



# STAIR

Start The Adventure In Reading

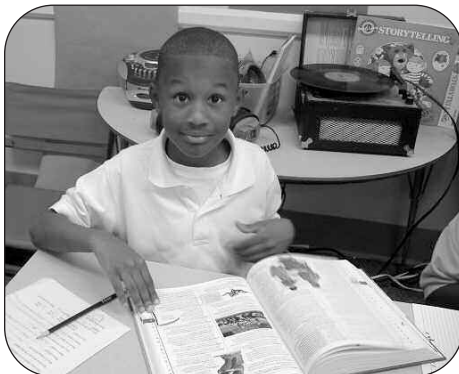


## SERVING CHILDREN SINCE 1985

SUMMER 2008

# STAIR Families Enjoy Reading Workshops

As part of its continuing series of family reading workshops, STAIR partnered with parent educators



*A STAIR student uses his new dictionary provided with funding from the Selley Foundation*

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." The discussion with parents, family members and STAIR tutors covered such topics as promoting your child's inner strength and self-esteem, encouraging positive behavior, and building relationships as the cornerstone to strong and responsible parenting.

Nearly 125 children, including STAIR students, siblings and children attending afterschool 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 Convent, 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 literacy activities presented by such special visitors as the Reading to Rover program, the New Orleans Hornets Bookmobile and Radio Disney,



*Parents and tutors receive information from the Parenting Center at the Family Reading Workshop at Berean Presbyterian Church.*

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.

## STAIR Program Prepares for the Fall School Year

Start the Adventure in Reading (STAIR) is excited to have reached our 23rd anniversary, serving more than 5,000 young students from the greater New Orleans area since 1985.

Our successes in 2007-2008:

- STAIR operated 23 tutoring sites in Orleans, Jefferson and Plaquemines parishes.
- Our tutoring sites served nearly 250 academically at-risk second grade students from 27 public elementary schools.
- More than 350 volunteers provided one-on-one tutoring to second grade students in need of extra help in reading and language skills.

As we prepare for the 2008-2009 school year, we plan to add three additional tutoring sites to serve approximately 300 children from 31 public elementary schools.

**Thanks for giving the gift of reading.**

# STAIR Program Strategic Planning Update

In March, members of STAIR's board of directors participated in a facilitated strategic planning retreat



Facilitator *Erness Wright-Irvin* led STAIR board members at the March 1 Retreat.

to further chart STAIR's course for next year and beyond. Erness Wright-Irvin, a facilitative planning consultant who guided the discussion, was provided to STAIR by the Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations (LANO). 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.

The retreat was preceded by an evaluation of STAIR's curriculum conducted by Karen R. Babbitt, M. Ed. Her

written report noted 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 enhancing the curriculum and how STAIR's program could serve additional children.

Beginning in the fall of 2008, STAIR will act on the recommendations from the curriculum evaluation and those developed at the Board Retreat. At selected sites, in addition to serving second graders, tutors will begin tutoring second-semester first graders as well as previously enrolled third graders who still need the STAIR program.

Other pilot sites will 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 two students with similar needs work together cooperatively. "Benefits of cooperative learning involve improved attention, social motivation to achieve, and observational learning opportunities," she noted. 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.

## STAIR Elects 2008-2009 Officers and New Board Members

As the 2007-2008 STAIR year draws to a close we thank those board members who have completed their terms of service: Cynthia Hedge-Morrell and Ellen P. Gilbert. In keeping with STAIR's literacy mission, each board member will be honored with a new children's book to be donated to a STAIR site.

At the annual meeting in June, the STAIR Board of Directors elected the following officers: President: Bridget Carter, Vice President: Alison Decker Scott, Secretary: Frieda

McGregor, Assistant Secretary: Mary Lee Carver, and Treasurer: Tina Brockmann. The board also welcomed new board members Corinne Quayle Berger, Lucas Diaz, Jade Brown Russell and Lauren Schug.

Retiring Board President Lee R. Adler was recognized for his efforts in leading STAIR since Katrina. Penny Sproles, STAIR Curriculum Specialist, received the Betty Faucette Award for Distinguished Volunteer Service.

