# LITERACY PARTNERSHIPS THAT WORK

## HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, OCTOBER 8, 2002

**Serial No. 107-82**

Printed for the use of the Committee on Education and the Workforce

83-203 pdf

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# LITERACY PARTNERSHIPS THAT WORK

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**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2002**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM,**

**COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE**

**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10 a.m., in Room 2175, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Mike Castle [chairman of the subcommittee] Presiding.

Present: Representatives Castle, Ehlers, Biggert, Osborne, Culberson, Wilson, Kildee, Scott, Woolsey, Hinojosa, McCarthy, Davis, Payne, Kind, and Holt.

Also Present: Representatives Boehner, Johnson, and Isakson.

Staff Present: Julian Baer, Legislative Assistant; Alexa Callin, Communications Staff Assistant; Sally Lovejoy, Director of Education and Human Resources Policy; Patrick Lyden, Professional Staff Member; Maria Miller, Coalitions Director for Education Policy; Deborah L. Samantar, Committee Clerk/Intern Coordinator; Jo-Marie St. Martin, General Counsel; Bob Sweet, Professional Staff Member; Heather Valentine, Press Secretary; Liz Wheel, Legislative Assistant; Mark Zuckerman, Minority General Counsel; Maggie McDow, Minority Legislative Associate/Education; Alex Nock, Minority Legislative Associate/Education; and Joe Novotny, Minority Staff Assistant/Education.

## *OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MICHAEL N. CASTLE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.*

**Chairman Castle**. A quorum being present, the subcommittee will come to order. We are meeting today to hear testimony on literacy partnerships that work. Under committee rule 12(b), opening statements are limited to the Chairman and the Ranking Minority Member of the

subcommittee. Therefore, if other members have statements, they may be included in the hearing record.

With that, I ask unanimous consent for the hearing record to remain open 14 days to allow member statements and other extraneous material referenced during the hearing to be submitted in the official hearing record. Without objection, so ordered.

We will start with my opening statement.

Let me first say good morning to everybody. I am pleased to welcome you to the Education Reform Subcommittee's hearing on literacy partnerships that work. Today, more than 21 percent of our adult populations, which is more than 40 million Americans over the age of 16, have only rudimentary reading and writing skills. Another 22 percent cannot fill out a job application, follow a prescription, or even read a simple children's story.

Too many adults do not have the skills to find and keep a job, support their child's education, or participate actively in civic life. Worse, I have been told by people who have not been given the time or attention to learn to read that it is a horribly humiliating and frustrating experience. Reading is such a fundamental skill that many of us take it for granted. However, we now know that reading is a skill that does not come naturally. For children who don't learn to read, an early educational stumble can easily translate into a lifelong learning disability. In fact, of the 10 to 15 percent of children who will eventually drop out of high school, over 75 percent will report difficulties learning to read. In addition, surveys of adolescents and young adults with criminal records indicate that at least half have reading difficulties. Fortunately, children who are at risk for reading failure can learn to read at average or above levels if they are identified early and provided with intensive instruction.

For that reason, the recently enacted No Child Left Behind education reform law includes a new Early Reading First Program, which will enhance reading readiness for children ages 3 through 5. It also includes a new Reading First Program that will help ensure that all children can read by the end of third grade.

During the extensive negotiations on the new bipartisan education reform law, I was pleased that business groups, recognizing their own demand for knowledgeable and talented staff, came out in strong support for our efforts to improve student achievement for all children, regardless of their challenge or disability. As we all know, education is not just the responsibility of our federal, state, and local governments; it is our collective responsibility. Whether it is a parent reading to a child or a business reaching out to those in need in their community, we all have a role to play in helping people who lack literacy skills overcome their difficulties.

I want to thank all of you here today for your interest, and this panel in particular for your efforts to draw the public's attention to the problem of illiteracy.

When we announced our plans to hold a hearing on this topic, we were overwhelmed with requests from associations, organizations, businesses, and others who wanted to testify. While we could not accommodate everyone, I do want to acknowledge those present in our audience today

who have used their celebrity status to promote literacy, including Dick Enberg, CBS sportscaster. Where is Dick? Dick, why don't you stand? There he is. Also here is Chris Thorpe, our silver medalist in the luge; Lee Ann Parsley, our silver medalist in the skeleton; and Mike Kohn, our bronze medalist in the bobsled. Mike, if you could stand. We really do thank all of you and appreciate your being here.

Less well recognized but no less appreciated are those of you who work in the frontlines, combating the problem of illiteracy. Again, there are simply too many to name here, but I would like to single out the National Institute for Literacy for their efforts.

I thank you all for your efforts to take your own ability and give to others the gift of literacy. Unleashing the potential of these children and these adults is a wonderful thing to do. I am pleased for the opportunity to highlight all literacy efforts, from the Office of the First Lady to our community efforts in states like Delaware.

In a moment I will proceed with the introduction of our distinguished panel. In another moment, I will yield to the Ranking Member, Dale Kildee. But before we do that, I would yield to the Chairman of the full education committee, Mr. John Boehner.

WRITTEN OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MICHAEL N. CASTLE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.—APPENDIX A

## *OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN JOHN A. BOEHNER, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.*

**Chairman Boehner**. Mr. Castle, thank you for yielding time. Let me thank all of you who have come today to testify on this very important subject. I thank all of you, as the Chairman has already, for your work in helping to combat illiteracy in America.

As the Chairman pointed out, there are some 40 million Americans who have little to no reading skills. We as a society and we as a country can't continue successfully unless our citizens are educated. Last year, we were negotiating the No Child Left Behind Act, which brings a great deal of focus into early childhood reading. During that time I had to remind some of our colleagues that it is not the fault of those children who grow up in a rotten household or a rotten neighborhood. We as a society have a responsibility to ensure that these children get a chance at a good education.

One of the things that we have all learned through this process over the last several years is that every child can learn. Our responsibility is to ensure that every child has a chance to learn. For those of you who are dealing with adult illiteracy, let me congratulate you. We have spent a lot of time here on this committee during the last several years trying to focus efforts to ensure that we don't add to those numbers. With this new reading program, we also want to ensure that all

children will be able to read by the end of the third grade.

So let me just say congratulations to all of you for your fine work. Thank you for being here. I look forward to your testimony.

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you, Chairman Boehner.

Now, for whatever statement he may wish to make, I will yield to Ranking Member Dale Kildee, whose interest in education is a legend built over many decades.

## *OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MINORITY MEMBER DALE E. KILDEE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.*

**Mr. Kildee**. Thank you. You are very kind. Having been a former teacher myself, I want to thank you for holding the hearing this morning. I apologize for being late. I will be running in and out, since I have a mark up on 20 bills in the Resources Committee. Resource is the other committee I serve on, but I wanted to be here today. This is a very important topic.

I think we all recognize that up to the third grade, a child learns to read. After that, they read to learn. If they haven't learned to read well by the third grade, then they aren't going to be able to read to learn after that. We can do some remediation, but very often that remediation is inadequate. So it is very important that by the end of the third grade they are reading, and that they are skillful readers. Otherwise, they will not be able to read to learn.

It is also important to note that in this country we have adults who have literacy problems. I can recall, about 20 years ago, when they were rebuilding the Buick plant in Flint. They thought about closing it down, but they had to retrain the workers. They found many of the workers actually didn't need training in computer science. They actually needed literacy training. That is very important. We have to address this issue. There are adults who try to hide the fact that they are not highly literate or are hardly literate at all.

I believe that this committee wants to address both of these groups. Both to make sure that our children have learned to read by the end of the third grade and to help our adults achieve literacy.

Mr. Chairman, I will submit my entire statement into the record. However, I would like to yield the balance of my time, with your indulgence, to the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Payne.

WRITTEN OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MINORITY MEMBER DALE E. KILDEE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C. – APPENDIX B

## *OPENING STATEMENT OF REPRESENATIVE DONALD M. PAYNE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.*

**Mr. Payne**. Thank you very much, Mr. Kildee. I would like to commend you also for your many years of work as a former teacher. I find that this question of literacy is so important.

Back in 1989, the first bill that I introduced to Members was to establish a National Literacy Day. It won overwhelmingly, and July 2nd was then proclaimed National Literacy Day. We then moved forward to the establishment of the National Literacy Institute here in Washington, D.C., which is the clearinghouse for the promotion of literacy nationwide. We also encouraged States to set up State literacy councils. We had a very active council in New Jersey, with Governor Florio at the time, who appointed his wife as the leader of literacy.

I think it is something, as has been indicated, that over 40 million Americans are illiterate. The number is increasing because of new Americans who are coming into the country. I think it is really good to see outstanding people like the athletes and presidents of corporations that have volunteered their time, especially today with the Dow going the way it is. However, I don't want to get into that, I know you have other issues before you, but it is wonderful to see you here. Also, as a former high school football and track coach while teaching at Newark, it is great to see people that young people look up to, our athletes, our Olympians, come forward.

Finally, I would like to really mention a program that I worked on in close cooperation with two partners, Sesame Street Workshop and the Prudential Foundation. Prudential headquarters are also in Newark, New Jersey. We have seen programs like this have such an impact in 20 different countries when Sesame Street goes before children, trying to encourage them to read.

I would like to commend Chairman Castle for calling this very important hearing. I would like to also thank each and every one of you who have come out this morning. It is an important issue. Together we can defeat illiteracy if we work together. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Kildee, for yielding.

WRITTEN OPENING STATEMENT OF DONALD M. PAYNE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C. – APPENDIX C

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you, Mr. Payne, and thank you, Mr. Kildee.

We will turn to our witnesses, and I will explain the ground rules briefly. I will introduce each of you. Actually, one person will be introduced by another panel member. Then you will each have 5 minutes in which to speak. There are lights on the table. It is green for 4 minutes, yellow for 1 minute, and red for thereafter. Red, theoretically, is the end of it, and at some point we might bang the gavel, but I don't know. I think with Mr. Jones I won't bang the gavel at all. He

is on his own. Then, after that, it is over.

We will each take turns of 5 minutes in which we are supposed to fit in our questions and your answers. That is the format in which we will be moving forward.

Let many introduce our witnesses, starting with Mr. Jones. Mr. James Earl Jones, of course, is one of America's most distinguished and versatile actors. He has had a successful career in film, television, and on the stage. He is best known to many as the voice of Darth Vader and CNN, as well as a national literacy spokesman for Verizon. He has received numerous honors, including the National Medal of Arts and Honorary doctorates from Yale, Princeton, and Columbia Universities.

I know that doesn't do total justice to your career, but that is all we have time for right now.

Mr. Ivan Seidenberg is the president and Chief Executive Officer of Verizon. Mr. Seidenberg has a longstanding commitment to education and is a proponent of connecting students and teachers to technology. He strongly advocated a special rate to connect schools and libraries to the Internet. He also serves on the boards of the New York Hall of Science and Pace University.

Mr. Ralph Kuebler is the Executive Vice President for the MBNA Foundation in Wilmington, Delaware. He currently manages the overall administration of community education initiatives within the MBNA Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the quality of education. Previously, he has served as strategic manager and as a group manager in product development for MBNA. Mr. Kuebler has served on the boards of the Center for the Creative Arts, the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation of Delaware, and the Business Education Partnership for the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce.

