



STAIR

Start The Adventure In Reading



SERVING CHILDREN SINCE 1985

WINTER 2009

STAIR Promotes Family Reading Events with Schools and Community Partners

As part of its continuing effort to involve families, STAIR is working with the schools and several local community partners to provide meaningful and entertaining literacy activities for STAIR children and their families.

Family Reading Events at

Schools: STAIR is working with a number of its participating elementary schools to help them plan and implement Family Literacy Nights during the 2008-09 school year. Events include: "Breakfast and Books" at **Dibert Elementary School**, "Polar Express Night" at **Esperanza Charter School**, "Holiday Read-in" at **A. C. Alexander School**, Night of Family Learning at **Dryades YMCA**, Family Literacy Night at **Nelson UNO Charter School (with the N.O. Hornets Bookmobile!)** and Reading Night at **Harahan Elementary School**. STAIR expects to participate in additional school

Mark Your Calendar:
National Volunteer Week
is April 19 - 25
STAIR Volunteer Party
at Garden District
Book Shop,
Sunday, April 5, 3-5 PM

literacy events during the remainder of the school year.

STAIR also has received a grant from the **Prime Time Family**



Lumar LeBlanc, leader of the Soul Rebels Brass Band, entertained the children and families at the STAIR site at Rayne Memorial United Methodist Church, presenting a program called "Brass Bands, Books and all that Jazz at STAIR!" Sponsored by the New Orleans Musicians Clinic, the Soul Rebels will visit 13 STAIR sites during the 2008-09 school year.

Reading Time program sponsored by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, Target Corporation and the New Orleans Kids Partnership. For six Tuesday nights (Jan. 27-March 10), STAIR is coordinating the Prime Time program of reading, discussion, and storytelling for children and family members from **Dibert Elementary School** and other schools served by STAIR in the New Orleans community. A discus-

sion leader and storyteller conduct weekly book discussions and storytelling programs for children ages 6 to 10 and their parents. Pre-reading activities are also provided for younger siblings. The event also includes a healthy dinner and free books for families to take home.

In each 90-minute session, a storyteller demonstrates effective reading-aloud techniques, and a university professor then leads discussions about the texts. These discussions are centered on humanities themes, such as fairness, greed and dreams. The featured books include award-winning children's books and incorporate culturally diverse titles. They span fairy tales and folk tales from around the world, stories about problems most individuals encounter, and tales from history.

Each session also includes a five-minute "library commercial," allowing librarians to introduce families to library resources, such as other books, homework aids, ESL and GED materials for parents, books on parenting and healthcare, and local and international newspapers and magazines.

Musical Literacy Programs: Research has shown that children exposed to music learn more at

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Thanks for giving the gift of reading.

STAIR PROMOTES FAMILY EVENTS

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school. So STAIR children, family members and tutors are getting "jazzed up" and turned on to both reading and New Orleans music during these hour-long sessions featuring two members of the **Soul Rebels Brass Band**. This program, funded by the New Orleans Musicians Clinic, will be featured at 13 STAIR sites this year. So far the Soul Rebels have appeared at these sites: **St. Charles Ave. Pres. Church, Dryades YMCA, Berean Presbyterian Church, Community Church Unitarian Universalist,**

Rayne Memorial United Methodist Church and Tulane University with more dates to be set for 2009.

Reading to Rover: This program, where STAIR children (accompanied by family members and tutors) read to trained dogs and their handlers, is sponsored by the New Orleans Visiting Pet Program. So far Reading to Rover has visited the STAIR Saturday morning sites at Community Church Unitarian Universalist and Rayne Memorial United Methodist Church with more visits scheduled for the STAIR sites at Berean Presbyterian Church and Open World Family Services in March.

Volunteer Tutors and STAIR Students Work Together

More than 350 community volunteers are tutoring nearly 250 children from 31 public schools at these 26 STAIR sites throughout the New Orleans area: **Orleans Parish:** Algiers United Methodist Church, Ben Franklin Elementary School, Berean Presbyterian Church, Capdau UNO Charter School, Carrollton Church of

Charter School, Open World Family Services, Rayne Memorial United Methodist Church, St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church (2 sites), Tulane



STAIR Site Director Michelle Burl and her STAIR student enjoy a reading lesson at the STAIR site at William Hart Elementary School in Gretna.

Christ, Community Church Unitarian Universalist, Dillard University, Dryades YMCA, Fischer Elementary School, Holy Angels Congregational Center, Lafayette Academy, Nelson UNO



Fun with Reading to Rover at the STAIR site at Community Church Unitarian Universalist.

