THE BIRTH-2-FIVE PROGRAM: CLOSING THE 30 MILLION WORD GAP

JUDITH'S READING ROOM BRINGS CHILDREN'S BOOKS TO IMPOVERISHED FAMILIES

It began with a memory. Ana Ramirez Luhrs, a librarian at Lafayette College and a member of the Judith's Reading Room Board of Directors, remembered the long visits to the Women Infants and Children (WIC) center with her mom and younger sibling. "As a young girl, I would often accompany my mother to our local WIC office, and I can recall spending many hours sitting in the waiting room with little to keep me occupied," says Luhrs. "I know that my 11-year-old self would have

loved to have access to books during those long afternoons."

With Luhrs' help, a Judith's Reading Room library stocked with 1,000 children's books valued at \$8,870 was established in February 2013 in honor of her parents Nydia Theodorakis and Luis Alberto Ramirez. The library contains bilingual books for ages 1-18, while an ongoing donation serves children under five. With that first donation, the Birth-2-Five Program was born.

Since February, the Birth-2-Five Program has grown into a major part of Judith's Reading Room's outreach. Another library was established in April 2013 at Casa Guadalupe's WIC center following *continued on page 2*

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Judith's Reading Room
**AT A
GLANCE**

70 LIBRARIES
1677 Volunteers

SIX STATES
IL, NJ,
NY, OR,
PA, & VA

\$711,576
value of books donated
70,691 Books

Afghanistan
Cambodia
Costa Rica
Indonesia
Japan
Nigeria

11 COUNTRIES
Albania
China
India
Iraq
Namibia

Reaching Kids Who Fall Between the Cracks

Judith's Reading Room partners with the WIC programs because the children whose families are on this Special Supplemental Nutrition Program are least likely to be enrolled in daycare programs, where many children are first exposed to books.

Below are our tips for raising great readers.

Tips for Reading to Your Infant

Good Times

Choose a good time for reading to your infant. Bedtime is ideal.

Point It Out

Use the pictures to think of new things to say and let your infant play with the book.

Brain Power

Reading aloud to your infant early on increases brain capacity for language and literacy skills.

Listen Carefully

Expose your infant to new vocabulary, language patterns, and expressive vocal inflections to improve listening skills.

Read Every Day

Twenty minutes of reading out loud every day will help your infant start school ready to learn.

It's Never Too Early

Early exposure to books and language lay the foundation for future success in learning to read—so start now!



Children peruse the library at St. Luke's KidsCare in Bethlehem

BIRTH-2-FIVE (cont. from page 1)

the same model at Hispanic Center Lehigh Valley. At both locations, parents must sign a Parent's Pledge, a promise to read aloud for twenty minutes each day, before their children are able to receive the free books. Over 5,000 children have been reached as a result of the program, and 7,608 books worth over \$62,767 have been donated in less than one year.

Our outreach extends to mobile library carts in the St. Luke's KidsCare centers and on the dental van, where a library was established in August 2013. At all of these locations, children who are not traditionally exposed to books have access to them.

The goal of Judith's Reading Room is to have the Birth-2-Five Program become a national model that will demonstrate to organizations working with at-risk children how to impact children through reading. The 30 million word gap, the vocabulary gap between children from middle-income and low-income families, is a national threat to education. Research from the last 20 years points to the ages between birth and five years as the most critical area of learning because it sets the foundation for education in later years. By molding good educational habits early on, children are more likely to finish high school and continue to college.

Right now, children who can not read well enough or with ease are 3 to 4 times more likely to drop out in later years. It is estimated that the cost of illiteracy to business and the taxpayer is \$20 billion per year. Early intervention is critical to the future of our children.

Children's books are currently the most needed resource at Judith's Reading Room. High quality picture books and brand new baby board books are needed monthly. If you or another book lover in your life would like to hold a children's book drive to benefit the Judith's Reading Room Birth-2-Five Program, please contact Cathy Leiber at 484-661-6151 or info@judithsreadingroom.org.

events

February

3

Boxing Party #47

Join us for our Valentine's Celebration! 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm
5 East 3rd Street, Bethlehem, PA

March

3

Boxing Party #48

Celebrate Judith's Reading Room's 4th anniversary! 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm
5 East 3rd Street, Bethlehem, PA



Judith's Reading Room's Daniel Leiber assists filmmaker Joel Vargas at Harkins House

LOCAL FILMMAKER BEGINS DOCUMENTARY PROCESS ON PROGRAMS AFFECTING AT-RISK TEENS

On December 18, 2013, filmmaker and Lafayette College senior Joel Vargas, assisted by Judith's Reading Room's Daniel Leiber, began filming footage for a documentary based on the Bi-Coastal Literacy Project. The project, made possible by a generous grant by the Dornsife Family Foundation and funding from Keystone Nazareth Charitable Foundation and the Martin Charitable Foundation, is comprised of book clubs at two facilities that serve at-risk teenagers: Children's Home of Easton in Easton, Pennsylvania and Harkins House outside Portland, Oregon. Teens at both facilities participate in weekly book clubs, which foster non-violent discussions and help the teens become adjusted to leadership roles and public speaking.

