



## ROTARY CLUB OF REDWOOD CITY

October 1, 2006

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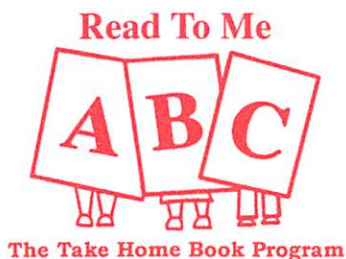
Dear Mark:

Our Rotary Club, Rotary Club of Redwood City, enthusiastically supports Menlo Park Rotary Club, in bringing clean drinking water to approximately 182 families in the towns of Rio Blanco and Colonia Choatulum, Guatemala. Our club has donated \$1,500 toward this matching grant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Roland Haga". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left and then curves back under the name.

Roland Haga, President  
Rotary Club of Redwood City



**"Building a child's confidence to read is a shared responsibility between teachers and parents."**

January 16, 2007

Dear Members of the Rotary Club,

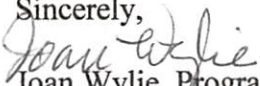
Welcome to the Take Home Book Program! The program has been designed to help families become involved in reading to and enjoying books with their children.

The Take Home Book Program provides thirty hard cover books in sturdy canvas book bags for each classroom at the kindergarten, first and second grade level. The children take a book home every week during the school year. Parents read and reread the books to their child and the child draws a picture and writes a sentence about each story in the program journal that is also provided by the program. Rereading, drawing and writing are strategies that develop comprehension. Teachers support the program by reading and discussing the books in the classroom as part of their regular read aloud time.

Stanford University Graduate School of Education has conducted a two year evaluation of the program and confirms that the Take Home Book Program is an essential component of the classroom, increasing literacy skills at both the kindergarten and first grade level. 97 percent of participating parents report that they read more with their child due to the program and 85 percent report that they learn useful information on helping their child learn to read and write.

You will find attached additional program highlights. I can be reached at [joanwylie@hotmail.com](mailto:joanwylie@hotmail.com) to answer any additional questions.

Sincerely,

  
Joan Wylie, Program Director  
The Take Home Book Program

# **The Take Home Book Program**

**Program Description:** The Take Home Book Program is a school-based program of family reading for kindergarten, first, and second grades. The program involves parents in reading to their children by providing read-aloud books to families through the public elementary schools. Each classroom receives 30 hard cover books in sturdy canvas book bags and a drawing/writing journal for every child. The children take a book home each week during the school year. Parents read and reread the books to their children. The children draw a picture and write or dictate a sentence about each story in their program journal at home. Teachers read and discuss the take home books in class as part of the regular classroom curriculum. Program information and information on learning to read is provided to the parents and supported by parent literacy meetings at school.

**Mission:** The mission of the Take Home Book Program is to increase the literacy skills of primary students by providing books to families to read to their children and with their children and by helping parents become more informed about their children's reading development.

**Problem:** Many children enter school lacking basic pre-literacy skills and do not receive support at home as they are learning to read in the primary grades. In 2004, 50% of California's fourth graders read below the basic level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. A significant percentage of below standard readers have two parents who attended college.

**Research for Social Change:** Research demonstrates that reading aloud to children is the single most important activity for ensuring children's reading success. Research also demonstrates that when a teacher makes a specific request of parents, 85% of the parents respond positively regardless of socioeconomic background.

**Differentiation:** The key differentiators of the Take Home Book Program include: high quality materials, integration of the take home books into classroom practice, the inclusion of a drawing-writing component, and parent education on learning to read.

**Cost:** The total cost of the program is \$700 per classroom or five dollars per child over a seven year period. The books are "guaranteed for life." The cost of renewing journals and parent information for seven years is included in the per classroom cost.

**Program Maintenance:** Schools and their districts take responsibility for maintaining lost books and bags. Program maintenance is available through Perfection Learning Company 1(800) 831-4190. The average amount of loss is one book and bag per classroom per year. Replacement cost is \$20.

**Program Evaluation:** 10,000 year end surveys were completed by parents and teachers 1999-2005. The surveys are universally positive. Parents, students and teachers appreciate the program, enjoy the reading time and report positive results such as increased vocabulary development and a greater interest in books and reading. The most frequent comment from both teachers and parents notes the quality of the book selection. A small sample of teacher and parent comments is attached.

The Stanford Graduate School of Education has also conducted a two year evaluation of the program that confirms the Take Home Book Program as an essential component of the classroom, increasing literacy skills at both the kindergarten and first grade levels. At the end of kindergarten, the program children demonstrated an increase in timed letter recognition and timed letter sound production based on a standardized test. At the end of first grade, the program children demonstrated a significant increase in Words Correct, Orthographic Features, Accuracy, and Comprehension. 97 percent of the program parents reported reading more with their children and 85 percent reported learning useful information on learning to read and write.

**Program History:** The Take Home Book Program was developed in collaboration with primary teacher leaders convened by the Noyce Foundation of Palo Alto in 1996. San Francisco Bay Area teachers have continued to provide input into all aspects of the program including the book selection, design of the journal and parent information. The program is continuously improved based on teacher and parent feedback. Mills College Graduate School of Education, the Stanford University Graduate School of Education and St. Mary's College Early Literacy Center have also contributed. Private foundations support the program as a nonprofit activity in the San Francisco Bay Area.

**Parallel Practices:** The program is based on the concept of mutually supportive activities at home and at school. This practice was shown to benefit student's literacy development in a study conducted by the National Reading Research Center, 1995. The books that are read and discussed at home are also read and discussed in the classroom by the teacher.

**Parent Education and Involvement:** Parents must be involved in their child's education. "Parents need to read aloud to their child daily, provide engaging books, listen to their child read, and help their child develop specific reading skills." (Hall and Moates, 1999.)

**Specific Direction:** Many parents want to be actively involved but feel that they do not get enough direction from teachers. Dr. Joyce Epstein, Johns Hopkins University Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children advocates that the message teachers give to parents needs to go beyond the general, "Help your child." to the specific, "Read this book." Dr. Epstein's research demonstrates that when a teacher makes a specific request of parents, 85% respond positively regardless of socioeconomic background.

