



Start The Adventure In Reading



SERVING CHILDREN SINCE 1985

Annual Report 2008

STAIR continues to expand services to New Orleans area children and their families

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Start the Adventure in Reading is a local children's literacy program that provides free one-on-one after school tutoring in reading and language skills to at-risk second-grade public elementary school students as well as literacy support to family members. During the 2007-2008 school year, STAIR served more than 200 children from 27 public elementary schools at 23 tutoring sites in Orleans, Jefferson and Plaquemines parishes. Looking ahead to 2008-2009, we will continue to expand to serve 250 children from 30 schools at 27 tutoring locations.

As it has been for 23 years, STAIR is led by a strong all-volunteer Board of Directors and Advisory Council, staffed by qualified literacy administrators, and endowed with a volunteer force of more than 300 trained community individuals who return year after year to tutor and build relationships with the second grade children in the program.

STAIR Program Evaluation & Strategic Planning Update

This past year, in response to the changing public school landscape particularly in Orleans Parish, STAIR's curriculum underwent an extensive evaluation conducted by reading specialist Karen R. Babbitt, M. Ed. with funding provided by the Reily Foundation. Her written report validated our mission, noting that "STAIR quite consistently meets its goal in helping lower elementary school students improve their reading skills and self-esteem." She also offered recommendations on how STAIR's program could serve additional children.

Beginning in the fall of 2008, STAIR



began acting on the recommendations from the curriculum evaluation. At selected sites, in addition to serving second graders, tutors began tutoring third graders who stand to benefit from the STAIR program. Other pilot sites plan to mix the current mode of one tutor per child tutoring with two-on-one tutoring. According to Babbitt's report, tutoring sessions can be most productive when 2 students with similar needs work together cooperatively. Additionally, sections of the program curriculum and teaching aids have been updated and consolidated to help tutors use the program materials in a more effective way.

In a two-part retreat held in March and September, members of STAIR's board of directors participated in a facilitated strategic planning process to further chart STAIR's course for next year and beyond. Board members reviewed STAIR's mission and developed a shared practical vision for the Year 2011. In the months ahead, STAIR will identify strategic directions and develop an implementation plan that will move the organization forward.

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STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

With the 2007-2008 school year, STAIR began relying on testing scores furnished by all of its participating schools who test the children using the **Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)**.

Both fall and spring DIBELS test scores for each STAIR child were obtained from the schools to determine the success of our program. On average STAIR students' scores in Oral Reading Fluency increased more than 150%!

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2007-2008 Facts and Highlights

- **STAIR's Students:** The demographics of the students served in Orleans, Jefferson and Plaquemines parishes were similar to those during the 2006-07 school year. Of those tutored, 74% were African-American, 13% were Caucasian, 6% were Hispanic, 1% was Asian with 6% not identified. Pre-Katrina, 90% of STAIR's students were African-American, 7% were Caucasian; 2% were Hispanic and 1% was Asian. Additionally this past year, of the total number of children served, there were 54% boys and 46% girls.

- **STAIR Volunteers:** More than 350 community volunteers tutored, tested and assembled curriculum materials during the course of the school year, amassing a total of 14,200 of donated hours to our program. For comparison purposes, this number was 10,000 in 2006-2007. As in years past, during National Volunteer Week, Board members visited STAIR sites to express appreciation to tutors for the work they do. Our annual Volunteer Appreciation Party was held in April at the Garden District Book Shop.

- **STAIR Family Reading Workshops:** The STAIR program benefits both the *child and the family*. As part of its continuing series of family reading workshops, STAIR partnered with parent educators from Children's Hospital's Parenting Center to provide workshops at 8 STAIR sites during the 2007-08 school year. This year's workshop theme was "Bringing Out the Best: Encouraging Your Child's Positive Behavior."

Nearly 125 children, including STAIR students, siblings and children attending after-school programs at schools, and 100 parents,

family members, tutors and volunteers, participated in the Family Reading Workshops held at these STAIR sites during the school year: Carrollton Church of Christ, Berean Presbyterian Church, Jefferson Presbyterian Church, Rayne Memorial United Methodist Church, Holy Angels Congregational Center, Faith Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Lafayette Academy and St. Paul's United Methodist Church.

