

National Children's Reading Foundation: Meet Our Team

Inside this issue:

National READY! Staff 2

National READY!
Director 2

NCRF Outreach
Coordinator 3

NCRF: A Decade of
Commitment 4

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Staff, Pioneering Programs and Technology Expand in New, Larger NCRF Headquarters

Wall to wall, office to warehouse- the new home for the National Children's Reading Foundation is ideal for expanding its innovative programs across the country.



Nancy Kerr

Nancy Kerr, NCRF president, said the new facilities at 515 W. Entiat Ave. in Kennewick, WA fulfill the Foundation's needs for both space and top technological support. "These advancements," she noted, "were made possible partly because of grants from the Washington Department of Early Learning and Thrive by Five WA and partly because of the growing awareness of our important mission."

The 2,000 square-foot office suite and 6,000 square-foot warehouse is now the base of operations for both the Foundation and its growing *READY! For Kindergarten* division.

The bright, high-ceilinged warehouse is organized with NCRF materials and arranged with an assembly line to allow quick turnaround for orders from Foundation chapters and participating schools.

Nancy, along with the NCRF Outreach Coordinator Amy Smith, *READY!* National Director Virginia Smith and their staffs, welcome visitors to their new offices to learn about the Foundation's programs. **Continued on page 3**

Bobby Paine, Warehouse Manager, moves a load of READY! materials at the facility.





National READY! for Kindergarten Staff

Bobby Paine, warehouse manager, makes sure all of the READY! materials get to our customers on time. With years of experience managing shipping and parts departments for various businesses in Seattle and the Tri-Cities, Bobby likes very much being part of a team to help children and parents. He also likes the sunny weekends in Eastern Washington when he and his fiancé ride motorcycles.



Bobby makes sure READY! materials arrive on time.



Dianna has a "can-do" attitude!

Great customer service is the focus of **Dianna Lopez**, Operations Manager for *READY! for Kindergarten*. Detail-oriented, Dianna ran her own Internet business for years. That business helped her develop strong office skills, but her enthusiasm for *READY!* and helping children and her energetic spirit are equally appreciated by those who work with her.

"The READY! program fits perfectly into my belief that the first five years of a child's life are crucial."

National READY! Director



Virginia Smith is excited about leading *READY! for Kindergarten* as it expands to help more and more little children be eager and prepared for school. She knows first hand what it means to children to have those basic skills to succeed in school. She started out her career in education teaching kindergarten, first and second grades.

"I wanted to increase my ability to make a difference in children's

lives," she commented. "That's why in 1995 I earned a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction and followed that up in 2007 with my Elementary Principal's Credentials."

Her goal is to make a difference for children in many classrooms. In the past she found, even with all her acquired skills, it was very hard – almost impossible – to help a child who tested below grade level "catch up."

Her association with the Reading Foundation gives Virginia renewed hope for helping all children be successful in school. Before taking on *READY!* in May, she di-

rected Team Read for the Kennewick School District. Team Read is a volunteer tutoring program that NCRF created to help first, second and third graders read at grade level.

When the opportunity to direct *READY!* came to her, Virginia knew it was the right place for her to be. "The *READY!* program fits perfectly into my belief that the first five years of a child's life are crucial. For sure, parents are the first and best teachers, and our program helps them give their children just what they need to succeed at school."



"There's no doubt that the impact upon young lives by our programs is profound and long lasting."

National Children's Reading Foundation Outreach Coordinator



The NCRF outreach coordinator, **Amy Smith**, wears many different hats each day as she oversees on-going programs and gets the message out about the benefits to children when adults read with them. Her background in grant writing,

marketing, fundraising, volunteer management, customer service, database management and event planning is a perfect fit for the many-faceted Foundation position.

"The ideals of the Reading Foundation are leveraged by affiliates across the country into enormous advancements in their schools," she said. "There's no doubt that the impact upon young lives by our programs is profound and long lasting."

She pointed out that research proves reading with children 20 minutes a day prepares them for academic success and happiness in school and strengthens family bonds in wonderful ways. A graduate of Northwest University, Amy is active in her home community as a member of Young Professionals of the Tri-Cities and vice president of the Mid-Columbia Rotaract Club.

Learning begins at birth...and lasts a lifetime

The most important 20 minutes of your day ... read with a child

Continued from page 1

New Headquarters...

In the office, Dianna Lopez, Office and Operations Manager, handles the day to day financial aspects of *READY!* such as purchasing and invoicing orders, and in the warehouse, Manager Bobby Paine oversees the assembly and disbursement of program resources.

Seventy-five schools and districts from Kennewick to New Mexico and Illinois to Canada use the Foundation's school readiness materials. More orders are coming in for the winter and springs terms.

Parents receive tools and training through *READY!* to help them prepare their children for school and have fun doing it. NCRF provides the materials, PowerPoint lesson plans and projects for local groups. The *READY! for Kindergarten* web site is being updated and will be operational soon.

Meanwhile, anyone with questions on *READY!* should call Virginia at 509-396-7700 or email info@readyforkindergarten.org.

The Reading Foundation's phone number is 509-735-9405. Its Organizational Handbook can be accessed online at readingfoundation.org.

NCRF: A Decade of Commitment

For a decade the National Children's Reading Foundation has helped communities make boys and girls enthusiastic, strong readers. Affiliate foundations in more than a dozen states enjoy a close, supporting tie with NCRD while responding to the particular needs and opportunities of their home regions.

All of these reading foundations reach out to parents and childcare providers with information, resources, activities and encouragement. Their goal – to promote early literacy – is also the essential building block needed by all children to attain a good education and success in life.

The guiding board of each community-based Foundation chooses among these many NCRF programs and activities:

- **Books for Babies:** At hospitals parents are given baby's first book, a "Read to Me" bib, a brochure on reading to their baby, library card application, and a message from their school district.
- **Books to Grow On:** At pediatrician offices, children up to 4 years old receive a book and a prescription to read 20 minutes a day.

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- **Well Fed, Well Read:** At area food banks and meal centers, young children select a new book. Parents receive book markers with read aloud tips.

- **Home Health Nurses/Home Visitors/Foster Care Families:** During each home visit a new book and parent education is offered.

- **Sunshine Shelves:** Bright yellow book shelves are stocked with gently used books in targeted apartment offices and employee lunch rooms. Parents may take books home to read with their children. Books are returned for other titles.

- **Booker T. Bear:** NCRF's mascot, a yellow bear with a *20 minutes a day* t-shirt, is available for school visits and other events.

- **Story Van:** Books are read aloud, plus activities, at housing developments, farms, day

cares, and community events.

- **Read Around the House:** Children color a drawing of a two-story house and yard as they read in various locations. Pictures are displayed at the library.

- **Dads and Doughnuts - Moms and Muffins:** Short and popular gatherings at schools, parks and community sites, at which books are read and snacks are shared.

- **First Teacher Libraries:** New elementary teachers receive 100 children's books for their classroom.

- **Storybook Santa:** At malls elves read books to children and Santa gives children books rather than candy.

- **Breakfast with Santa:** Service clubs sponsor a warm breakfast for low-income children, where they listen to the *Polar Express*, sing, get a new book and hug Santa.

NEW ADDRESS FOR NCRF and READY!

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NCRF may still be contacted at:
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WATCH FOR OUR NEW WEBSITE OCT. 1ST!



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