I will yield to Mr. Johnson for the introduction of Mr. Rawlings.

**Mr. Johnson**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to be with you today. As you know, Mr. Rawlings has served as president and Chief Concept Officer for the Dallas-based Pizza Hut since June 7, 1997. Under his leadership, overall operating profit has doubled and margins have improved to record highs. He was a letterman at Boston College, so I guess that qualifies him for the Olympics, right? In fact in 1999, Dallas' D Magazine recognized Pizza Hut's progress under Mr. Rawlings' leadership, and named Pizza Hut the best company to work for in Dallas. I can assure you, based on the size and number of companies in Dallas, that is nothing short of a Texas-sized compliment.

As you know, Pizza Hut currently employs 200,000 people nationwide; 566 actually live in my congressional district. Mr. Rawlings' commitment hasn't stopped at just focusing on the people of Pizza Hut, but has caused a turnaround in the company's culture. Because of his focus, Pizza Hut's BOOK IT! program truly has become a literacy partnership that works. I am pleased to say that Pizza Hut has made it possible for 101 classrooms in my congressional district to have a national reading incentive program.

Thank you, Mr. Rawlings. We appreciate your guidance and the help with your BOOK IT! Program. I thank you so much for being here today.

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you, Sam.

Let me go back to Mrs. Mary Belle Escamilla. She and her family have participated in Columbia's Even Start program for 2-1/2 years. Mrs. Escamilla has obtained her GED, and Mr. Escamilla, who is also with us today, is now working towards his real estate license. They are accompanied by their 2-1/2-year-old son, and actually the reason we are here is to educate that son, Gustavo Arturo Escamilla. We are delighted to have all of you here.

Finally we will have Ms. Judith Stoia, who is executive producer of the PBS children's series "Between the Lions." Today Theo the Lion accompanies her. Previously, Ms. Stoia worked at WCVB TV, the ABC affiliate in Boston, where she created a nightly news magazine, Chronicle. At ABC, she became executive producer and oversaw documentaries, Presidential debates, a children's series, and after-school specials. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including Emmys, Gabriels, and Peabodys. We welcome you, Ms. Stoia.

With those introductions complete, we will go to our witnesses. Please get the microphones as close to you as you can so the whole room can hear.

**Chairman Castle**. Mr. Jones, we will start with you, sir.

## *STATEMENT OF MR. JAMES EARL JONES, NATIONAL LITERACY SPOKESMAN, VERIZON, WASHINGTON, D.C.*

**Mr. Jones**. I want to thank you, Chairman Boehner, Chairman Castle, Congressman Kildee, and members of the committee, for inviting me here and giving me the opportunity to have this unlimited and ungaveled time to talk with you. I promise I will not abuse it.

You have asked me to speak about literacy today, and I could not be more proud of my association with an exceptional company like Verizon. As its company spokesperson, I have had a chance to see how passionate they are about literacy and how strongly they are committed to be America's literacy champion. My role as Verizon's spokesperson gives me the opportunity to be a literacy advocate and travel across America, reading to children and talking to them about the importance of books in their lives. It is by far one of the most enjoyable things that I do.

Creating a more literate society is a responsibility that falls on every person who can read. Verizon's focus on literacy makes that job easier for many people, and I know it is deeply appreciated by the Nation's leading literacy providers and by local literacy agencies and volunteers all across the country.

Ninety-two million Americans have low or very low literacy skills. That means they cannot read above the sixth-grade level. To be illiterate in America, or anywhere for that matter, is to be unsafe, uncomfortable, and unprotected. For the illiterate, despair and defeat serve as daily fare. A

world of uncertainty rises anew with every word they confront in black and white.

Can any of us who do know how to read really understand the sadness that is associated with the inability to read? Can we understand the silent humiliation that always attends it, the quiet desperation that can't really be expressed, and the hundreds of ways that those who cannot read struggle in shame to keep their secret? While most of us in this room cannot possibly understand fully the anguish of those who cannot read, I can, because it affected my family.

Parthenia Connolly was my great, great grandmother. She made her way to this country from Ireland before the Civil War. She indentured herself as a servant and ended up in Mississippi, where she met and eventually married my great-great-grandfather, Brice.

I mention her because Parthenia lived in a very different age, an age where because she dared to teach a black man to read, she was a criminal in the eyes of the law. The man she taught, her husband, Brice, a black man who had the audacity to learn how to read, was guiltier than she was and subject to the harshest punishment if his secret was known. Ironically, Brice learned to read and feared that others might find out.

Today it is the man or woman who can't read who puts a great deal of energy and creativity into the effort to keep their illiteracy a secret. I have wondered sometimes what Brice must have thought as the foreign words and symbols of the English language began to unravel themselves in his mind. I can't help but think that his very first taste of real freedom in this country came the day he made the connection between a familiar word and some letters in a book. He must have known that he had found the real key to self-possession, the real key to unlocking the chains of his slavery.

While Brice's story is not unique, it is highly illustrative of the struggle out of literacy, and it was and still is part of the story of America.

In my family, we say the love of reading and book learning is in our bone memory. Parthenia and Brice passed on their love of reading to my great-grandfather, Wyatt, who owned a modest library and encouraged his family to read his books and to revere them. I am told that now and then Wyatt would tempt his children and grandchildren by allowing them to simply touch the books he owned, to hold them very carefully and to treat them with respect.

Those seeds certainly took root in my grandfather, John Henry, the man who raised me and made sure that I got a good education. For that and many other reasons, he is my hero. He helped me to discover the world. Books were his cherished possessions. They are no less to me.

As a child, I gave up speech. I stuttered badly, and so I retreated and lived in a world of silence rather than speak. But I found my voice in books, and I found the expanded vocabulary that is so important for someone who stutters. I developed a love for science and science fiction, the tales of the impossible. Jules Verne took me on adventures under the sea, under the Earth, and through time itself. Through his words, through my ability to read them, I could serve with Captain Nemo and thrive in a variety of worlds. I was mute to the outside world, but there were hundreds of conversations in my head. That is the beauty of reading that all children discover, the world that

grown men and women can discover when they too learn how to read.

Today I come before you as a literacy advocate for Verizon, and I am just one of the many celebrity personalities who have partnered with Verizon and accepted the challenge to bring this insidious disease out of the closet. We are a deeply committed group, and proud to do our part. Lawmakers, reading teachers and tutors, corporate philanthropists, educators, and literacy volunteers, all of us have an important and necessary role addressing this issue. The hope that is ours to give to the illiterate is ageless, a prize that my great-great-grandfather Brice would have easily recognized. It is in his name and in the spirit of hope that Parthenia awakened in him that I thank you for letting me share this time with you.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR. JAMES EARL JONES, NATIONAL LITERACY SPOKESMAN, VERIZON, WASHINGTON, D.C. – APPENDIX D

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you, Mr. Jones, for your very compelling testimony. We appreciate it.

Mr. Seidenberg.

## *STATEMENT OF MR. IVAN SEIDENBERG, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, VERIZON, WASHINGTON, D.C.*

**Mr. Seidenberg**. Chairman Castle, Chairman Boehner, Congressman Kildee, and the members of the committee, Verizon is very pleased to be here this morning to participate in this hearing, and as you know, we are committed to fight this battle against illiteracy.

I am here to describe very briefly for you the comprehensive program that we put in place in our company to address these various issues. We call the umbrella program Verizon Reads. Under this program, literacy is a major focus of our philanthropic efforts. The Verizon Foundation donated more than $20 million to literacy organizations in 2001.

We also have a program where our customers can participate directly through a unique option we call Check Into Literacy, which is a check off box on your phone bill through which customers can donate $1 a month to literacy organizations in their communities. We then distribute the funds back into their communities.

As you also know, we have enlisted the time and talents of very important people across the country to bring attention to the cause by becoming Verizon literacy champions. You have met the amazing folks behind us today, as well as the esteemed Mr. James Earl Jones.

We also have 240,000 employees and retirees who are very crucial to this effort. We encourage their involvement through matching gift programs and other initiatives to promote volunteerism on their part. Just last year, this resulted in 15,000 hours of volunteer time devoted to tutoring, reading to children, running book drives, etc., and more than 60,000 books donated in our annual "Seasons Readings" campaign across our company.

We have also developed the Verizon Literacy Network on the World Wide Web as a one-stop resource for literacy information. Early next year we will extend this network even further by creating the Verizon Literacy University on the Internet.

Working with our partners in the literacy community, we intend to arm volunteers with the skills to assist literacy organizations across the country, dramatically changing the way services are offered through the practical application of our communications technology.

Of course, we are in this with many other important partners. We have closely aligned ourselves with the nation's leading literacy organizations such as National Center for Family Literacy, the National Institute for Literacy, ProLiteracy, and the National Alliance of Urban Literacy Coalitions.

Verizon's mission in all of this is highly focused. We work to raise public awareness, create partnerships, and generate financial support for local and national literacy organizations so they can do their jobs more effectively. Our experience shows that it takes more than traditional corporate philanthropy to make an impact on a complex social problem such as illiteracy. It takes collaboration, commitment, and long-term grassroots involvement.

Government can be an important part of this collaboration. In particular, the literacy community is very grateful for this Congress's support for family literacy initiatives that strengthen parents' ability to be their children's first and most important teacher. These programs are crucial to breaking the vicious cycle of low educational attainment and poverty.

There is also a critical need for additional funding for literacy research and methodologies that can better evaluate the state of literacy in America. Verizon, along with our literacy partners, applauds the House of Representatives for passing H.R.1, known as the "No Child Left Behind" act. Now we can all do more. We must make sure that no person is left behind regardless of age, geography, disability, or any other barrier.

Just last week, we were pleased to announce the latest member of our extraordinary Verizon literacy champions. His name is Erik Weihenmayer. Among Erik's achievements is that he has climbed the tallest peak on each of the world's seven continents, including Mount Everest. Erik also happens to be blind. Erik was with us last week when we joined the American Foundation for the Blind in supporting an initiative that will promote literacy for the blind by transcribing textbooks into Braille.

Every day, a child's mind is unlocked, a mother's bond with her children strengthened, a person's disability overcome, all by the simple power of learning to read. Unfortunately, there are vast populations in this country that remain locked in a cycle of illiteracy; a pattern that, left unaddressed, has dire consequences for our society. Verizon will continue to attack this issue. We urge the rest of corporate America, as well as our valuable partners in government and education to join us in this fight.

Thank you for your attention and for the work that you are doing in this issue.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR. IVAN SEIDENBERG, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, VERIZON, WASHINGTON, D.C. – APPENDIX E

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you, Mr. Seidenberg, for what you are doing also.

Mr. Kuebler.

## *STATEMENT OF MR. RALPH KUEBLER, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, MBNA FOUNDATION, WILMINGTON, DELAWARE*

**Mr. Kuebler**. Thank you, Chairman Boehner, Chairman Castle, and members of the subcommittee, for inviting me to testify today on the topic of literacy partnerships that work. I am an executive vice president with MBNA, headquartered in Wilmington, Delaware. We are the largest independent credit card lender in the United States, with more than 50 million customers.

