



# Vermont Reading Partners

## A Volunteer Literacy Program

Student-Tutor Newsletter, Winter 2010

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### Holiday Potluck Party

December 13 at 6: 00 p.m. the Barrows House was a buzz as tutors, students, Board Members, friends and family members arrived at the Holiday Pot Luck Party held at the Barrows House as it has been for the past nine years. Guests, ranging in age from two months to 840 months, enjoyed the delicious fare created by some of the finest home cooks in Vermont. Held in honor of tutors and students, the party is a favorite VRP event where each student receives a gift book, whether a dictionary, an atlas, or other type reference book. This year **Project Party Books** was funded by the **Vermont Country Store**, a donation made at the direction of their volunteer employee-led Manchester Community Action Team. As part of the VCS Values Statement, they are pleased to give back to the communities in which they live, and we are grateful for their support.



**MEMS pre-schoolers open Christmas books donated by the Vermont Country Store. See p. 3, for story.**



**Linda McGinnis proudly displays her Knights of the Reading Table ring.**

### Knights of the Reading Table

**Linda and Jim McGinnis**, hosts for the VRP annual Holiday Party, were honored on December 13, 2009, as they were inducted into the **Knights of the Reading Table**, a secret society of enthusiastic readers devoted to supporting literacy. Jim and Linda have repeatedly shown their dedication to literacy by hosting various events for VRP at their lovely inn, the Barrows House, and by supporting all community events connected to literacy and education whenever possible. VRP commends the McGinnis's on their life-long dedication to literacy and their years of support to VRP. As Linda accepted the Knights flashing rings, she confessed that her grandchildren will be envious of her ring and that they also share her love of reading.

## Fall Tutor Training a Bonanza

This fall, VRP held two tutor training workshops for people interested in helping children and adults learn to read better. In September, a tutor training workshop for the School Program, an after-school program that provides tutors to students who need help in reading and writing but fail to qualify for State or Federal Programs, was held at the Bank of Bennington in Manchester on three afternoons. The training team of **Marie Sossi, Liz Luca, Cristina Mansfield, Bobbi Schalit, and Sally Brown** guided eight new recruits through the course to become certified tutors. These new tutors, along with other previously trained tutors, have been matched with elementary students at one of our School Program schools. Our new tutors are Dick Bailey, Patricia Beach, Sarah Green, Norma Peebles, Marion Rapoport, Joy Slusarek, Gay Squire, and Joanne Van Meter. A special thank you to Carol Johnson and the Bank of Bennington in Manchester for providing the classroom space.



2009 School Program Tutors

Later in the fall, a tutor training workshop for the Adult Program was held at the Martha Canfield Library in Arlington on four afternoons. Thirteen new recruits came from all over our area including Bennington, Manchester, and Rupert. They completed the workshop



2009 Adult Program Tutors

and became certified tutors, prepared to help adult students learn to read better. Trainers **Sally Brown, Betsy Butler, Sarah Knight, Cristina Mansfield, Chris Wetzel, and Koshka Pabst** collaborated and team taught the workshops. Our new tutors are Elaine Beckwith, Lyn Bernasco, Donna Calder, Ellen Hogan, Karen Krulikowski, Kristin Long, Becca Martin, Tad Martin, Jane Neuschafer, Barbara Ring, Wendy B. Seier, Joy Slusarek, and Karen Tibbets. Our thanks to Phyllis Skidmore and the Martha Canfield Library for providing the space for the workshop.



## Stratton Foundation Provides “Tools” for Learning



School Program tutors and students at Currier School with supplies made possible by the Stratton Foundation.

