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# 2004 Annual Report

Vision: **Ensure that every child grows up literate.**

Mission: **Empower** medical providers to  
**Partner** with community organizations to  
**Prescribe** family literacy and  
**Promote** children as informed consumers of media

## Reading Rx 2004 Accomplishments

Reading Rx is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that partners with medical clinics and libraries to promote shared reading, critical media viewing, and visits to the public library. Founded in 1996, Reading Rx trains medical providers to integrate the message of literacy into well-child visits. We provide helpful information for families and free books for children of all ages.

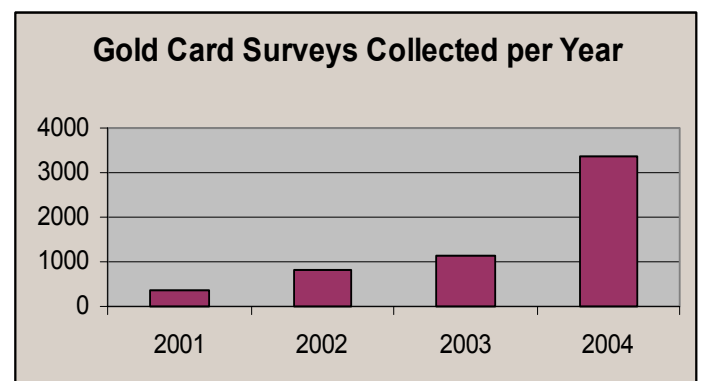
Reading Rx experienced tremendous growth in 2004, adding seven new clinics, seven partner libraries, and expanding services in one of our existing clinics. The increase in program participants resulted in a record 11,632 books given away! Growth was visible across the board. By August of 2004, the number of gold card surveys collected had already surpassed 2003 levels. (The surveys track information on reading and media habits as well as program participation.) At the end of the year, Reading Rx had collected 3,374 surveys – more than three times the 2003 total. Even the Reading Rx office grew in size as we moved to a new building in April.

Reading Rx growth was made possible, in large part, by a significant increase in staff hours. In January, Reading Rx hired Rob Lane as a part-time Executive Director. In February, Rob hired Reading Rx's first Americorps VISTA, Stephanie Agnew. Through the VISTA program, Stephanie worked full-time at no cost to Reading Rx. (For more on the VISTA program, see page 2.) In August, Rob left Reading Rx and Reading Rx Board Member, Tom Fitzpatrick took over as part-time Executive Director. Second-year Americorps VISTA, Marnie Christensen, started her term of service in August. With more than sixty hours of staffing per week, Reading Rx was able to provide consistent support to our clinics and libraries and focus on opportunities for expansion.

One such opportunity came through a \$12,000 grant from the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board (YCB). The YCB grant allowed Reading Rx to open 4 new sites at Family Medical Center, Green Central Clinic, La Clinica en Lake, and Southside Community Clinic and expand services at the Native American Community Clinic. We also added four new partner libraries in Minneapolis at East Lake, Franklin, Hosmer, and Washburn. The new sites opened during the summer and are doing a great job with our program.

A partnership with the Northwest Hennepin Family Services Collaborative provided another opportunity for expansion. In June, Reading Rx opened at the Zanewood Welcome Center in Brooklyn Park. In December, the program expanded to the Allina Clinic – Champlin. The Champlin Library also came on board.

Other 2004 highlights include the Reading Rx Open House held in October, the development of a monthly email update for all clinic sites and library partners, and the translation of the gold card survey into Spanish.



Gold Card Survey Data from 2001-2004 shows the growth of the Clinic-Based Literacy Effort

## Americorps VISTA and Reading Rx



Marnie Christensen, AmeriCorps VISTA, counts the gold cards collected on a site visit.

Americorps VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) started in 1964 as part of the Johnson Administration's "War on Poverty." Members serve at least one year of full time service with local, state, and federal agencies, and public, private, and faith-based non-profits to address the needs of low-income communities. VISTA projects are primarily indirect service and focus on building sustainable infrastructure in non-profit organizations to help them more effectively bring individuals and communities out of poverty.