From its inception in 1982, MBNA has believed strongly in community involvement. In 1997, MBNA decided to increase our emphasis on education and created a foundation to enhance educational opportunities for students. Since then, I have been the managing director of the foundation's grants programs, college scholarship programs, education-related corporate donations, and school volunteer programs. My remarks today will focus on our grants programs where we have the best opportunity to partner with schools in ways that promote literacy.

As we all know, the ability to read is crucially important today. The development of partnerships with schools particularly to advance literacy was and continues to be a major goal of MBNA. However, our expertise is in banking, not education; therefore, we needed a partnership program that could, one, operate at the grassroots level; two, involve teachers; three, provide resources for the classroom; and four, incorporate accountability.

We designed the grants program with all these components, programs that could be used as models for other businesses that are willing to invest the people, the time, and the money to make it work. As of today, MBNA has funded more than 6,000 teacher-generated grants and provided more than $32 million in areas where our foundation operates. In Delaware alone, $4 million is earmarked annually to fund the grants programs.

Here are some examples of what we have been able to provide teachers to support literacy: increased numbers of reading books for classrooms and school libraries; leveled books and software to give extra help to students who are performing below grade level; assistive technology materials to enhance reading and writing experiences; support for before- and after-school remedial reading programs; professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their instruction in reading and writing; student incentive programs to put extra books in the hands of students; access to literary artists, poets, and other guest lecturers to excite students about reading and writing; tutorial assistance to provide one-on-one help for students; funding for the development of school newspapers, radio stations, class trips, and other activities that increase opportunities for students to practice reading and writing; support for mentoring programs that match adults with

students; and support for read-a-thons and book clubs.

This list goes on and on.

Then, for accountability, at the conclusion of every funded grant, the recipient must provide us with a program evaluation. Three times a year, MBNA publishes a newsletter highlighting successful grants and distributes it to all the teachers eligible to apply for our grants program. The success of the MBNA grants program is in the ability to have teachers tell us what supplemental programs, equipment, and material they need to improve the achievement of their students.

In addition to our grants program, MBNA participates in the Help One Student To Succeed program, in which MBNA people volunteer to tutor a child, at a school, one-on-one, for 1 hour a week. We also encourage and help develop partnerships between MBNA divisions and schools located near our many offices. Company policy allows all MBNA people 4 hours per month of paid volunteer time during normal working hours.

For the past 7 years, MBNA has partnered with the Gannett Company in its Newspapers in Education program, providing educational supplements to teachers and their students to promote reading and writing through the use of the daily newspapers. We also support numerous nonprofit organizations, such as Reading Is Fundamental, Reading Assistance Institute, Read Aloud, and Literacy Volunteers of America.

When it is all added up, MNBA and its people support education in many ways, year in and year out, and we will continue to look for effective ways of partnering with teachers and with schools to help all children develop strong literacy skills that will enrich their lives.

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I thank you for the privilege of appearing before you this morning. I wish you well in your deliberations, and would be happy to provide any additional information you may find helpful. Thank you.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR. RALPH KUEBLER, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, MBNA FOUNDATION, WILMINGTON, DELAWARE – APPENDIX F

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you, Mr. Kuebler.

Mrs. Escamilla, we look forward to hearing about your real-life experiences.

## *STATEMENT OF MRS. MARY BELLE ESCAMILLA, MEMBER, EVEN START PROGRAM, AND PARENT, WASHINGTON D.C.*

**Mrs. Escamilla**. Good morning to everybody. I am a part of a literacy program called Even Start. I have been a part of the program for 2 and a half years. My husband is also part of the program, as well as my child Gustavo. This program has helped us a lot. When we came to the program, we

couldn't communicate. Right now, I am very happy to be able to communicate with you. The program also helped us to reach our goals.

When we entered the program, I had not yet finished my GED. The Even Start Program helped me finish my GED. My husband's goal was home ownership. We finally got a house 6 months ago. The Even Start Program also helped get my children used to reading books. Gustavo, for example, loves to read books. If I don't read about five books a day, he is not happy. He cries and bothers me, saying, "Mom, read me a book. Read me a book."

The program was a great help. I give thanks for that. So they really helped us to get to a time where we could read for them. Even Start also helped us to get into different programs. We are enrolled in both computer classes and parenting classes. Currently, I am a volunteer in one of the parenting classes.

The program has helped my family considerably. It is the reason I can understand my two other kids. I can now understand them and help with their homework. Also, Even Start has helped me to be able to go and talk with the teachers. I am really thankful to have the kind of program that helps not only my family, but also other families. That is all I have to say. Thank you.

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you, Mrs. Escamilla. Based on your testimony, I think next time we have a panel, we will have your son testify about having his mother read five books a day. That is what we need to hear around here.

Mr. Rawlings.

## *STATEMENT OF MR. MIKE RAWLINGS, PRESIDENT, PIZZA HUT, INC., DALLAS, TEXAS*

**Mr. Rawlings**. Good morning. Thank you, Chairman Castle, for the invitation to testify. I am humbled to be here with Mrs. Escamilla.

Pizza Hut's literacy partnership is a national reading program called BOOK IT! program. If any of you have any children that have attended grade school in the last 18 years, there is a good chance that you are probably familiar with the program. Nearly 70 percent of all elementary schools in the nation participate in the BOOK IT! program. Basically, this program is so popular because it works.

Some 20 years ago, Art Gunther, the CEO of Pizza Hut, saw his young son struggling with reading. It was heartbreaking for him. He wanted to do something, so he started thinking about incentives as a way to motivate and making reading fun. He developed the idea of the program that provides pizza and praise for children. With the input of educators and librarians, the BOOK IT! program was born in 1985.

This month, BOOK IT! begins its 18th year. Right now, more than 20 million school children will be setting their reading goals and looking forward to that praise. Yes, and looking forward to that pizza, also. They will find reading a little more fun as a result of participating in

BOOK IT!

Now, a few highlights about the program. BOOK IT! is the Nation's largest and longest-running reading incentive program. It reaches 875,000 classrooms and 50,000 public, private, and parochial schools this year. We will also reach our 300 millionth BOOK IT! student. Young adults who were BOOK IT! students in the 1980s are now BOOK IT! teachers and BOOK IT! parents. Pizza Hut created the program and is its exclusive sponsor. We have invested nearly half a billion dollars in BOOK IT! Yes, invested half a billion dollars. Since its inception, we have given over $200 million in free pizza certificates. We have also invested in the classroom materials, educator research, and literacy partnerships over the years. In 1998, we developed a send program, BOOK IT! Beginners, which is a read-aloud program to reach preschool children like Gustavo.

This is how the program works—there are basically four Fs in the BOOK IT! programs.

First, the program is free to elementary schools. Free is important in our public schools today.

Second, BOOK IT! is fun. Making reading fun is very important for kids.

Third, the program is flexible. We give the teachers the tools and let them decide how to use it based on their curriculum and their strategies.

Fourth, and most importantly, Pizza Hut provides rewards of gift certificates for food. I probably don't have to tell you that pizza is children's favorite food.

Free, fun, flexible, and food. It is a simple formula, and that is why it works.

We also regularly seek guidance and feedback from educators on our advisory council, which includes the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, and the American Library Association.

Now, maintaining the integrity of the program remains our highest priority, and I believe we have accomplished that. A recent survey indicated that the program has a positive impact on students' behavior and attitudes about reading. Overall, over 90 percent of teachers said the programs met or exceeded their expectations. Teachers said that the program had a positive impact on vocabulary skills for over 90 percent of the kids. They said that their kids read more often, and their interest in reading increased. They said they had positive impact over their overall attitude about learning.

Pizza Hut supports the BOOK IT! program because it is the right thing to do. However, there is another reason we care about it. A large number of young people will gain their first work experience in the restaurant industry. The restaurant industry helps prepare these young people for future careers in a wide range of fields. We want to see this workforce arrive prepared, able to read, able to comprehend, and able to lead.

The ability to read at an early age is arguably the most important answer to the most difficult long-term questions faced by our country. Focus is what we need on this critical issue, and we need to stay with it until it is solved. For Pizza Hut, this is not a cause that we support by attending a fancy dinner and writing a check once a year. We deeply believe in this issue. We believe in the contribution the BOOK IT! program has made. So do the teachers, so do parents, and so do children that have participated in it.

We look forward to many more years of BOOK IT!, and we will continue to look for more ways to make our program more responsive to the needs of our children. We expect to help another generation of readers learn to love books and have fun reading.

Thank you very much, Chairman.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR. MIKE RAWLINGS, PRESIDENT, PIZZA HUT, INC., DALLAS, TEXAS – APPENDIX G

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you, Mr. Rawlings. We appreciate that.

Our final witness will be Ms. Stoia, and perhaps Ms. Stoia and a friend.

## *STATEMENT OF MS. JUDITH STOIA, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER OF "BETWEEN THE LIONS," BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, ACCOMPANIED BY THEO THE LION*

**Ms. Stoia**. Perhaps. Thank you so much for including us today. We began “Between the Lions” with our partner, Sirius Thinking, in response to the urgent literacy crisis among America's children. We began developing the project in 1996. At the time, 70 percent of America's fourth graders read below grade level. At that time, there was one television program that was at all focused on reading skills. It was “Sesame Street,” which teaches the sounds of the alphabet. Today, 6 years later, the market for children's television has exploded. Twenty-nine broadcast and cable channels offer 279 separate programs which, when repeats are counted, add up to 1,324 hours of programming each week aimed at children. Of all of these, two programs, “Sesame Street,” and now “Between the Lions,” try to help children learn to read. “Sesame Street” still does a brilliant job teaching the alphabet and its sounds. “Between the Lions” goes much further in teaching vowel sounds, how sounds go together to make words, and how words make sentences you can read. In short, “Between the Lions” helps young children crack the code to become readers.

The window for cracking the code is perilously narrow. If a child has not gotten it by the third grade, as so many have noted this morning, chances that he or she will ever become a proficient reader are slim. Put more bluntly, if we fail to reach a child by the third grade, he or she may grow up to become one of the 40 million Americans who are functionally illiterate, who have trouble understanding directions, filling out job applications, or reading to their own children. For these people, the world of books and the pure joy of reading is beyond their reach.

So on one hand, we have a literacy crisis of towering proportions and a tiny window of opportunity. On the other hand, we have television, which many people say is part of the problem, and often they are right. However, we believed back in 1996 that television could become part of the solution, also. We felt that television had unique properties that could help kids learn to read. Television could make all the vowels on a page bounce and say their sounds. We can make word endings sing. We could highlight text as a story is read and then rearrange all the words and do it over again.

In short, the elements that make television so objectionable at times, its frenzy and its silliness, can also make it uniquely suited for teaching reading.

Our producers worked for a year on a detailed reading curriculum before we even thought of how to produce the program. We met time and again with the country's top reading experts, and assembled a group of kindergarten and first grade teachers who worked very closely with us in deciding what "Between the Lions" should teach. Through them, we identified the latest evidence-based practices, and we built our series on those practices. We came out of that year with a detailed curriculum that guides every element in our program.