The **Stratton Foundation** awarded Vermont Reading Partners a grant in 2009 to purchase supplies necessary for “hands-on” learning techniques. These supplies or “tools” may be as basic as scissors, glue, and colored markers, but they provide countless opportunities for VRP tutors to create fun and interesting ways for their students to learn to read and write. With this grant, VRP will be able to purchase enough supplies so that all School Program tutors can customize their “tool boxes” according to the specific needs and interests of each of their students. Students in the program range from Pre-K to sixth grade, and their needs and interests are just as diverse. VRP would like to thank the Board of Directors of the Stratton Foundation for understanding the need for “hands-on” learning tools and for their continuing support of literacy and VRP.

### New Pre-K Class at MEMS

by School Program Tutors Marie and Liz

Yes, it is Friday, when Miss Marie comes. Yes, it is 10 a.m. on Friday, Miss Marie’s favorite time of the week. Each Friday, a Vermont Reading Partner’s Tot Bag enters the preschool wing at Manchester Elementary Middle School. At ten o’clock, before thirty wee eyes, the Tot Bag empties. Soon language flows, energy bubbles, as the preschoolers actively take part in a weekly literacy lesson. Whole and small group settings are successful through cooperation of Mrs. Dianna Scott’s staff and the VRP Tutor, Marie.Sossi. Storytelling, “author’s chair,” and book making are just some of the ongoing activities. Although the preschool program has been in operation for four years, this is the the first year VRP has participated, thanks to the encouragement of MEMS principal Jacqueline Wilson.



On October 26, a Community Celebration was held at the MEMS School for the start of the MEMS Pre-K program. Preschool students and parents were welcomed by Jacqueline Wilson, and the program began with pizza, salad and dessert in the MEMS cafeteria at 5:30 p.m. This was followed by a gathering in a festively decorated Pre-K classroom, with simple crafts for the children, and story reading by Susi Garvin, Early Literacy Outreach Coordinator, with the children’s participation. Three VRP book sharing tables were manned by tutors Marie and Liz, with age appropriate books selected from the VRP library. We encouraged parents and children to give our books a “new home.” The parents were most appreciative, and all the books, by the end of the evening, had journeyed to new homes.

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## February is VRP Literacy Awareness Month

VRP designates February of each year as our Literacy Awareness Month. This coincides with *Read Across America Day* and the birthday of Dr. Seuss, a man who wanted to help children read better by making reading fun. Join our “**Read-In**” (where everyone drops everything and reads for 30 minutes) on Friday, February 26, and support our fundraisers throughout February that provide funds to our tutoring programs.

VRP’s **Hockey Match** will be held on Feb. 14 from 4:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. We will host a **Free Table of Books** for the young and young at heart. The concession stand will be open for those with an appetite. Please join the **Green Mountain Boys** and the **Vermont Law Enforcement Hockey Club** at their annual match-up at the Riley Rink.



## VRP Opens its Eleventh Free Book Swap Location

We’ve opened our eleventh **Free Book Swap** location at **Winchester’s Store** in **Pownal**. The mission of the Free Book Swap program is to bring books and readers together in our community and to foster a love of reading at home as families read together. VRP places new and gently used books for children and young adults at free book swap locations, accessible during business hours, throughout southern Vermont. All books are donated by community members.

Other VRP Book Swap locations are the Wayside Country Store, **West Arlington**; Nichols Store, **Danby**; Stewart’s Shops, **Manchester**; **Shaftsbury** Country Store; BROCC, **Bennington**; Mach’s Market, **Pawlet**; **East Dorset** Jiffy Mart; Oak Hill Child Center, **Pownal**; Sunrise Family Resource Center, **Bennington**; and Vt. Dept. of Health–WIC, **Bennington**.

For more information about VRP and its programs, visit our website at [www.vermontreadingpartners.org](http://www.vermontreadingpartners.org) or call 802-362-2323. Book donations are gladly accepted at the VRP office located at the Zion Church Parish House and Kilburn’s Convenience Store, both locations in Manchester Center.

## Issues On Line

The winter issue is the first Newsletter that will appear on our new website. You can also receive it in PDF form by calling our office. For the present, two issues will be mailed a year and two will appear on the website only.

