



magazine publishers family literacy project

MagazineLiteracy.org
Program Description

Feeding Children Hungry to Read and Succeed

The **Magazine Publishers Family Literacy Project** was conceived in 1994 and incorporated on *International Literacy Day*, September 8, 2004. The program was inaugurated on that day with the launch of **MagazineLiteracy.org**.

We marked our one-year anniversary with great sadness in the wake of hundreds lives shattered by Hurricane Katrina, but with an even greater sense of responsibility, resolve and hope. With over 200,000 children left homeless and on the move to shelters and new schools, on top of 1,000,000 children who seek safety at family homeless and domestic violence shelters at some point each year - often arriving without any possessions - as well as the thousands of teachers and other literacy agents in need of good reading materials, our program is more compelling and timely than ever before.

MagazineLiteracy.org is made possible by the generous support of corporations and local businesses, literacy agents, magazine publishers and stakeholders, and caring individuals. Their inspiration and support has enabled us to launch programs that put magazines in children's hands every month. We continue to add wonderful children's magazines to our portfolio, so children in every age group can have access to every title available. The consumer magazine industry has been supportive with display advertising and invitations to participate in national conferences, such as the FOLIO: Show, where we need to mobilize stakeholders. We have joined with the Association of Educational Publishers (edpress.org) to promote Children's Magazine Month in October each year.

So, although there is great sadness today, tomorrow brings opportunity and hope for marshalling the resolve and support and the generosity necessary to touch the lives of countless children hungry to read magazines.

Join us. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Mennell'.

John Mennell
Founding Director

Additional information about the project is provided below and at our web site:
<http://magazineliteracy.org/>



magazine publishers family literacy project

MagazineLiteracy.org
Program Description



Our Mission:

The mission of the Magazine Publishers Family Literacy Project (MPFLP) is to help children learn to read and to build their self-esteem by promoting reading and family literacy. This is accomplished by mobilizing collaborative business and community-based partnerships that provide children's magazines to schools, shelters, and other educational and non-profit organizations.

The MPFLP aspires to marshal the resolve and the resources necessary to unleash the awesome potential of children's magazines

as a powerful literacy resource. Complementing other vital reading materials, such as books and newspapers, few treasures brighten a child's eyes, smile, and intellect like a magazine. Working with schools, libraries, shelters, and other community literacy programs, and with the magazine publishing industry, magazine consumers and other corporate and individual sponsors, our goal is to build the reading skills and self-esteem of our nation's young people by promoting and supporting magazine-base literacy programs for kids and families.

Program Objectives:

The MPFLP has set out to accomplish the following program objectives:

1. broadly promote children's magazines as a powerful literacy resource for teachers and other community literacy agents;
2. engage "literacy agents" - schools, libraries, shelters, and other community organizations - to use children's magazines to help build reading skills and self-esteem of children and families in need;
3. work with magazine publishers and editors, as well as other media and partners to spotlight and to celebrate magazine-based literacy programs and to design special promotions and new approaches for engaging the American public in the social challenge of illiteracy among youth-at-risk and families;
4. forge collaborative partnerships with national, state, regional and grassroots organizations and government agencies dedicated to improving reading skills, especially for children and families; and,



5. Locate and marshal the financial support of business, community, and individual sponsors, as well as magazine publishers and industry stakeholders, to fund magazine-based literacy programs for children and families in need.

Target Beneficiaries:

The MPFLP focuses attention on programs that support underprivileged children and families, particularly those that lack reading resources. Studies show that children at or near the poverty line are much less likely to have reading materials at home. In collaboration with schools and other literacy agents, the MPFLP helps to make valuable reading materials available for classroom use, homework, and other home study on



a regular schedule. Access to the magazine reading materials, and the added confidence associated with learning to read, also helps to build self-esteem for children. "Literacy Agents" - schools, libraries, shelters, and other community-based programs dedicated to building the reading skills of children and families establish the link to our program services. The literacy agents devise their own reading program specifications and evaluation criteria, and monitor program effectiveness against those targets. Literacy agents help children and families get the most out of the magazines and promote accountability by providing feedback useful for program evaluation, improvement, and replication. Literacy agents report on their programs and progress, providing valuable lessons and models that can be replicated in other communities.