Between the Lions looks like a lot of fun, and it is. But there is nothing random about the program. Every element teaches a reading skill. Those reading advisors and teachers have stayed with us every step of the way. They consult on scripts, view rough cuts, and lay out each season's curriculum. Indeed, we have a full-time reading advisor on our staff. This is one reason "Between the Lions" is so popular with teachers. What they are teaching in the classroom, we are reinforcing on television.

But does it work? Does our television program actually help young children learn to read? Most television programs are not quantifiable. They may be wonderful programs, but there is no way of measuring their effect. That is not true with "Between the Lions." Whether or not children are learning from our program can be measured. Two cumulative research studies using experimental and control groups show that children who view "Between the Lions" demonstrate marked improvement in their reading skills. The first was a controlled study by the University of Kansas. It showed the kindergartners who watched "Between the Lions" made dramatic gains in key reading skills compared to the control group that did not watch the program.

The second research study was quite unusual. With the help of Senator Thad Cochran and his staff, we saturated two communities in Mississippi with our materials. Our advisors and producers conducted teacher workshops at the Choctaw Reservation and in Indianola in the Delta. With grants from PBS, CPB, and the U.S. Department of Education's Ready to Learn program, we provided every Head Start, childcare, kindergarten, and first grade classroom with a set of 55 videotapes, books, teachers' guides, and song sheets, as well as bags of books for children to take home. It was all free to them.

In exchange, the teachers agreed to show "Between the Lions" regularly, do related classroom activities, and continue working with our advisors. They did this over the course of the entire school year.

Mississippi State conducted a yearlong research study that we have just received. I am delighted to report that the Mississippi children who watched “Between the Lions” showed dramatic improvements in important early reading skills over the children who did not. The researchers told us they were surprised and impressed at how well the children did in so many important early reading skills.

Details of the Kansas and Mississippi research studies are in the material we are leaving with you, as well as information on the Department of Education's Ready to Learn program and what it is doing in your State.

Along the way, we have enjoyed important partnerships with the business community. Pizza Hut featured “Between the Lions” in last spring's far-ranging BOOK IT! Beginner's Campaign, reaching 96,000 preschool classrooms and 1.5 million kids. Chik-Fil-A distributed thousands of cassettes with our stories and songs. Cheerios was an underwriter for our first two seasons, along with five wonderful national foundations.

The landscape has changed for us now, as it has for so many children's programs, with the slide in the economy affecting foundations and corporations who might have been our partners in sunnier times. Just having the program on television is not enough. We must continue producing programs in order to cover all the skills that beginning readers need in order to become proficient readers.

Also, there is so much to be done off the air. We already are working with the National Association of Childcare Resource and Referral Agencies to distribute our materials locally, and we have made an alliance with the American Indian Head Start program to use our materials and training in their communities. We want aggressively to expand teacher training and the use of our materials into childcare, kindergartens, and first grades around the country. It is frustrating to be scraping for funding, because we know that in the midst of the country's literacy crisis, we have a program that actually works.

I don't wish to end on a discouraging note, but I don't wish to conceal our challenges either. We are determined to build on what we have done, and look for support wherever we can find it. We are enormously grateful to be included in today's hearing.

I want to now introduce someone who has spent his life working in the areas of literacy.

**Theo the Lion**. Blah, blah, blah. My line. Blah, blah, blah.

**Ms. Stoia**. This is Theo.

**Theo the Lion**. Judy, Judy, when do I come in? What is my cue?

**Ms. Stoia**. This would be now. This would be now.

**Theo the Lion**. Now? Oh, now, now! Oh, thank you.

Mr. Chairman, do I get my own 5 minutes, or do I get the tail end of hers, sir?

**Ms. Stoia**. That would be the tail end of mine, I think.

**Theo the Lion**. I have the tail end. Well, I am good at that.

My name is Theo the Lion, and I work at a wonderful library on the show "Between the Lions." With me are my beautiful wife Cleo and my adorable cubs Lionel and Leona. They are a great family. I guess you might say I am mighty proud of my pride. I am going to wait for a laugh. Okay, that was good.

Actually, our library on "Between the Lions" where we help kids learn how to read is a typical library except for the fact that it is run by a family of lions. Actually, we have two pigeons that hang out there called Walter and Clay Pigeon. Of course, there is a dinosaur in the basement named Health the Thesaurus. Try saying that a few times fast. Well, of course, we teach vowel sounds with our singers, the Singing Vowels. If they ever need to sing consonant, they are joined by a lounge singer named Johnny Consonante. Then we have characters that come out of books and join us in the library, and through the magic of television we can go into the books and join the characters in their stories and change things around. It is a lot of fun.

Aside from all that, it is a typical library.

I suppose this is the point when we are supposed to take questions. Is that right, Judy?

**Ms. Stoia**. Well, maybe. Yes.

**Theo the Lion**. Maybe take questions? Yes. Questions so you can raise your hands? We will all remember to take turns now, Congressmen, and play nicely. Thank you very much.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MS. JUDITH STOIA, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER OF "BETWEEN THE LIONS," BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, ACCOMPANIED BY THEO THE LION – APPENDIX H

**Chairman Castle**. Well, we thank you, Theo. Judy, we thank you very much for your testimony.

We will go into the question phase now. I will yield to myself first for 5 minutes for questions.

I am going to ask Theo a question, if he is still there.

**Theo the Lion**. Yes.

**Chairman Castle**. I have never had a chance to ask a lion a question in my whole time in Congress.

**Theo the Lion**. Well, I appreciate you having a lion here in D.C., sir. This is very nice.

**Chairman Castle**. Well, we are pleased to have you here today. I am interested to know if your wife Cleo, who you mentioned, is as enthusiastic about reading as you are, and why is she enthusiastic?

**Theo the Lion**. Why is Cleo enthusiastic about reading? She is enthusiastic for probably the same reasons that I am. Books are incredible. Like all you folks said here, books open up whole new worlds. Mr. Jones was able to be Captain Nemo and all that stuff. Reading is everywhere. Just think of it. You have to read signs on the highway, instructions, newspapers, and magazines. It is important stuff. I don't know a better thing to get excited about.

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you, Theo. We appreciate that.

Mr. Kildee.

**Mr. Kildee**. Could we put Mr. Leo under oath to make sure he is not lion?

**Chairman Castle**. We trust Theo not to be lion. We will leave him off oath.

Let me turn to a different question for our three individuals representing three of America's finest corporations, as far as I am concerned: Mr. Seidenberg, Mr. Kuebler, and Mr. Rawlings.

I don't mean to imply that changes are needed or anything negative in the question, but I am very curious about business practices with respect to education.

Mr. Kildee and I have been working very hard on the Office of Education Research, and we are about to get legislation passed to change all that, and to look into what really works in education and what doesn't. I have often worried about the business programs. This is not to imply in any way whatsoever that each of your programs, individually or collectively, don't work extraordinarily well to help young people develop literacy. But I am not sure that all the business programs out there do. I don't know what communication exists.

I was just wondering if each of you could take just a little bit of time to answer the question of if models exist out there at which you look. Is there any scientifically based research that you do to determine that the program you have is actually working? You know, it may sound good, it may seem good, but is it actually working out there? Do you talk to each other? Do you borrow from each other? Are these programs done independently because of your own entrepreneurial will to just do it yourself and not share with others?

Is there some sort of consortium that helps you with all of this? God spare, I probably know the answer to this. Is there anything we could do to help with this, or do you just want us to

stay as far away from you as we possibly can? I can understand that answer as well.

I hope from that sort of series of questions you get the gist. Essentially, what can we do to make sure that when businesses are doing this, we are delivering it as well as possible, and not just in a vacuum where there is a thought that it is going well but perhaps it is not? I am not suggesting that your programs are not going well.

Mr. Seidenberg, you can start it off. Unfortunately, it is a fairly long question, but I need brief answers because I only have 5 minutes.

**Mr. Seidenberg**. Mr. Chairman, as you were talking, I was trying to formulate my answer. I think it would come down to our role in this process and our belief, which is to ignite the grassroots. I think in our case that we have taken it on faith, so to speak. If we can focus attention on the issue and ignite activism in the communities where our employees work and where our customers are, we can in effect build this up from the bottom. If you look at this from the top down, very clinically, we basically have to interview or test 10 people to hire one. We spend $50 million to $60 million a year on training, mostly technical training, and what we find is that you can't train people on very sophisticated telecommunications if they lack the basic skills for communicating, reading, and writing.

We got into this from the standpoint of working with our other corporate partners who have the local programs, and we try to provide the resources to ignite the grassroots.

There is no question that you could do that work very well by continuing to keep focusing the world on this issue.

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you.

Mr. Kuebler.

**Mr. Kuebler**. We took a little different approach. We felt that the teachers had the secret. So before we started our grants program and put it together, we interviewed teachers, school administrators, superintendents, parents, and asked them how we could support their programs in the school. They pretty much said give us a means to get access to funding, but let us decide the programs that we are going to implement in the classroom, and we were comfortable with that. In our grant program, a teacher can apply for a grant for as small as $250 up to any amount that they want.

We meet monthly, and we evaluate every program by a committee that is representative of the community, and I think the key that makes our program work, in addition to the application that they fill out, is that they agree to do a program evaluation at the end. They do a self-evaluation of the results. They set goals and objectives and methods of measurement of the program they are going to implement. They rate it, and when they send the evaluation back to us, we reevaluate it and rank every program that we fund. I can stand here today and say that we feel that more than 98 percent of our funds have been very well spent.

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you.

Mr. Rawlings.

**Mr. Rawlings**. I think your question is a great one. We know this is a big problem. We know it is complex. We also know there are a lot of people working on it. It is our perception that there are a lot of good organizations doing a lot of good things, but they are not organized and focused. I think a clear national strategy understanding the role that the private industry has to play and how they are going to be supporting the local environment and the national environment is necessary.

First of all, we believe in accountability, and that is why we did our research to find that this program worked. Is there not clear enough metrics of success? There is this national goal, but to make things work, it has got to be broken down at a local level, at a state level, and we believe in our business in racking and stacking success. We believe in recognizing people that are successful, shining the light on people that are not, and having accountability. I think that both having an agenda that brought all this together and participating as one entity are very necessary in dealing with this problem.

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you. It is an interesting area for discussion that we need to keep focused on. But my 5 minutes is long over, so I will yield now to Mr. Kildee.

**Mr. Kildee**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, as chairman, I want to thank you for assembling this panel. It is an excellent panel today—each of the witnesses is excellent. Whenever I am surfing the television at night and I see your face, Mr. Jones, or your voice, I stop right there just to enjoy your voice. It is a tremendous voice, and those of us in politics wish we had one like that. All of you have been just excellent today.

Ms. Stoia, can teachers in the classroom utilize some of the reading techniques used on television, and are they being offered in teacher training institutions? In the No Child Left Behind Act we really emphasized the training of teachers and making sure every teacher is fully qualified. Can we use some of those things in the classroom, and have teacher training institutions incorporated that into their curriculum?