WHAT'S ON YOUR NIGHTSTAND?

WE ASK ERIN D'AMELIO, FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR AND RECIPIENT OF THE 2013 JUDITH'S READING ROOM SCHOLARSHIP OF EXCELLENCE, ABOUT HER NIGHTSTAND.

What is special about your nightstand?

My nightstand is special because it quickly became a repository for all of the books that I want to read. And because I wake every morning looking at it, it has also become my motivator to finish whatever I'm currently reading and whittle down the towering piles. Yet somehow that proves difficult, if only because I keep adding more books!

Do you judge a book by its cover?

It's hard not to be drawn to a book that has either a flashy or aesthetic design; reading is fun because you can enjoy all aspects of the book, including an eye-catching cover. Despite marveling over a pretty dust jacket every now and then, I tend to look online or talk to friends for reviews on great current literature. I tend to gravitate towards the classics as well, just because they differ in style and usually are excellently written.

What genre do you find yourself reading the most?

Literary fiction is my Achilles heel. I absolutely love delving into a story that explores human nature. I'm not saying that thrillers, science fiction, or other

genres don't do that, but to me they have to heed certain stylistic and character choices that to me seem restrictive. In literary fiction, the stories seem slightly more believable and real to me, and that I appreciate far more.

What is the best book you've ever read?

Ah! This is hard, because there are so many novels that I can and want to easily revisit and pour over. If I absolutely had to choose one, I would go for Mrs. Dalloway by Virginia Woolf. Not only do Woolf's words vividly activate all of my senses with their lyricism and apt description, but what she writes also demonstrates a fascination with the inner workings of human psychology. There were several moments in reading her novel where I couldn't help but read through a passage five times because of how impressed I was by its ability to capture human sentiment or anxiety.

What book are you most looking forward to reading?

To help me prepare for and anticipate my trip to Malaysia, I'm planning on reading books that describe the country and its culture. I have a few of those books that I'm going to read on my planes to Malaysia. But maybe I should bring more- it's over 36 hours to get there!

Want your nightstand featured here? Just email us a picture of your nightstand and the answer to our five questions!

info@judithsreadingroom.org



Here are some of the titles on Erin's nightstand:

Pale Fire **Vladimir Nabokov**

The Invisible Man **H. G. Wells**

Swamplandia! **Karen Russell**

Super Sad True Love Story **Gary Shteyngart**

All the Pretty Horses

Cormac McCarthy

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society

Mary Ann Schaffer and Annie Barrows

How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents **Julia Alvarez**

Moral Disorder

Margaret Atwood

The Castle **Franz Kafka**

The Book of Laughter and Forgetting **Milan Kundera**

The Casual Vacancy **J. K. Rowling**

Middlesex **Jeffrey Eugenides**

Infinite Jest **David Foster Wallace**

Poems **Sylvia Plath**

The Rainbow **D. H. Lawrence**

White Teeth **Zadie Smith**

Walden **Henry David Thoreau**

Selected Poems **Alfred, Lord Tennyson**

100 Words Every Word Lover Should Know

100 Words Almost Everyone Confuses and Misuses

Phaedrus **Plato**

Method and Madness: The Making of a Story **Alice LaPlante**

The Holy Teaching of Vimalakirti

Learning by Teaching **Donald Murray**

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Judith's Reading Room was established in 2010 in memory of Judith F. Krug, cousin to the founders of the organization. Judy was a librarian for over 40 years and served as the Director of the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom. In 1982, during one of the nation's periodic censorship epidemics, Judy established Banned Books Week, a celebration of authors, their literature, and the Constitution's protection of free expression.

In her memory, Judith's Reading Room donates libraries and ships books to people who do not have access to books in America and around the world.

VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH: LEORA HORNICK

Lee has long been a supporter of Judith's Reading Room. In addition to serving on the Board of Directors including as Secretary of the Board, Lee was one of the dozen who attended the very first Boxing Party, BP#1, in April 2010. As of the December 2013 Boxing Party, Lee had attended the most Boxing Parties outside members of the founding family—a total of 34 to date!

Lee has contributed to Judith's Reading Room in significant ways. She created the VA 100

Program in honor of her father, a WWII vet, and her husband, a Vietnam vet, a program that ships 100 paperback books each month to VA hospitals that wish to receive our books.

In 2011, Lee also spearheaded Judith's Reading Room's donation of a mobile library to Fox Chase Cancer Center in honor of her father who was treated there. To date, Judith's Reading Room has donated 1,680 books to the center.

Lee introduced Judith's Reading Room to two key people on our team, our web manager, Judi Glamb, and our bookkeeper, Carol Cannon. Thank you for all you have done for Judith's Reading Room, Lee!



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