

To: Columbus City Schools Partnership Committee
From: Dragana Saas, Ready to Read Program Leader
Date: November 8th, 2012
Subject: **Ready to Read Corps Partnership**

CML launched its Ready to Read Corps in 2009 as a first-of-its-kind initiative that takes the library into at-risk communities to teach parents and caregivers of children ages 0 to 5 how to be their child's first teacher and prepare their children for kindergarten. Our Ready to Read Corps now encompasses 13 community-based team members and a dedicated bookmobile focused on six communities: Weinland Park/Parsons, Linden, Hilltop, Northland, Groveport and Whitehall.

Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs recently completed the first evaluation of the Ready to Read Corps' work, spanning the time period from November 2009 through the end of December 2011. Following is summary of the key findings of the phase I evaluation.

Key Findings

- The program is making progress toward the goal of 75% of children scoring in Band 2 or 3 on the KRA-L, based on a sample of 208 children assessed with the KRA-L in 2011, 63% of whom scored in Band 2 or 3.
- From 2009 to 2011 library staff have had 25,297 quality interactions which refers to an interaction between Corps staff and a customer during which the staff member introduces the Corps program and advertises library services. The quality interactions resulted in the distribution of 7,849 literacy kits via literacy intervention. Of those 7,849 literacy kits, 6,366 customers completed a post intervention survey.
- The Corps has developed partnerships with 88 entities such as Women Infants and Children sites (WIC), medical centers, free stores, settlement houses, and government social services agencies.
- In the month or two following the intervention, the majority of surveyed parents/caregivers (77.5%) use the literacy kit at least once a week and 45% report they use the items in the literacy kit on a daily basis. Only 4.6% of parents/caregivers report never using the kit. 30.7% of participants report visiting the library at least once a week, and nearly double that percentage (60%) report that they read books to their child daily.

- After the intervention, 76.4% of parents or caregivers point out letters and numbers in signs, books and billboards to their children once a week or more, and 75.5% sing or rhyme with their children once a week or more.
- Based on the training they received from the Corps, there is strong agreement among 5 of the 7 parent/caregiver focus groups that children are never too young for parents or caregivers to start working with them on early literacy skills. Responses from all of the groups reveal that participants receiving the intervention are learning literacy strategies to use with their children and are using the literacy kits.

Opportunities

While these findings are encouraging, we have the following opportunities to further strengthen the program:

- To date, partnerships have been formed with 88 community agencies or programs. Although this is a very good start, we have the opportunity to move these partnerships to a deeper level in a number of ways to strengthen impact: to increase exposure to targeted client families, receive targeted referrals and integrate Ready to Read into parent education and training.
- Embark on a research study with OSU, College of Education, to evaluate the efficacy of the various delivery methods of Ready to Read training.
- Look for opportunities to take the training to some participants' homes. Lack of transportation is an issue for many at-risk families, and multiple visits to a home allows for deeper engagement and reinforcement among parents and caregivers.
- Partnership with CCS to deepen the work and reach more families.