**Ms. Stoia**. It is one of our major goals. We have teachers' guides for kindergarten and first grade teachers that are available free on our web site and we have distributed tens of thousands of them nationally to kindergarten and first grade teachers.

In addition, we have a very advanced and well-produced web site that allows teachers to download elements of our program that coincide with what they are trying to teach in the classroom. So if a teacher is teaching past tense, he or she can go to our web site and download games, activities, songs, and stories that coincide with what they are doing in the classroom. Teachers are among our best partners, and we are doing everything we can to interact with teachers on the web, and to conduct teacher-training sessions around the country regarding the use our materials in the classroom.

**Mr. Kildee**. Well, I only read my 4-year-old grandson, Gabriel, two books a night, not five, but he watches Theo, and it is incredible. I am amazed. I certainly was not that advanced in reading when I was his age, not even near that, but it is incredible what children can learn about reading and writing from television. So where it might be a problem for some watching too much television, it can also be a very, very helpful tool, and Theo and his family have helped. Thank you, Theo.

I think that one discipline can learn from another, and one area of our life can help another, and I think that television can be a very helpful thing in teacher training and in teaching children. So, again, I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for having this very good panel.

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you very much, Mr. Kildee, and Mrs. Biggert will be next.

**Mrs. Biggert**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This has been a very interesting hearing that we have had today. My first question is for Ms. Stoia. How much emphasis does "Between the Lions" place on research-based instruction?

**Ms. Stoia**. Our program is completely designed on research-based instruction. It is our belief that there are many competing theories on how to teach reading skills, and the only way to decide which among them to include is to make sure that there is some basis for their success. Otherwise it is much too random. We assembled a panel of reading experts and teachers who sorted through the research with us, and together we developed the program based entirely on research-proven elements for teaching and reading. This allowed "Between the Lions" to be a combination of phonics, which I think is very important, a love of reading, and the usefulness of reading and vocabulary. It is all of those things.

**Mrs. Biggert**. Does this video that we have pertain to that?

**Ms. Stoia**. Well, there is a chance that if we had time. The video we brought in is a very brief clip that demonstrates how we teach phonics. This particular clip we have talks about the "EN" word ending, and, you know, it shows animation, music, and live action and gives you a little test of how we handle those elements.

**Mrs. Biggert**. Could we see it, please?

**Theo**. Yes please. Roll the tape. Oh, I have been waiting all morning to say that.

[videotape shown]

**Mrs. Biggert**. Thank you. Thank you, Theo.

**Theo**. Oh, you are very welcome.

**Mrs. Biggert**. I have just one other question. What kind of feedback, then, do you get from parents and teachers and kids about the show?

**Ms. Stoia**. Well, we get a tremendous response on our web site, and a lot of feedback through local stations. PBS has a system called "Ready to Learn," which extends the message of every PBS kids show in its local communities, and through them we get a terrific response. Without it, we wouldn't know we are on the right track.

**Theo**. I actually go to the web site every week and click on "feedback," and I think the words you are looking for, Judy, are overwhelmingly positive, outstanding feedback from kids, from teachers, and from parents. It is very, very encouraging.

**Mrs. Biggert**. What about the families that don't have access to the web site?

**Ms. Stoia**. Well, one of the reasons it is important that this program is on public television is because that is free to virtually every child in the country.

What we are hoping is that children who don't have computers at home have access at schools and at libraries. You are right. Not everyone does have access to that. In a matter of time, everyone, or nearly everyone will.

**Mrs. Biggert**. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you, Mrs. Biggert. Mrs. McCarthy.

**Mrs. McCarthy**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank all of you. I learned the first few months that I was here in Congress that if we didn't have cooperation with our corporations out there, half the work that needs to be done in our schools and for our children wouldn't get done, and I have been encouraging companies to get more involved, especially in the schools.

I guess there are a couple of things I want to look at. You are already starting to look at teaching the teachers how to teach. I happen to think we should be doing that in the colleges. I am not blaming the teachers, but the frustration on some of the committee hearings that we have had here was that basically the teachers were dedicated and they wanted to do this, but no one taught them how to teach someone how to read. I think that is something that we are going to be looking at, hopefully in higher education.

But there is another thing. When you brought up the Internet and computers, it came to mind that a lot of my schools in my minority area have no computers, not one in the whole school. I went to corporations and asked for help, and we started getting computers, but a lot of my schools still do not have computers. So, again, they are dissatisfied as far as not having the tools that they need. This is where the disparity is between the school that I went to as a kid that has computers and 5 miles away the schools that don't have anything. That is where, hopefully, all of you can come in and help.

The other question is how are we going to reach every child that needs to be reached? You know, I am hoping all of you will reach out to the other CEOs, because of the partnerships that need to be done in this country, and you are talking about your low funding. We are going to have terrible funding, absolutely terrible funding. We don't even know if we are going to be able to have

the funding there for Leave No Child Behind. That is where we are concerning our budgets.

It is going to have to be a cooperation between businesses and certainly the federal government. I spend a lot of time in some of the night schools and some of the other programs that are out there where they are trying to teach the parents how to read, and there is a waiting list like you wouldn't believe. That occurring in this day and age is a sin, because we know if the parents can't read, they are not going to be there helping their children, and to me that is one of the reasons we are seeing such bad results, especially in the early grades.

Now, I am lucky. I have grandchildren like Mr. Kildee does. I was reading to my grandson on Sunday, and he corrected me on a word that I misspoke. I grew up with learning disabilities, and I was lucky I had my father that worked with me to give me the love of reading. That love opened up a whole new world for me. I would have been totally withdrawn, but I could go into the world of magic, as I always called it. Reading allowed me to go to places where I never thought I would be. I tell the story all the time. I am not ashamed to say I have learning disabilities. I am not ashamed to say it, because I am sitting here in Congress, which goes to show if someone takes the time to work with you and if someone gives you the tools to learn, you can sit here in Congress, also.

I certainly say thank you to all of you, but with all the skills that you have taken, would any part of it actually work in the colleges to teach our teachers how to read, because I think that is where we are really lacking on a lot of things? I think if we did that we would see, in my opinion, that a lot of kids who are in programs for the learning disabled, would not be in those programs, because it is mostly lack of reading skills that is holding them back and not other issues.

Would anything that you guys do fit into a college program? I am opening it up to you. No answers.

**Ms. Stoia**. Well, I couldn't agree with you more. A lot of the work that we do is working with teachers and helping them use "Between the Lions" in their classroom. What we are really doing is talking about how to teach reading, frankly.

**Mrs. McCarthy**. Absolutely.

**Ms. Stoia**. What we encounter over and over again is precisely what you are saying. With teachers, the issue probably starts in college. This isn't my area, but I know that if we could we would spend all the time when we are not making TV shows with teachers, because that is the central moment after the parent, isn't it?

**Mrs. McCarthy**. Absolutely.

**Ms. Stoia**. I don't know the answer, except that I think a lot of the tools are there, but there isn't a coordinated plan or funding. We haven't figured out how to do that yet.

**Mrs. McCarthy**. Well, hopefully we will deal with working with our future teachers in this committee in the future. Thank you.

**Chairman Castle**. I hope so, too.

Thank you, Mrs. McCarthy.

Mr. Wilson.

**Mr. Wilson**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank all the participants today and the panelists. Your reports have been very inspiring, and I am particularly happy to see Mr. Seidenberg. I am a happy Verizon customer, and you should be happy. My wife is also. My sons are from Clemson and Maryland in College Park, and so we are a Verizon family.

Additionally, I am very pleased that you work with James Earl Jones. He is an inspiration, and the very first movie that I took my oldest son to 25 years ago this year was Star Wars, and so this is just extraordinary to have you here. We appreciate you being such a positive spokesman for America.

I wanted to point out that I know firsthand the information you gave us about silent humiliation of an adult who is unable to read, and I am very pleased to see that you are working in that regard. Reverend Johnny Lee Johnson was a family friend that helped raise me and helped raise my children. He was particularly helpful in pointing out scripture from the Old and New Testament that was applicable to conduct that needed to be corrected. He was so dear, in fact, that I provided the eulogy at his funeral at Stonewall Holiness Church this January. What I didn't realize until about 5 years ago was that he couldn't read. I almost credit him with being a genius with his ability to memorize. The question I would have for Mr. Seidenberg is how do we break down the reluctance, of very proud people, even a pastor, who cannot read?

**Mr. Seidenberg**. Well, it is a very difficult question, Congressman, but I guess we ought to come back to what our belief is about this. Through James and through our champions behind us, Dick, Lee Ann, Mike, and Chris, we have tried to raise the grassroots perspective on this and enable people to see that it is okay to focus on this. We have tried to get people to volunteer and make this sort of an activity that everybody wants to do, and also provide the funding. In our case we want to raise the awareness, but at the same time focus all of the resources in a given community to get people to work on this.

Literacy is linked to jobs. It is linked to economic advancement. It is linked to just being a productive human being, but I think we have come at this in a way that tries to personalize this to everybody and give him or her the confidence that it is the right thing to focus on.

**Mr. Wilson**. I think it is a quality of life, and I appreciate what you are doing.

Additionally, I appreciate you having the sport stars here. We in South Carolina are very proud of Mike Cohn, in that we don't have many people who excel in Winter Olympics. We have

to import snow, and so he is a rare figure.

**Mr. Seidenberg**. You also have to be able to read, to read the instructions on these cell phones that we give you. You know that.

**Mr. Wilson**. Yes, please. The book you provide is excellent. There are two hundred pages of instruction on the phone. How did Verizon get into the literacy program?

**Mr. Seidenberg**. This was started by the predecessor company, GTE, several years ago. It was really born from the simple view that our employees live in the communities. We recognized that most of the GTE properties were in rural areas, and literacy was an important part of helping to support economic development. When you think of the nature of our business, becoming more technologically advanced with the Internet and all these other kinds of things, we felt this was a clear linkage between the ability to read, write, and communicate. Therefore, we have made this our flagship program, and our people love to do this. We love to do this, and the people that work with us do a great job for us.

**Mr. Wilson**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you very much, Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Scott.

**Mr. Scott**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I would add my congratulations and thanks to James Earl Jones for being with us and using his celebrity for such a worthwhile project and worthwhile cause.

We have heard from our corporate executives about the importance of literacy in terms of economic development and employment. This committee deals with welfare and crime, obviously very much associated with both. Not reading by the third grade is very much associated with juvenile delinquency. I guess my first question would be to the corporate executives who are running the programs. Do you have a waiting list to get on the programs?

**Mr. Rawlings**. We do not. We send this out every fall, and we invite every school district in every community to be with us. Ironically, the schools that are more in the urban and minority districts see this as a better program for them versus the other schools that are better funded.

**Mr. Scott**. Are there people who would like to learn how to read that we don't get to for lack of funding?

**Mr. Rawlings**. Our program is open to everybody. It is just an awareness issue, and we don't have that issue. I am sure there are. I don't argue with that, but it is not an issue with us.