University-Reily Center (2 sites), Woodland Presbyterian Church; **Jefferson Parish:** John Calvin Presbyterian Church, Faith Cumberland Presbyterian Church, William Hart Elementary School, Jefferson Presbyterian Church, Airline Park Elementary School, St. Paul's United Methodist Church, and **Plaquemines Parish:** Belle Chasse United Methodist Church.

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Start The Adventure In Reading*

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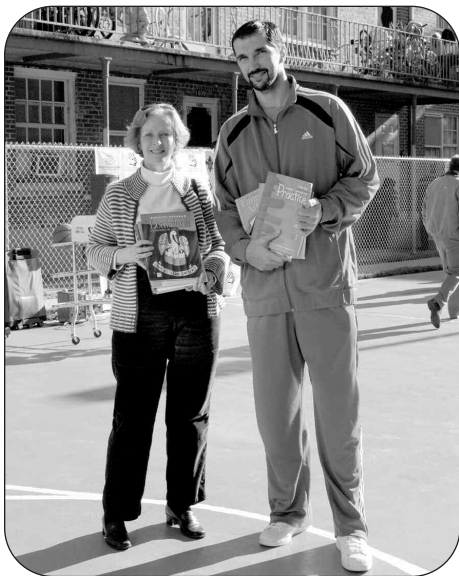
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STAIR Tutors Offer a Variety of Backgrounds and Talents

Currently STAIR has nearly 350 volunteers tutoring at our various sites in the area. Of the total number, 48



The Peja Stojakovic Children's Foundation recently donated new books to the STAIR program and to First Book-New Orleans for distribution to children and families in the area. Shown here with Peja is STAIR Executive Director Sara Woodard who also serves on the First Book-New Orleans Advisory Board.

tutors or 14% are men. This percentage is up slightly since Katrina. As a point of comparison, in 2004-05 the percentage of male tutors was 11%.

This past fall we trained 124 new volunteers. There is a slight increase in the number of Jefferson Parish residents who trained this year. The low number of Jefferson tutors in our survey of 2004-05 was one of the areas of concern. At that time the percentage of new tutors from Jefferson Parish was 26%. Of the 124 new tutors trained in the fall of '08, 37, or almost 30%, were from Jefferson Parish.

STAIR tutors represent the diversity of our city and have many talents. One new tutor recently returned from teaching at the Norwegian International School in Nigeria. We have a licensed brick mason who besides being an excellent STAIR tutor has developed a program to teach high school students about the basics of masonry. One of the members of the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra (French horn) is a STAIR tutor. If you read the regular column

about cheese in *St. Charles Avenue Magazine*, you are reading the work of a STAIR tutor. You might also take Yoga lessons from a STAIR tutor who owns her own studio.

■
"I loved getting to know the students and came to love Mondays and Wednesdays. My student is bright, confident, friendly and so smart. I feel lucky that I got to know him this semester."

STAIR Tutor, Tulane University site

■
There is a professor at Southeastern Louisiana University and Spanish professors from Tulane who tutor for STAIR. A UNO political science professor who has been frequently quoted in the newspaper during the last election cycle is a STAIR tutor. We also have jewelry designers, retired doctors and dentists, a bartender, a bookstore owner, and a sports anchor from WDSU-TV.



Representatives from The Mazda Foundation, which has supported STAIR for the past several years, paid a visit to the STAIR program in the fall. Shown here with Executive Director Sara Woodard are Tamara Mlynarczyk and Barbara Nocera.

New Orleans Public School Enrollment For 2008-09 Increases 12 Percent

The LA Department of Education reports that student enrollment data shows public school enrollment in New Orleans for 2008-09 is up 12 percent over last year. That is 55 percent of the city's pre-Katrina student enrollment data counted in October, 2004.

The report says that most of the increase came from charter school enrollment which grew 14 percent. Schools operated by the Recovery School District increased their enrollment by 10 percent with Orleans

Parish School Board-operated schools growing 7 percent.

Of the total enrollment, 57 percent of the children attend charter schools, 35 percent attend RSD-operated schools and 8 percent attend OPSB-operated schools. Demographics are 90.3 percent African American, 5.2 percent White, 2.2 percent Hispanic and 2.1 percent Asian. Approximately 83 percent of the children qualify for the Free and Reduced Lunch program.



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WINTER 2009

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 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!