Reading Rx receives the services of a VISTA Volunteer through a partnership with the Minnesota Literacy Council. The Reading Rx VISTA is involved in many aspects of the organization including site support, program evaluation and expansion, record keeping, fundraising, community outreach, and volunteer recruitment. Reading Rx VISTA accomplishments in 2004 included developing a regular schedule of site visits, updating contact info for clinics and partner libraries, revising the gold card survey, writing and publishing the Fall Newsletter and organizing the Reading Rx Open House.

Reading Rx plans to participate in the AmeriCorps VISTA program for three full years, with the possibility of having a fourth year through a cost-share program. Each VISTA will build upon the work of her/his predecessor, with an emphasis on sustainability.

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### Spotlight on Family Medical Center

One of the goals of Reading Rx is to reach families in underserved, economically disenfranchised communities. When expanding the program, we look for clinics serving these communities. The Family Medical Center (FMC) is located in the Powderhorn neighborhood in south Minneapolis. It is adjacent to the Phillips neighborhood and is the only subsidized safety net provider directly in the Powderhorn neighborhood. In 2002, FMC served 14,002 patients. 61% of patients are on some form of medical assistance and 25% are self pay. FMC also serves a high number of children. In 2002, 32% of patients were aged 0-10. Another 22% were between 10 and 21 years old. Patients are primarily Hispanic/Latino and Black/African American at 66% and 24% of patients respectively.

FMC became a Reading Rx site in August 2004. Participation in the program (as measured by gold card survey data) continues to increase. In 2004, FMC turned in more than 280 gold card surveys. They are currently averaging more than 70 surveys per month. Due to the large number of Hispanic/Latino patients, FMC gives away more Spanish books than any other Reading Rx site. Reading Rx has worked hard to obtain enough Spanish books to meet the needs of the population. When providers at FMC requested a Spanish translation of the gold card survey, Reading Rx collaborated with a number of volunteer translators to develop a Spanish version. Our work with FMC demonstrates our flexibility and commitment to meeting the needs of diverse populations.

#### **FMC site champion, Lora Koepp, talks about Reading Rx**

*"I don't have a specific story about reading habits being changed, but so many of the families who come to our clinic don't realize they should read to their babies. They may say they read with their 5 year old, but few spend time looking at books with the infants. What I hear from the parents is "they're too young" for reading. When I ask how many books the infant has, they say none. When I give them a book, I tell them to show the baby. They are surprised when they see the infant looking at the pages.*

*Reading RX is a great program and I'm so glad we're able to participate. The children love the books."*

### Reading Rx Board of Directors

**Hilary HP Stecklein, MD, FAAP**, Founder and President of Reading Rx, is a pediatrician with 20 years of clinical experience. She is currently one of the Regional Medical Directors of HealthPartners and Clinical Associate Professor of the University of Minnesota, Department of Pediatrics. She is a former Minnesota representative for the American Academy of Pediatrics Community Access To Child Health (CATCH) program.

**Vivian Husnik, MD** is a pediatrician at the Coon Rapids HealthPartners Clinic. She is also the mother of four children and the author of the children's book, [Thank You for Giraffes](#).

**Kate Pfaffinger, PhD, MSPH, CNP**, Co-Founder, is a pediatric health psychologist in the HealthPartners Behavior Health Department. Prior to becoming a psychologist, she worked for ten years as a nurse practitioner in a community medical clinic.

**Bonny Skovbrotten, RN, M.A.N.** is the Director of Care Management for Maternal Child Health Programs at BlueCross BlueShield of Minnesota.

**Jean Tews** is an independent fundraising consultant. She is the Campaign Director for the Power of Three Campaign and the former development director of the Minnesota Humanities Commission.

**Stacey Jo Volna** is a media specialist and teacher in Moundsview, Minnesota.

**Kate Zacher-Pate, LSW** is the Assistant Director of the Minnesota Board of Social Work, the regulatory agency for licensed social workers in the state. Prior to this position, she provided social services in non-profit agencies.