**Mr. Seidenberg**. Congressman, I think the issue is making sure the RAMs are where the people are located. I think that is the focus that we have really tried to make sure through using all of the local organizations. I am sure we could always use more funding. I guarantee people could use

more funding, but the more important issue is to make sure that people are aware of the capabilities in the local communities to access the programs.

**Mr. Scott**. Mr. Kuebler, you indicated that you require your grant recipients to give an evaluation of the program. Can you tell us some of the more successful programs and how you evaluate whether or not it is successful?

**Mr. Kuebler**. We do a lot of levelized reading programs. When children are reading one or two grades below level, we will provide software and books in the classroom to supplement what is being taught to the regular children in the classroom. At the end of a year, we will get reports back that the majority of the students have advanced one, two, two and a half, three grades. In some cases they have progressed beyond the grade level that they are in currently. We get all kinds of reports back from parents and from teachers that talk about making the books fun to read.

One of the Congressmen mentioned that one spends their first three years learning to read, and then from fourth grade on, reading to learn. What we find is a shortage of good books or a variety of good books at different reading levels for students in the schools. Many of our programs and more than 30 percent of our grants go to provide reading material in the classrooms and in the libraries so that children have something to read. We also provide a lot of take-home programs, where it is a reward. They get to take the book home and read it with their families, and in many cases other children in the family are also reading those books.

**Mr. Scott**. You are funding different kinds of programs?

**Mr. Kuebler**. Yes.

**Mr. Scott**. Do some work better than others?

**Mr. Kuebler**. A lot of it is implementation. I mean, I think most of them have good concepts. Sometimes teachers take on more than they can handle, and they will see that in the evaluation. We don't even consider that a failure, because the next time they apply for a grant, they are not going to make the same mistake that they have made before. In addition, one of the conditions of our grants program is that every teacher who gets a grant has to agree to share the results of that with any other interested teacher.

So many of our teachers who are interested in doing something will get in touch with other teachers to find out how they implement their program, what worked, and what didn't work, so that they can be more successful in their implementation.

**Mr. Scott**. Thank you.

Ms. Stoia, you indicated that you started off by asking around to find out what the best methodology might be. Did you find a general consensus that the education community knows what to do, or did you suspect that more research is needed?

**Ms. Stoia**. Well, we found both. You know, when we started looking into this in 1996, there were ferociously competing ideas of how reading ought to be taught. The conclusion we arrived at with our reading advisers was that it was important to teach reading skills like phonics, and it was also important to include vocabulary and a love and celebration of reading, as well as understanding text in context.

I believe, compared with the situation in 1996, when we started thinking about this program, that there is much more consensus now on the theories of what ought to be taught, but a struggle to get there.

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you. Let me tell you what we are going to do. We are going to try to finish this whole hearing before we go vote. There are several people who want to ask at least one question—Mr. Ehlers, Mr. Payne and Mr. Osborne. Mr. Ehlers is going to ask a brief question, yield to Mr. Osborne, and then Mr. Payne hopefully will have time to finish it. We need brief answers and brief questions.

Thank you, everybody. Mr. Ehlers.

**Mr. Ehlers**. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and let me first of all commend all of you for what you have done. This is a good example of corporate responsibility, and we need a good deal more of that, especially to counteract the impression the American people have about corporate actions these days. I could mention another EN word here that came up from the vocabulary. Also thank you, Mr. Jones, for being here. You have been one of my heroes for many years, and I appreciate you being here.

The issue is simply that there are many children who have reading difficulties of one sort or another. Dyslexia is one of the most common; in fact, the most common that involves a physical or physiological problem. Do any of these programs that you have here try to address those with problems in reading or those who have speech impediments who can't read aloud leading to a problem learning to read? Do you just try to reach the large mass of people?

I am curious if any of you are addressing that problem yet, and if not, whether you plan to address it in the future as your success warrants it. We can go very quickly down the line. Mr. Seidenberg, do you have any comments?

**Chairman Castle**. Very quickly down the line.

**Mr. Seidenberg**. The answer is yes, and that is not our primary focus, but we do catch that.

**Mr. Ehlers**. Good. Thank you.

**Mr. Seidenberg**. We will be happy to provide you with more information.

WRITTEN INFORMATION SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY MR. IVAN SEIDENBERG, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, VERIZON, WASHINGTON, D.C. –

APPENDIX I

**Mr. Ehlers**. All right. Next.

**Mr. Kuebler**. We have a separate grants program called the Helen Graham program. It is funded a million dollars a year, and it is for children with cognitive disabilities. It is very specialized and we provide the materials, the software, the equipment, and whatever it takes to help that child to learn.

**Mr. Ehlers**. Thank you.

**Mr. Rawlings**. We do not have anything focused against that. This program covers those students as well.

**Mr. Ehlers**. All right. Lastly, is there anything in "Between the Lions"?

**Ms. Stoia**. Yes, one of our partners is the National Center for Learning Disabilities, which uses our materials in their own programs.

**Theo**. We also have a character on the show whose name is Gus. He is my son Lionel's friend, and he has trouble with reading. Kids can relate to him and see that it is okay to have trouble. It is not a bad thing, and there is something you can do to help. Thank you.

**Mr. Ehlers**. Well, thank you, Theo. I want to quickly mention, I could never go to school because I have such severe allergies, and I was tested at the Mayo Clinic once. On a scale of 0 to 400, which is their scale, my cat allergy was 15,500. I could barely stay in the session with them. It would have been nice if you had selected chihuahuas as your mascot. But I recognize "Between the Chihuahuas" doesn't have quite the ring to it.

I am pleased to yield the balance of time to Mr. Osborne.

**Mr. Osborne**. Thank you very much. Also, I would like to express my appreciation to you for coming today, and I just have one very quick question. I notice that Mr. Seidenberg indicated that you could only hire roughly one out of every 10 people that you interview. I guess in my experience in athletics, we often found that looking at a transcript doesn't mean much, because while an American might have a 3-point GPA and high school diploma, it doesn't mean he can read.

So what I was wanting to assess is your opinion of the education bill, the new bill that requires testing grades 3 through 8 every year on reading and math, whether you think that is a good thing or not. It seems like a simple question, but we hear a lot of people who don't like that, and I just wondered from corporate America what your feeling would be in that requirement.

**Mr. Seidenberg**. Congressman, to me it is easy. You have got to test, you have got to test, and you have got to test. I think it is not the only decision. It is not the only standard you use when you hire, but you have got to test and verify. As a businessperson over time, you can't raise the

standard if you can't measure it, and you can't measure it if you don't test it.

**Mr. Kuebler**. I agree with Mr. Seidenberg. I think you have to hold the teachers accountable. One of the ways to hold them accountable is through pre and post testing, and I think it helps you monitor each individual child much more closely that way.

**Mr. Rawlings**. Both my parents and all my family were teachers, and so I am sensitive to the points of view that at times teachers say you just don't want to teach for the test. But I also think a test must be the sign for clear metrics or an ability to make progress. I believe the more metrics the better and testing for success.

**Mr. Osborne**. Thank you. I yield back whatever time is left.

**Chairman Castle**. Let us turn very quickly to Mr. Payne, and I am sorry to have to cut his time. He is one of the fine, caring members who actually has taught in the past. Mr. Payne.

**Mr. Payne**. Thank you very much. I would just like to also thank Mr. James Earl Jones. I think if young African-American kids heard your story, they would perhaps have a little more appreciation for learning and learning to read. So thank you so much for your story. Mr. Seidenberg, being in Newark and your new office going up, we look forward to working closely with you. Your company does an outstanding job. Of course MBNA also has two new buildings in Newark. The MBNA has really become a tremendous leader in our town. Newark needs a lot of assistance from corporate people, and we really appreciate the exemplary work that you have done in our town in such a short time.

Pizza Hut, you need to get an office in Newark. We eat a lot of pizza, you know. I grew up in the old North Ward where pizza was really the primary food. That is where the Sopranos come out of, you know. So we would certainly welcome it.

I also want to thank Ms. Stoia. Theo, I grew up on "The Wiz" with the cowardly lion, but I am glad that, of course, he ended up all right. It is good to see Theo being so positive at the beginning and getting kids right on it. Do you agree, Theo?

**Theo**. Yes, sir. Thank you.

**Mr. Payne**. Let me just thank everyone, and of course the participants. I think the important thing is Ms. Escamilla and her young reading son. There is one last thing I would like to say. Mr. Dick Enberg, if you could get Mr. Tagliabue and some of the NFL to talk about the fact that being illiterate is not a stigma. So many people are in the closet. It is similar to how mental health used to be. We have stories of couples that were married, and one of the spouses didn't even know that the other spouse could not read. When it came time for a newspaper, they said, did you see that article, and the wife might say, oh, let me get some coffee, or there were even some business people that could not read. The airline would ask a person a question, and they would respond, oh, I don't have my glasses, could you tell me when the flight to Chicago is. I mean, successful business people. If we can get people to understand that it is not a stigma to be illiterate, I think

that is where we need to push people out of the closet so they take advantage of these programs.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman Castle**. Thank you, Donald. We appreciate that. I apologize for a little bit of the rushing at the end. It is the nature of the beast. We are going to be on the floor for 30 or 40 minutes. We didn't want to hold everybody up. We thank each and every one for being here, including those who came today but did not participate in this testimony. Your being here is a tremendous contribution to this effort that we all care greatly about. We want to join with you in everything we can possibly do to educate both the young and every other individual in America, particularly those who can't read as well as we can.

So we do appreciate you being here. I am sorry we can't say good-bye individually. We have got to hit the ground running because we have got about 2 minutes left of this vote. With that, the subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:40 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

***APPENDIX A -- WRITTEN OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MICHAEL N. CASTLE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.***

**Statement of The Honorable Michael N. Castle**
**Chairman, Subcommittee on Education Reform**
**"Literacy Partnerships that Work"**

Good morning. I am pleased to welcome you to the Education Reform Subcommittee's hearing on "Literacy Parenterships that Work."

Today, more than 21 percent of our adult population -- more than 40 million Americans over the age of 16 -- have only rudimentary reading and writing skills. And another 22 percent cannot fill out a job application, follow a prescription, or even read a simple children's story.

Too many adults do not have the skills to find and keep a job, support their child's education or participate actively in civic life. Worse, I have been told by people who have not been given the time or attention to learn to read that it is a horribly humiliating and frustrating experience.

Reading is such a fundamental skill that many of us take it for granted. Yet, we now know that reading is a skill that does not come naturally. And, for those children who don't learn to read, an early educational stumble can easily translate into a lifelong learning disability.

In fact, of the ten to 15 percent of children who will eventually drop out of high school, over 75 percent will report difficulties learning to read. In addition, surveys of adolescents and young adults with criminal records indicate that at least half have reading difficulties.

Fortunately, children who are at-risk for reading failure can learn to read at average -- or above -- levels if they are identified early and provided with intensive instruction. For that reason, the recently enacted No Child Left Behind education reform law includes a new Early Reading First program, which will enhance reading readiness for children ages three through five, and a new Reading First program, which will help ensure that all children can read by the end of third grade.