The program began with a shared reading of a book related to the workshop theme, *Mean Soup* by Betsy Everitt. Then, while the adults attended the parenting session, the children were entertained by special visitors, including the Reading to Rover program, the New Orleans Hornets Bookmobile and Radio Disney, depending on the site. At the conclusion of the program, STAIR and The Parenting Center provided children and family members with take home materials, including new books and literacy resources.

In an effort to expand its family literacy programming to include all students at its participating schools, STAIR is working with a number of schools to help them plan and implement Family Literacy Nights during the 2008-09 school year.

- **STAIR Literacy Bags:** Beginning in January of 2008, every STAIR site began lending Literacy Bags to their students. Titled "Reading is My Bag," the bags are designed to encourage shared reading at home by providing one week of exploration of a particular children's topic. Similar to each site's library, Literacy Bag books have reading levels of varied difficulty. This allows students to practice reading skills while also creating an educational family activity that affords parents, guardians, and family members the opportunity to model STAIR's mission of having children associate reading with pleasure.

- **STAIR's Musical Literacy Program:** With funding and assistance facilitated by the New Orleans Musicians' Clinic and the Rotary Club of Carrollton, STAIR once again provided its students with a musical literacy workshop by local pianist Davis Rogan. Rogan's appearance at all 23 of STAIR's sites during the year encouraged the children to learn and appreciate the songs of New Orleans by reading and learning the lyrics and singing along. This music series will continue at STAIR sites during the 2008-2009 school year.

- **STAIR'S Partnerships:** STAIR's tutoring sites are located at its partner schools, universities and various churches that donate

storage space for curriculum materials and books as well as classroom space for tutoring. STAIR has partnerships with local universities as part of their work-study or service-learning programs. We work with Tulane (2 STAIR tutoring sites at Tulane with Tulane tutors) and UNO (Capdau UNO Charter School site with UNO tutors) and Dillard University (STAIR tutoring site at Dillard with Dillard tutors). Xavier and Loyola universities also provide tutors. Students from area high schools (McGehee, St. Martin's Episcopal, Chapelle, Lusher, and Douglass) serve as STAIR tutors as part of their service learning programs. STAIR also continues to work with its partners **Communities in Schools, Children's Defense Fund, New Orleans Outreach, Junior League of New Orleans, Greater New Orleans Afterschool Partnership, Literacy Alliance of Greater New Orleans, New Orleans Musicians Clinic, First Book-New Orleans** and the **Unified Nonprofits of Greater New Orleans**.

- **STAIR Affiliate Sites:** STAIR's affiliate sites in Birmingham, AL, Wilmington, DE, Port Charlotte FL, Annapolis, MD, Lewisburg, WVA, as well as Ruston LA, continue to flourish. Visit STAIR's web site at www.stairmola.org for information and photos of all of the STAIR programs in action in New Orleans and beyond

Since 1985, the STAIR program has benefited more than 5,000 public elementary school students and their families. As the New Orleans community continues to recover, **Start the Adventure in Reading** will be at the forefront to provide at-risk public elementary school children the literacy resources and support needed to succeed.

Bridget S. Carter *Sara W. Woodard*

Bridget Carter
President

Sara W. Woodard
Executive Director

VOLUNTEER AND IN-KIND DONATIONS

Volunteers donated more than 14,000 hours to STAIR this year! If you add up all of our volunteers' hours — tutors, testers, Board and Advisory Council members, work-day helpers and event volunteers — the total monetary value would be \$353,501! STAIR certainly appreciates the invaluable support of its volunteers.

Statement of Financial Position

June 30, 2008

FINANCIALS		ASSETS	
Revenue and Support — June 30, 2008		Current Assets:	
Corporations/Foundations	\$ 129,807	Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 279,273
Churches	49,534	Restricted cash	4,147
Individuals	58,641	Unconditional promises to give	20,000
Organizations	43,743	Inventory - supplies	250
State	5,000	Prepaid expenses	<u>3,988</u>
Book Fair Events	2,089	Deposits	
Misc. Revenue	3,466	Total Current Assets	\$ <u>307,658</u>
Interest	<u>6,696</u>		
Subtotal	\$ 360,052	Property and Equipment - net:	\$ <u>8,449</u>
In-Kind Contributions	<u>\$226,983</u>	Other Assets:	
TOTAL	\$ 525,959	Library - books and videos	<u>10,715</u>
		Total Assets	\$ <u><u>326,822</u></u>
Expenses — June 30, 2008			
Salaries/Taxes	\$ 205,016	LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	
Transportation	42,600	Current Liabilities:	—
Curriculum/Supplies	18,270	Accounts payable	\$ 2,731
Snacks	5,784	Net Assets:	
PR/Postage/Printing	8,141	Unrestricted	299,944
Audit/Professional Fees	6,023	Temporarily restricted	<u>24,147</u>
Insurance	4,677	Total Net Assets	\$ <u>324,091</u>
Staff Development/Travel	1,677		
Depreciation	2,778	Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ <u><u>326,822</u></u>
Other	<u>9,336</u>		
Subtotal	\$ 304,302		
In-Kind Expenses			
(occupancy, transportation, misc.)	<u>\$ 226,983</u>		
TOTAL	\$ 531,285		