A Literacy Agent or sponsor registers a program that seeks support from the MPFLP. A questionnaire is completed to determine eligibility for program participation. The following types of Literacy Agents are the primary focus of our efforts:

1. **Schools:** reading groups within classrooms; teachers, assistants, parents or community volunteers;
2. **Libraries:** librarians; literacy coordinators & volunteers;
3. **Shelters:** homeless family and domestic violence shelters;



4. **Community Organizations:** literacy programs, after-school programs, recreation centers, and home visiting programs;
5. **Family Literacy Initiatives:** programs to serve children whose parents are also enrolled in literacy programs so parent and child can improve reading skills together, helping to break the cycle of illiteracy;
6. **ESL Programs:** English as a Second Language programs sponsored by schools, libraries and other community organizations.
7. **Anti-poverty Programs:** Illiteracy tightens the grip of poverty. Breaking the cycle of illiteracy one child at a time, and one caring parent at a time can help to give families a fighting chance at self-reliance so they can build full and productive lives;
8. **Foster Family Support Programs:** abused and neglected children suffer well beyond the mistreatment itself due to a lack of family stability, dislocation, and moves from home to home and often from school to school. Magazines are provided to programs that serve children staying with supportive foster or alternative care providers to help bring a sense of ownership and continuity to their lives;
9. **Disaster Relief:** Families who are the victims of home or forest fires, floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, and other natural disasters can lose all their possessions and face dislocation and uncertainty. Access to magazines gives a child something to call their own and helps rebuild a sense of order and continuity.

How Magazines Build Child Success

Magazines offer children important advantages. In today's fast-paced world, literacy agents can leverage magazines to very effectively enhance the reading skills, self-esteem, and productivity of children and families. Magazines - colorful, topical, adventurous, and fun - catch, then hold a child's attention, encourage him or her to want to read, and inspire long-term positive impact on reading skills.

Children, faced with explosive physical, mental and social growth, exhibit an impatient curiosity about the world around them. Information whizzes by in bits and bytes. Attention spans are fleeting. Magazines are especially capable of keeping up with this pace and reaching into a child's world.

Magazines inform and entertain at the same time. They are topical, timely and informative. They are vibrant, colorful and fast-paced. Magazines offer the tremendous potential of engaging young people in the process of developing the reading comprehension necessary to keep pace with their ever-changing world.



Our Programs

MagazineLiteracy.org

This is the main web site for the Magazine Publishers Family Literacy Project. The web site includes information about the mission, programs, events, and history of the project, as well as news and links to other literacy programs.

The MagazineLiteracy.org web site is a key communications vehicle for reaching the general public, and especially supporters and beneficiaries. In addition to providing information about our mission, history and programs, the web site has online application forms for collecting the information that enables the project to match magazine resources to literacy programs.

The web site also lists the children's magazine publications that are available for participating literacy programs. There is an ongoing effort to add additional titles to this portfolio, which involves obtaining permission from the publisher. Our goal is to provide access to every children's magazine available from every publisher. The project defers to teachers and other literacy agents to select the magazines that they feel will best serve the needs of their particular reading programs and children.

Leveraging the web site and the Internet expands the reach of the project, while minimizing costs for outreach and communications.

Magazine Mentors

Finding sponsors to support schools and literacy programs in their own communities is an essential aspect of our mission to promote reading.

Magazine Mentors are businesses, community and school groups, and individuals who sponsor magazines to help kids in schools, homeless and domestic violence shelters, and other literacy programs in their own communities. Magazine mentors also volunteer to find sponsors to support programs they know about.

Individuals, community groups or businesses complete a form on the MagazineLiteracy.org web site to indicate their interest in supporting a literacy program with magazines. The project matches the support with a literacy program and facilitates the follow-up necessary to select and obtain magazines. The literacy program beneficiaries also complete an online application so that their eligibility for program support can be determined.



Kids Magazine Airlift

The Kids Magazine Airlift delivers magazines to teachers and other community literacy agents to help children in need. The Airlift works like a food drive at a grocery store, but feeds kids hungry to read.

Consumers shopping for magazines for their own children at magazine publisher web sites can also purchase a gift that will be sent to help other children. Our project matches the gift subscriptions to schools, shelters and other community literacy programs that serve children and families in need.

This activity enables the project to extend to individuals a convenient mechanism for supporting schools and other literacy programs serving children with much-needed reading materials. We are able to combine the contributions of individual supporters to accumulate the larger quantities needed to meet the needs of a whole class or group of children.

Children's Magazine Month

Children's Magazine Month is a nationwide literacy initiative that celebrates reading, promotes literacy, and spotlights children's magazines as a valuable literacy resource for teachers, librarians, children, parents, and other literacy agents.

The promotion of Children's Magazine Month is managed by our project in collaboration with other organizations that help to publicize the event to their own stakeholders and the general public. These organizations include the International Reading Association and the Association of Educational Publishers and their members.

Children's Magazine Month helps to focus attention on the importance of teaching children to read and provides an opportunity to spotlight and to celebrate the many excellent children's literacy programs across the U.S. The event also spotlights children and families reading together, and the importance of having reading materials in the home. Making the information available about innovative reading programs helps to inspire like initiatives in other communities. This helps to spread the joy and the power of learning to read.