During the extensive negotiations on the new bipartisan education reform law, I was pleased that business groups, recognizing their own demand for a knowledgeable and talented staff, came out in strong support for our efforts to improve student achievement for all children, regardless of their challenge or disability.

As we all know, education is not just a responsibility of our federal, state and local governments: it is our collective responsibility, whether it is a parent reading to a child or a business reaching out to those in need in their community. We all have a role to play in helping people who lack literacy skills overcome their difficulties, and I want

to thank all of you here today for your interest and, for this panel in particular, your efforts to draw the public's attention to the problem of illiteracy.

When we announced our plans to hold a hearing on this topic, we were overwhelmed with requests from associations, organizations, businesses and others who wanted to testify. While we could not accommodate everyone, I do want to acknowledge those present in our audience today who have used their celebrity to promote literacy, including

Dick Enberg, CBS sportscaster,
Chris Thorpe, our silver medalist in the luge,
Lee Ann Parsley, our silver medalist in the skeleton,
Mike Kohn, our bronze medalist in the bobsled, and
Chamique [Sha-meek-a] Holdsclaw, of our own Washington Mystics.

Less well recognized, but no less appreciated, are those of you who work in the front lines, combating the problem of literacy. Again, there are simply too many to name here, but I would like to single out the National Institute for Literacy for their efforts.

I thank you all for your efforts to take your own gift and give to others the gift of literacy. Unleashing the potential of these children and these adults is a wonderful thing to do, and I am pleased for the opportunity to highlight all literacy efforts, from the Office of the First Lady to our community efforts in states like Delaware.

In a moment, I will proceed with the introduction of our distinguished panel but first I will yield to Ranking Member, Dale Kildee, for whatever statement he may wish to make.

***APPENDIX B -- WRITTEN OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MINORITY MEMBER DALE E. KILDEE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.***

Remarks of
The Honorable Dale E. Kildee
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Education Reform
Hearing on Literacy Partnerships
October 8, 2002

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for holding today's hearing on the critically important topic of literacy. Since today may mark our last hearing before the end of this Congress, I want to thank Chairman Castle for the bipartisan spirit in which he has led this subcommittee. It has been a pleasure to work on both H.R. 1 and the reauthorization of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement with you this Congress. I look forward to completing our work on OERI in the coming days.

The literacy of those living in the United States is a critically important issue. We must ensure our youngest of children are ready to learn to read when they enter school. A child who does not have literacy skills will fall further and further behind their peers. Children who don't learn to read won't master their other academic subjects. This places them at significant risk of dropping out of school.

We also need to ensure that our nation's adults with low levels of literacy have the education and training they need. Adults with literacy skills have better job opportunities and most importantly – can participate more fully in the education of their children.

All of today's witnesses represent successful partnerships that have positively impacted literacy. I applaud today's corporate representatives and Ms. Stoia for their work and investment in this area. While we celebrate these achievements, we also need to recognize one of our most successful partnerships – family literacy. These partnerships are formed by a family who learns together in a family literacy program. I am very pleased that we have such a family here today. Theirs is only one of countless examples of the power of literacy and its impact on everyday lives.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you again for holding this hearing and look forward to the testimony of the witnesses.

I now yield the balance of my time to the gentleman for New Jersey, Mr. Payne.

***APPENDIX C -- WRITTEN OPENING STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE DONALD M. PAYNE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.***

***Statement for Congressman Donald M. Payne***
***October 8, 2002***
***Education Reform Subcommittee on Literacy***

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Mr. Chairman,

As a former teacher and lifelong advocate for children and youth, I understand from personal experience the challenges facing our children. The ability to read and write are crucial skills that unfortunately many Americans have not mastered. The National Adult Literacy Survey found that over 40 million Americans age 16 and older have significant literacy needs. More than 20 percent of adults read at or below a fifth-grade level – far below the level needed to earn a living wage.

These startling statistics led me to introduce my first bill, which was a measure to call attention to the problem of illiteracy through establishing National Literacy Day. Then my colleagues and I moved forward to establish the National Literacy Institute to coordinate literacy activities nationwide.

I would like to bring to the attention of the Committee another literacy partnership that has reached thousands of preschool children over the past two years and which will soon launch a new literacy initiative. The two partners are well known: Sesame Workshop, the non-profit educational organization and producers of the television show Sesame Street, and the Prudential Foundation.

For over 30 years, Sesame Workshop has been using innovative techniques to improve childhood education, and it has used research to create new programs to engage children in learning. Sesame Street is now seen in 20 different countries, with production tailored to the unique cultures of each country. Sesame Workshop has also created guides for educators and parents including tips on how to choose appropriate media for children at different ages. In addition to television shows, Sesame Workshop has also produced a line of over 600 books and an interactive website.

In February 2000, Sesame Street Beginnings: Language to Literacy was launched. This literacy initiative is a wonderful model of how two prominent companies have worked together to reach children and their parents to provide practical strategies to enhance language development.

The Language to Literacy project uses familiar Sesame Street characters to reach children from birth to age three. Interestingly, even infants communicate with their caregivers through eye contact and the mimicking of sounds, and it is this early interaction that lays the foundation for a lifetime of language of development. Recognizing the biological evidence that illustrates the importance of early childhood education and parental interaction, the program utilizes a video, print materials, and an audiocassette that appeal to both children and adult caregivers. It is important to note that

the American Academy of Pediatrics endorsed the Language to Literacy program in 2002.

From February 2000 to March 2001, 75,000 program kits were distributed free of charge to childcare programs, family literacy programs, community-based organizations, public broadcasting stations, and other agencies. By providing parents and caregivers with practical strategies and materials, the program aims to guide parents in their role as their children's primary teacher.

I am very pleased to announce that a new phase of the literacy initiative called Sesame Street Beginnings: Talk, Read, Write! will be launched in November. Once again created by the successful collaboration of Sesame Street and The Prudential Foundation, this new program will focus on the literacy development of children from ages three to five, and it will incorporate many of the elements found in the Language to Literacy program. Produced in both English and Spanish, the new program will help guide parents and young children through the early years of literacy development that follow language acquisition

Currently, several prominent associations including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Library Association, and the National Council of La Raza are reviewing the program materials and are expected to assist in the free distribution of the materials in childcare settings. Sesame Workshop and The Prudential Foundation anticipate that another 75,000 free kits will be distributed between November 2002 and June 2003

***APPENDIX D -- WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR. JAMES EARL JONES, NATIONAL LITERACY SPOKESMAN, VERIZON, WASHINGTON, D.C.***

**James Earl Jones**

**October 8, 2002 Sub-committee on Education Reform Testimony**

Thank you, Chairman Boehner, Chairman Castle, Congressman Kildee and members of the Committee for inviting me here and giving me this opportunity to spend some time talking with you.

You've asked us to speak about literacy today and I could not be more proud to be associated with an exceptional company like Verizon. As its company spokesperson, I have seen how passionate they are about literacy and how strongly they are committed to be America's Literacy Champion. My role as Verizon's spokesperson gives me the opportunity to be a literacy advocate and travel across America reading to children to talk to them about the importance of books in their lives. It's by far one of the most enjoyable things that I do.

Creating a more literate society is a job -- a responsibility that falls on every person who *can* read. Verizon's focus on literacy makes that job easier for many people, and I know it's deeply appreciated by the nation's leading literacy providers and by local literacy agencies and volunteers all across the country.

92 million Americans have low or very low literacy skills – they cannot read above the 6th grade level. To be illiterate in America -- or anywhere for that matter -- is to be unsafe, uncomfortable and unprotected.

For the illiterate, despair and defeat serve as daily fare. A world of uncertainty rises anew with every word they confront in black and white.

Can any of us who *do* know how to read really understand the sadness that is associated with the inability to read? The silent humiliation that always attends it? The quiet desperation that can't really be expressed? The hundreds of ways that those who cannot read struggle in shame to keep their secret?

While most of us in this room cannot possibly understand fully the anguish of those who cannot read, I can because it affected my own family.

Parthenia Connolly was my great-great-grandmother -- and she made her way to this country from Ireland before the Civil War. She indentured herself as a servant and ended up in Mississippi, where she met and then eventually married my great-great-grandfather, Brice.

I mention her because Parthenia lived in a very different age, an age where because she dared to teach a black man to read she was a criminal in the eyes of

the law. And the man she taught her husband, Brice -- a black man who had the audacity to learn how to read -- was guiltier than she -- and subject to the harshest punishment if his secret was known.

Ironic, isn't it? Brice learned to read and feared that others might find out. Today, it's the man or woman who can't read who puts enormous energy and creativity into the effort to keep their illiteracy a secret.

I have wondered sometimes what Brice must have thought as the foreign words and symbols of the English language began to unravel themselves in his mind.

I can't help but think that his first real taste of freedom in this country came the day he made the connection between a familiar word and some letters in a book.

He must have known that he'd found the real key to self-possession the real key to unlocking the chains of his slavery.

While my grandfather Brice's story is not unique, it is highly illustrative of the struggle out of illiteracy. It was and still is part of the story of America.

In my family, we say the love of reading and book learning is in our bone memory. Parthenia and Brice passed on their love of reading to my great-

grandfather, Wyatt, who owned a modest library, and encouraged his family to read his books and to revere them.

I'm told that now and then, Wyatt would tempt his children and grandchildren by allowing them to touch the books he owned, to hold them very carefully and treat them with respect.

Those seeds certainly took root in my grandfather, John Henry -- the man who raised me and made sure that I got an education.

For that and many other reasons, he was my hero. He helped me discover the world. Books were cherished possessions. They are no less for me.

As a child, I gave up speech. I stuttered badly, and so I retreated and lived in a world of silence rather than speak. But I found my voice in books and I found the expanded vocabulary that is so important for someone who stutters.

I developed a love for science and science fiction, the tales of the impossible. Jules Verne took me on adventures under the sea, under the Earth, and through time itself. Through his words, through my ability to read them, I could serve with Captain Nemo and thrive in a variety of worlds.

I was mute to the outside world, but there were hundreds of conversations in my head.

And that is the beauty of reading that all children discover. The world that grown men and women discover when they, too, learn to read.

Today, I am standing before you as a Verizon literacy advocate. I am just one of many celebrity personalities, who have partnered with Verizon and accepted the challenge to bring this insidious disease out of the closet. We are a deeply committed group and proud to do our part.

All of us - lawmakers, reading teachers and tutors, corporate philanthropists, educators, and literacy volunteers - all of us have an important and necessary role addressing this issue.

The hope that is ours to give to the illiterate is ageless, a prize that my great-great-grandfather Brice would have easily recognized.

So it is in his name, and in the spirit of hope that Parthenia awakened in him, that I thank you for letting me share this time with you.

***APPENDIX E -- WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR. IVAN SEIDENBERG, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, VERIZON, WASHINGTON, D.C.***

Ivan Seidenberg
Subcommittee on Education Reform
October 8, 2002

*"Literacy Programs that Work"*

Thank you, Chairman Boehner, Chairman Castle, Congressman Kildee and Members of the Committee.