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Start The Adventure In Reading

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**President:** Bridget Carter  
**Vice President:** Alison Decker Scott  
**Secretary:** Frieda McGregor  
**Assistant Secretary:** Mary Lee Carver  
**Treasurer:** Tina Brockmann

### MEMBERS:

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**Program/Materials Director,** Janette W. Coco  
**Curriculum Specialist,** Penny Sproles  
**Administrative Assistant,** Debbie Casey  
**LA Delta Service Corpsmember,** Heidi Sherman

# STAIR Students DIBELS Test Scores Show Improvement

With the 2007-2008 school year, STAIR began relying on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) testing scores to measure student improvement in reading. Since all participating schools use

primary assessment. According to the University of Oregon Center on Teaching and Learning which developed the DIBELS assessment, Oral Reading Fluency has been widely and thoroughly researched over the past 30 years and is actually very

highly correlated with reading comprehension. In order to comprehend what they read, children need to have good language skills, vocabulary and background knowledge AND they need to be able to read fluently.



*Reading to Rover at the STAIR site at Rayne Memorial United Methodist Church*

the DIBELS, these scores are an important indicator in determining the success of our program. Fall and Spring DIBELS test scores are being used.

While early test results show definite improvement, final results of the DIBELS testing for all students who participated in STAIR during the 2007-2008 school year will be available during the summer after all of the schools have completed testing.

The DIBELS measures were developed based on the essential early literacy components discussed in both the National Reading Panel (2000) and National Research Council (1998) reports to assess student development of phonological awareness, alphabetic understanding, and fluency with language.

Since the STAIR program works to increase reading comprehension, the DIBELS score measuring Oral Reading Fluency will be used as the

## STAIR Summer Workdays

Join us at one or more of STAIR's Summer Workdays and help prepare the materials we'll need for the next school year. Learn more about STAIR, exchange ideas about tutoring, and enjoy light refreshments! Come for the entire time or drop by for an hour or so. If you plan to attend any of the STAIR Summer Workdays, please RSVP to the STAIR office at 899-0820.

### JUNE 2008

**Wednesday, June 4,** 1:00 – 3:00  
St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church  
1545 State St., New Orleans, LA 70118

**Tuesday, June 10,** 1:00 – 3:00  
St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church  
1545 State St., New Orleans, LA 70118

**Thursday, June 12,** 1:00 – 3:00  
St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church  
1545 State St., New Orleans, LA 70118

**Wednesday, June 18,** 1:00 - 3:00  
Faith Cumberland Presbyterian Church  
3810 Power Blvd., Metairie, LA 70003

**Tuesday, June 24,** 1:00 - 3:00  
St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church  
1545 State St., New Orleans, LA 70118

**Thursday, June 26,** 1:00 - 3:00  
Woodland Presbyterian Church  
5824 Berkley Drive  
New Orleans, LA 70131

### JULY 2008

**Wednesday, July 9,** 1:00 - 3:00  
St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church  
1545 State St., New Orleans, LA 70118

**Saturday, July 19,** 10:00 -12 Noon  
Berean Presbyterian Church  
1629 Simon Bolivar Avenue  
New Orleans, LA

**Wednesday, July 23,** 1:00 – 3:00  
Parkway Presbyterian Church  
6200 Camphor St., Metairie, LA 70003

**Tuesday, July 29,** 1:00-3:00  
St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church  
1545 State St., New Orleans, LA 70118

*“ I think this was the best program that anyone could have come up with. My child has improved in school and her reading grade has come up a lot. Thanks for all the hard work and for all of your Saturdays that you have given up for our kids. ”*

– STAIR Parent



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 website: www.stairnola.org  
 e-mail: stair@scapc.org

**SUMMER 2008**

YOU'RE INVITED...

to be a Friend of STAIR. Just complete this form and mail it to the STAIR office, or visit our website at [www.stairnola.org](http://www.stairnola.org) to make your gift online. It's just that easy! Your contribution to STAIR will give a child the gift of reading. As a Friend of STAIR you will be listed in our annual report and on our website. Please consider a gift today!

**YES, I would like to be a Friend of STAIR!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please charge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to my credit card.  
 VISA     MasterCard    Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Card No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name as on card: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

My company will match gift (match form enclosed).  
 I am interested in volunteering. Contact me.

\$1,000	STAIR Major Supporter
\$750	to Sponsor-A-Student for a year
\$500	to Sponsor a Family Reading Workshop
\$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)*  
**STAIR, 1545 STATE STREET, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70118**

**THANK YOU FOR GIVING THE GIFT OF READING!**