Reading is Fashionable

"Reading is Fashionable" is a campaign to engage the fashion and style industries to help promote and spread the joy of reading to children and families. For example, a fashion model who owns a small business in Harlem sponsored magazines for an after-school program at a nearby school.



magazine publishers family literacy project

MagazineLiteracy.org
Program Description

To be successful our project must reach out across every sector of the general public and our culture. This is accomplished by organizing information campaigns and promotions across many individual sectors. Reading is Fashionable enables us to reach the consumers, businesses and other stakeholders involved with or interested in the style and fashion industries with our messages about literacy and reading. It also helps us to demonstrate the value of focused attention within individual sectors of our culture and inspires like initiatives across a vast and diverse landscape of people, geography and interests.

It takes an industry to reach a child

This campaign engages magazine industry stakeholders to add as many children's magazines as possible to the project's portfolio so literacy programs can receive the publications that best meet the needs of their children and families. Industry stakeholders are also asked to help communicate information about the project to the general public, so more support can be found to serve more literacy programs, children, and families.

This activity helps to energize and unify magazine industry stakeholders, and marshals a tremendous pool of talent and resources to support children's literacy. The project is able to reach out to magazine consumers to promote reading and literacy and to locate sponsors and beneficiaries in communities across the U.S. Reaching out to the diverse audiences served by the magazine publishing industry helps to spread information about the project and to promote reading and literacy across every sector of society.

KinderHarvest

This effort distributes surplus magazines from publishers, which would otherwise be destroyed, to literacy programs or other charitable organizations willing to distribute them to needy children and families. For example, arrangements were made to send a truckload of magazines early child education programs in Mississippi rebuilding from hurricane Katrina. Magazines are also given to food banks and food pantries for distribution to children and families who receive emergency food assistance.

The surplus magazines that are made available via this program would otherwise be discarded and destroyed. This initiative rescues those materials and sends them to programs that are able to distribute them to children and families. This helps to put additional reading materials into schools and other literacy programs, and also into homes where there are not many reading materials available. This



magazine publishers family literacy project

MagazineLiteracy.org
Program Description

helps to promote reading among children and families, helping to strengthen the reading skills and self-esteem of participants.

Our History

John Mennell conceived the idea for the Magazine Publishers Family Literacy Project in 1994 while organizing local and national hunger relief efforts. He knew the joy of reading children's magazines, but also knew that families unable to afford food certainly could not afford magazines for their children. The schools and literacy programs serving these children and families are often short of needed reading materials. He recognized a tremendous untapped opportunity and responsibility.

Since then, John has nurtured and developed the initiative, including outreach and organizing trial programs. Feedback from literacy agents - such as schools, reading programs, homeless and domestic abuse shelters, and foster care programs - has underscored a compelling need for matching magazines to children and families in reading programs that would otherwise not be able to obtain them. Initial outreach to sponsors, including individuals, corporations, and children's and consumer magazine publishers, has shown that there is strong interest and generous support for taking the project to the next level so that more children and families can be reached.

In recent years, in order to gauge the interest and explore the logistics of the concept, John pooled funds with support from friends and colleagues to purchase full-year magazine subscriptions for two schools serving over 300 children. The financial support was provided directly to schools that, in turn, purchased the magazines for their classrooms. These trial initiatives spanned four years and resulted in many valuable lessons. The ability to move the program forward, conducting early-stage research and preparation, and then to execute the current program model was made possible by the enthusiastic encouragement of magazine publishing, education and literacy leaders.

The MPFLP was incorporated on International Literacy Day, September 8, 2004, and inaugurated with the launch of MagazineLiteracy.org. The more formal organizational structure, along with leveraging the Internet site, are the means for building on early success to reach more literacy programs, to serve more children and families, and to find the necessary community-based sponsors. The MagazineLiteracy.org web site is a robust repository for information, news, program descriptions, and ongoing progress reports.



Our Team

John Mennell - *Founding Director and Chairman*

John's professional career spans Capitol Hill, Wall Street, Main Street, and the Information Superhighway. He is an entrepreneur recognized for innovation, leadership, and public service. His ideas have been lauded by the Benton Foundation and the prestigious ComputerWorld/Smithsonian Award program for leveraging technology to improve the effectiveness of human service delivery. In 1992, John received a Governor's Volunteer of the Year award for organizing large-scale domestic hunger relief efforts. Building on that, John engineered a national, toll-free telecommunications network that connected over 50,000 calls from hungry people to community food pantries. His project plan resides in the permanent research collection of the Smithsonian Institution and has served as a model for other national hunger relief hotlines. Along with the director of a community volunteer clearinghouse, John also co-founded an innovative shared office facility for human service collaboration that was spotlighted on the front page of the *Wall Street Journal* as a model initiative.