STAIR thanks the following educational institutions, businesses, churches, organizations and individuals for their in-kind support:

A. C. Alexander Elementary School
Algiers Charter School Association
Airline Park Elementary School
Algiers United Methodist Church
Audubon Nature Institute
Banneker Elementary School
Baudouin Elementary School
Behrman Elementary School
Belle Chasse Primary School
Belle Chasse United Methodist Church
Ben Franklin Elementary School
Berean Presbyterian Church
Bethune Elementary School
Bywater Church of Christ
Capdau UNO Charter School
Carrollton Church of Christ
Communities in Schools-New Orleans
Community Church Unitarian Universalist
Dillard University
Donald Jefferson
Drew Elementary School
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English Turn Garden Club
Episcopal Community Services
Esgee Enterprises (Water On-the-Go)
Esperanza Charter School
Faith Cumberland Presbyterian Church
First Book Greater New Orleans
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Garden District Book Shop
Gentilly Terrace UNO Charter School
Glazer's Companies of Louisiana
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Harahan Elementary School
Harney Elementary School
Harte Elementary School
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Independent Presbyterian Church
James Singleton Charter School
Jefferson Elementary School
Jefferson Parish Public Schools
Jefferson Presbyterian Church
Fore!Kids Foundation
Johnson Elementary School
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Lafayette Academy
Lakeview Presbyterian Church
Laurel Elementary School

Literacy Alliance of Greater New Orleans
Louise S. McGehee School
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Lusher Charter School
McDonogh City Park Academy
McDonogh #15 School for the Creative Arts
McDonogh #42 Elementary School
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Plaquemines Parish Public Schools
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Rayne United Methodist Church
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Save Our Schools NOLA
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Woodland Presbyterian Church
Xavier University

STAIR wishes to thank its individual, foundation, organization and corporate donors for their support. The following lists reflect donations made between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008. Gifts received after July 1, 2008, will be acknowledged in a future issue. Every effort has been made to accurately report the names in these lists. Please contact STAIR with any questions or corrections. Thank you for giving the gift of reading!

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Carrollton Church of Christ
Dillard University
S. J. Green Charter School
Holy Angels Congregational Center
Lafayette Academy
McDonogh #15 School for the Creative Arts
Nelson UNO Charter School
Rayne Memorial United Methodist Church
St. Charles Ave. Presbyterian Church
Tulane University-Reilly Center
Woodland Presbyterian Church

JEFFERSON PARISH

Faith Cumberland Presbyterian Church
William Hart Elementary School
Jefferson Presbyterian Church
Airline Park Elementary School/
Parkway Presbyterian Church
St. Paul's United Methodist Church

PLAQUEMINES PARISH

Belle Chasse United Methodist Church

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First Presbyterian Church
Birmingham

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Wilmington

Florida

Edgewater United Methodist Church
Port Charlotte

Pilgrim United Church of Christ
Port Charlotte

Louisiana

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Trinity United Methodist Church
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Thank you to the many individuals who designated donations to STAIR through the United Way and Combined Federal Campaign. The following is a partial list provided by the above organizations:

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STAIR

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My company will match gift (match form enclosed).

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- \$250 to Help provide Bus Transportation
- \$150 to Recruit and Train a Tutor
- \$100 to Provide Literacy Bags for one tutoring site
- \$50 for curriculum materials for 10 students
- \$ _____ Any size gift is greatly appreciated.

Please make checks payable to Start The Adventure In Reading (STAIR)
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THANK YOU FOR GIVING THE GIFT OF READING!