### Reading Rx Staff

**Rob Lane** served as our first paid Executive Director from January 2004 – August 2004.

**Stephanie Agnew** came on board in February 2004 as an Americorps VISTA Volunteer.

**Marnie Christensen** joined the Reading Rx team as our second-year VISTA in August 2004.

**Tom Fitzpatrick** became our new part-time Executive Director in August 2004.

**Gordon Stecklein** helped out in a variety of ways during the summer and during holiday break.

### Reading Rx Volunteers

**Ken Stecklein** served as Treasurer. He also put in many additional hours helping set up the new office location.

**Penny Timmerman** volunteered her talents as webmaster and is responsible for the "new look" on the web site.

Reading Rx also hosts a monthly Volunteer Night. Volunteers help Reading Rx staff prepare books for clinics and libraries by placing a Reading Rx sticker inside each book. This opportunity is especially appropriate for families who want to introduce younger children to volunteering.

For more information on Reading Rx volunteer opportunities, please contact [readingrx@readingrx.org](mailto:readingrx@readingrx.org).

### Reading Rx 2004 Clinic and Library Partners

Allina Clinic-Champlin • Arden Hills Health Partners • Arlington Hills Library • Brookdale Library • Brooklyn Park Library • Cedar-Riverside People's Center • Central Ave. Clinic • Champlin Library • Dayton's Bluff Library • East Lake Library • Family Medical Center • Franklin Library • Fremont Clinic • Green Central Clinic • Hennepin Care North • Highland Park Library • Hosmer Library • Indian Health Board • La Clinica • La Clinica en Lake • Lexington Outreach Library • Mahnommen Library • Mahnommen Merit Care • Maple Grove Library • Midway Health Partners • Minneapolis Children's Primary Clinic • Native American Community Clinic • Northeast Library • North End Clinic • North Point Health and Wellness Center • Oakdale Branch Library • Open Cities Health Center • Perham Library • Perham Merit Care • Pierre Bottineau Library • Regions Family Physicians • R.H. Stafford Branch Library • Rice Street Library • Riverside Health Partners • Riverview Branch Library • Robbinsdale Partners in Pediatrics • Rockford Road Library • St. Paul Health Partners • Sheridan Women and Children's Clinic • Sibley Manor • Smiley's Clinic • Southside Community Clinic • United Family Practice – West 7<sup>th</sup> • Walker Library • Washburn Library • West 7<sup>th</sup> Library • Woodbury Health Partners • Zanewood Welcome Center

## 2004 FINANCIAL REPORT

### REVENUES

Grants	\$52,737.72
Contributions	\$5,380.00
Video/brochure sales	\$3,177.91
Speaker Fees	\$2,050.00
Investment	\$210.50
Miscellaneous	\$133.75

**Total** **\$63,689.88**

### EXPENSES

Office Space Rent	\$11,000.00
Books	\$21,538.27
Printing	\$4,026.07
Wages	\$32,200.79
Office Expenses	\$4,955.13
Miscellaneous	\$5,158.44

**Total** **\$78,878.70**

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S FINANCIAL COMMENTS

By Tom Fitzpatrick

In 2004, Reading Rx served 30 clinic sites with 24 library partners. We distributed over 11,000 children's books to the clinics and libraries to give away to the families they serve. There are many other accomplishments that you can read about in other parts of this annual report. And we accomplished all this with out-of-pocket expenses of less than \$79,000.

My point is that Reading Rx has been able to stretch the limited dollars we receive to provide this important family literacy program. As an example, we strive to find children's books through donations and/or at reduced prices – over 4,000 books were obtained through donations in 2004, and we also purchased large numbers of high quality children's books at significant discounts. Another example is developing relationships with the Corporation for National & Community Service and the Minnesota Literacy Council which resulted in Reading Rx getting approved for an Americorps VISTA Volunteer for three years.

We will continue to seek the necessary funding and resources to enhance the quality of our program while expanding to additional clinics. We encourage everyone interested in family literacy to support Reading Rx. We welcome interested volunteers, book donations and financial contributions.

Believe in Reading Rx and please help us in any way that you can. Thank you.

Reading Rx was fortunate to work with many wonderful community partners in 2004. In addition to our 30 clinics and 24 libraries, we received support from many individuals and the following organizations:

**American Academy of Pediatrics CATCH program**

**First Book**

**HB Fuller**

**HealthPartners**

**Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support**

**Minneapolis Public Library – Library Links program**

**Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board**

**Presbyterian Church of the Way Mission Commission**

**Nephew Quole Book Club**

**Northwest Hennepin Family Services Collaborative**

**Target (Midway store)**

**Volunteers of America**

**MANY THANKS!**