John earned his Public Policy degree from Cornell University, where he was elected Chairman of the campus government and selected by his peers to be President of the Quill and Dagger Senior Honorary Society. Prior to that, John co-founded, with a high school friend, the Arnold's East Teen Center to serve as an alternative to alcohol and drug abuse for kids in his hometown. During a summer at Cornell, John helped teens in a nearby rural town launch their own community newspaper. After college, John worked as a press secretary and legislative aide for education and employment issues on Capitol Hill, and as a software engineer and information technology consultant in the financial services, telecommunications, and human service industries.

John's interest in founding the Magazine Publishers Family Literacy Project and the MagazineLiteracy.org web site stems from the lifelong joy he has known reading magazines and also his experiences as a youth mentor. Two compelling lessons have been especially inspiring. First, the awareness that a child cannot do well in any school or life subject unless they know how to read. A child who reaches the upper grades without knowing how to read is a child lost. The second lesson comes as feedback from teachers and other Literacy Agents who say that, without help from programs like this, they would not be able to provide wonderful magazines to children and families learning to read.



Melissa Cocci Lockett, Esq., *Secretary*

An attorney in the District of Columbia, Melissa previously lived in Columbus, Ohio where she gained extensive legal experience in the public and private sectors as sole corporate counsel for an Internet start-up, SubmitOrder, Inc., contracts counsel for a publicly traded software company and deputy counsel for the Governor of Ohio. As deputy counsel, she was involved in education and educational initiatives as an adjunct professor of legal courses at the college level and as the legal counsel for statewide education reforms. It was her time in the Governor's office that left an indelible impression of the importance of education in the lives of children. Melissa appreciates the need to encourage children to read by making reading enjoyable and relevant.

Melissa is an active member of the District of Columbia and Ohio Bar Associations and holds an escrowed license in Pennsylvania. She is a graduate of Capital University Law School in Columbus, Ohio and Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

Christopher Lockett, *Treasurer*

Chris is currently an executive recruiter specializing in the financial services and accounting industries. Prior to this he served as the Financial Officer for Stewart Title Group, LLC, which is an affiliate of the multi-national corporation Stewart Title Guaranty. There he was charged with the management of all funds received and distributed as well as compliance with local and federal laws for monetary transfers. In his free time, Chris is involved in private tutoring, in-class instruction and teacher training for post-graduate testing programs through Kaplan, Inc., which provides him an opportunity not only to help students but also hone his skills in the areas of math, reading, and logic.

Chris has also served as a Special Assistant to the Ohio State Treasurer. His duties included oversight of broker compliance and bond underwriter qualifications. He also assessed the financial impact of prospective and newly implemented Office initiatives. Chris began his career as a small business underwriter for Commerce National Bank in Columbus, Ohio where he gained invaluable experience in financial statement analysis. His background in the public and private sectors, including the banking industry provides a comprehensive base of financial knowledge.



Chris attended the University of Cincinnati where he studied Architecture and International Economics on his way to a Bachelor's Degree of Business Administration in Finance.

Carrie Snyder, Director

Carrie has had her hand in everything from social justice to developing a web site for Interior Designers. She graduated Summa Cum Laude from the School of Justice at the American University. Her passion for social reform and justice has allowed her many opportunities to be involved in outreach programs, educational reform and aiding the homeless.

In addition, Carrie has had her own design firm for over ten years. During that time she developed two web sites -- the first a resource site for designers, the other a "how to" site for those interested in design. Her experience in both social reform and web site development allows her to share a unique insight in the Magazine Publishers Family Literacy Project.

Carrie has been involved in various elementary schools reading programs, and has a passion for reading and sharing that with children.

Susan Grubbs, Director

Susan Grubbs is currently the Program Director for the Cappies of Greater Cincinnati. The Cappies is a critics and awards program for high school students in the performing arts. She introduced this program to high schools throughout the Greater Cincinnati area to bring recognition and acclaim to the exceptional talent and efforts that are demonstrated by high school students everywhere, yet many times go unrecognized.

Susan graduated with a degree in Medical Technology from Quinnipiac University, Hamden, CT. and completed her internship at Yale-New Haven Hospital. After working in the hospital laboratory for one year, Susan worked in a number of increasingly responsible positions in private industry. She began as a Technical Education Specialist, and moved into sales and marketing and in-house management for a major biomedical company in San Francisco. Prior to Cincinnati, Susan lived in Rome, Italy and Mexico City, Mexico.

As a mom and community leader, Susan knows that magazines can be one of the first self-esteem builders for children.