Verizon is very pleased to be a part of this important hearing on literacy.

We believe that no issue is more important to the future of our country – or our company – than literacy. And we also believe that -- as the nation's leading communications company -- our size, experience and technological reach give us a unique opportunity to lead corporate America in the fight against illiteracy.

Verizon is committed to being America's literacy champion.

I do not have to tell this committee about the link between literacy and economic development, crime and educational success. For Verizon, the strategic link between literacy and our future business success is particularly strong:

- We employ upwards of 240,000 nationwide, most in technically demanding jobs. A pool of literate, educable workers is of paramount importance to our future.

- We are the country's leading provider of wireline, wireless and, increasingly, data and Internet services to the mass market. The continued growth of these sophisticated services depends on a literate population.

- Even though communications is a global business, we are essentially a local company, with strong roots in communities all over America. Therefore, healthy, growing local economies – which, as you know, are strongly correlated to literacy – are crucial to the health of our business.

Being the nation's largest communications company not only gives us a special *interest* in solving the literacy crisis in America, it also gives us a special *ability* to make a difference. Our communications networks comprise a unique platform for sharing resources and forming partnerships. Our enormously committed employees and retirees have a long heritage of volunteerism and community involvement.

And more than a decades' worth of commitment to the issue of literacy has given us both the knowledge and the relationships with the literacy community to be effective.

The result is a serious, long-term, multi-faceted approach to literacy – one that is engrained in our culture and woven into our corporate fabric.

Many different elements come together under our comprehensive "Verizon Reads" program:

- Literacy is a major focus of our philanthropic efforts. The Verizon Foundation donated nearly $20 M to literacy organizations in 2001.

- We enable our customers to become part of the fight through a unique option we call "Check Into Literacy" – a check-off box on their monthly telephone bill through which customers can donate $1 a month to literacy organizations in their communities.

- We have enlisted the time and talents of celebrities across the country to bring attention to the cause by becoming Verizon Literacy Champions. A few of these terrific, committed individuals are with us today:

    - Dick Enberg of CBS Sports,
    - Chris Thorpe, luge silver medallist
    - Lee Ann Parsley, skeleton silver medallist
    - Mike Kohn, bobsled bronze medallist
    - And of course, the incomparable "voice of Verizon," the esteemed Mr. James Earl Jones.

- Our 240,000 employees and many thousands of retirees are also crucial to this effort. We encourage their involvement through matching gift programs and other initiatives to promote volunteerism. In 2001, this resulted in:

    - 15,000 volunteer hours devoted to tutoring, reading to kids, running book drives, etc.
    - More than 60,000 books donated in our annual "Season's Readings" campaign

- And we are using our technology to build the infrastructure for learning and collaboration among the literacy community itself. We have developed the Verizon Literacy Network on the World Wide Web as a one-stop resource for literacy information. Through its many features – an interactive search engine and a literacy directory, among others – *anybody* can locate literacy organizations in their community, *anywhere* in the United States.

- Early next year, we will extend this network even further by creating the Verizon Literacy University on the Internet. Working with our partners in the literacy community, we intend to arm volunteers with the necessary skills to assist literacy organizations across the country – dramatically changing the way services are offered through the practical application of technology.

Although we have devoted significant resources to this effort, we are by no means in this alone. From the beginning of our involvement in literacy issues more than ten years ago, we have closely aligned ourselves with the nation's leading literacy organizations such as the National Center for Family Literacy, the National Institute For Literacy, ProLiteracy and the National Alliance of Urban Literacy Coalitions.

Verizon's mission is highly focused. We work to raise public awareness, create partnerships, and generate financial support for local and national literacy organizations so they can do their jobs more effectively. To use a communications metaphor, we believe that -- through our scale, scope and technology – we can increase the "bandwidth" of the system and enable *more* learning to be delivered to *more* people, *more* effectively.

Our experience shows that it takes more than traditional corporate philanthropy to make an impact on a complex social problem such as illiteracy. It takes collaboration, commitment and long-term grassroots involvement.

Government can be an important part of this collaboration.

In particular, the literacy community is very grateful for this Congress's support for family literacy initiatives that strengthen parents' ability to be their children's first and

most important teacher. Our literacy partners have told us how crucial these programs are to breaking the vicious cycle of low educational attainment and poverty.

In addition, there is a critical need for additional funding for literacy research and methodologies that can better evaluate the state of literacy in America.

Verizon – along with our literacy partners – applauds the U.S. House of Representatives for passing H.R. #1, known as "The No Child Left Behind" bill.

Now, we must do more. We must make sure that no *person* is left behind – regardless of age, geography, disability or any other barrier.

Just last week, we were pleased to announce the latest member of our extraordinary line-up of Verizon Literacy Champions. His name is Erik Weihenmayer. Among Erik's achievements is that he has climbed the tallest peak on each of the world's seven continents – including Mount Everest.

He also happens to be blind.

Erik was with us last week when we joined the American Foundation for the Blind in supporting an initiative that will promote literacy for the blind by transcribing textbooks into Braille.

Every day, a child's mind is unlocked, a mother's bond with her children strengthened, a person's disability overcome – all by the simple power of learning to read. But there remain vast populations in this country who remain locked in the cycle of illiteracy – a pattern that, left unaddressed, has dire consequences for our society.

Verizon will continue to attack this issue, with every resource at our disposal. We urge the rest of corporate America – as well as our valuable partners in government and education – to join us in this fight.

Thank you for your attention and for this opportunity to address this important topic with you.

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## *APPENDIX F -- WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR. RALPH KUEBLER, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, MBNA FOUNDATION, WILMINGTON, DELAWARE*

**Testimony of Mr. Ralph A. Kuebler**
Executive Vice President, MBNA Corporation
Wilmington, Delaware

Before the
Subcommittee on Education Reform
Hearing on
"Literacy Partnerships That Work"

Tuesday, October 8, 2002
2175 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C.

Thank you Chairman Castle and members of the subcommittee for inviting me to testify today on the topic of "Literacy Partnerships That Work."

My name is Ralph Kuebler, and I am an executive vice president with MBNA, a bank headquartered in Wilmington, Delaware, that does business nationwide as well as in Canada, England, Ireland, and Spain. We are the largest independent credit card lender in the U.S. with more than 50 million Customers. We have been in operation for nearly 21 years and are proud to be consistently recognized by major business magazines as one of the best 100 companies to work for in America.

From its inception in 1982, MBNA has believed strongly in community involvement—so the 28,000 people who work at MBNA have volunteered hundreds of thousands of hours in support of community organizations and programs. That involvement has always included schools and the students who attend them. In 1997, however, MBNA decided to

place increased emphasis on education and created a foundation to develop programs that enhance educational opportunities for students.

Since 1997 I have been the managing director of community education initiatives within the foundation, overseeing its grants programs, college scholarship programs, education-related corporate donations, and education volunteer programs. My remarks today will focus on our grants programs, where we have the opportunity to partner with schools in ways that promote literacy. Then I will address other ways in which MBNA, through the MBNA Foundation, supports literacy.

MBNA realized from the start that education was the key component to improving the quality of life for residents of the communities where the people of MBNA live and work. There was this sense that if people, especially economically disadvantaged people, were to improve their chances for success—in reality, to be literate—then educational opportunities had to be expanded for them.

MBNA hires many young people, so a well-educated workforce is essential to our business. In addition, educated consumers who understand credit and debt ultimately make better Customers in using our products. But the commitment of MBNA transcends these considerations. Fundamentally, we believe we should use our expertise and resources to help in our community because it is the right thing to do.

The ability to read is crucially important today—untold hardships are endured by those who cannot decipher and comprehend the written word. Yet in our schools, students struggle every day to read. In elementary school there is typically a class called reading—but in fact, the ability to read affects a child's entire school day. In science, social studies, math, etc., students are expected to read. A child who doesn't master this skill cannot succeed in elementary, middle, or high school. Reading and writing are the building blocks on which academic life is based—they are essential ingredients to success in life. So the development of partnerships with schools particularly to advance literacy was and is a major goal for MBNA.

Our expertise is in banking, not in education, so to help improve literacy, we needed a partnership program that was at the grassroots level, that involved teachers, that provided resources for the classroom, and that incorporated accountability. Long before the release of recent compelling research that found teachers make the difference in what students learn, MBNA believed in the importance of putting its resources at the teacher level. We created grants programs which can be models for other businesses that are willing to invest the people, time, and money to make them work. The MBNA grants programs are successful because they are designed to empower teachers in all academic subjects.

As of today, MBNA has funded more than 6,000 teacher-generated grants and provided more than $32 million in the areas where our foundation operates. In Delaware alone, $4 million is earmarked annually to fund the grants programs. The range of grants funded is

limited only by the creativity and need of the applicants. The minimum amount for each grant is $250 with no maximum amount specified. The grants committee, composed of knowledgeable and respected community people, meets monthly to act on the proposals submitted.

The following is a brief sketch of what we have been able to provide teachers specifically in support of literacy:

- Increased numbers of reading books for classrooms and school libraries
- Leveled books and software to give extra help to students who are performing below grade level
- Assistive technology materials to enhance reading and writing experiences
- Support for before- and after-school remedial reading programs
- Professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their instruction in reading and writing
- Student incentive programs to put extra books in the hands of students
- Access to literary artists, poets, and other guest lecturers who can excite students about reading and writing
- Tutorial assistance to provide one-on-one help for students
- Funding for the development of school newspapers, radio stations, class trips, and activities that increase opportunities for students to practice reading and writing
- Support for mentoring programs that match adults with students
- Support for read-a-thons and book clubs

The list goes on and on. The bottom line is that the success of the MBNA grants programs is in its ability to have teachers tell us what supplemental materials they need to improve the achievement of their students. School funding helps teachers deliver basic curriculum, but with our grants programs the teachers can augment that curriculum focusing on the materials and support needed to give extra assistance to students—particularly those who are reading and writing below grade level.

At the conclusion of every funded grant program, the recipient is required to provide us with an evaluation indicating how successful the program was. Three times a year, MBNA publishes a newsletter highlighting successful grants and distributes it to all the teachers eligible to apply for grants.

MBNA also believes that libraries are essential to foster reading and literacy in general. Too often our schools are faced with under-funded, under-stocked school and classroom libraries. Too often, libraries are not accessible to students during the school day because they substitute as places for study halls or classes. MBNA grants have provided much-needed reading books for school and classroom libraries.

MBNA's commitment to fostering literacy does not stop with the grants programs. As a company, we participate in the HOSTS (Help One Student To Succeed) program in which MBNA people volunteer to tutor children in school one-on-one at least one hour a week. In addition, we encourage and help develop partnerships between MBNA

divisions and schools located near our many offices. Other volunteers regularly act as organizers or judges for science fairs, spelling contests, debating competitions, etc. Company policy allows all MBNA people four hours per month of paid volunteer time during working hours. For 2003, we estimate that MBNA people will contribute 600,000 hours of time volunteering in their communities.

Another MBNA policy allows for matching donations from the foundation to any college, university, or elementary, middle, or high school to which an MBNA person contributes personally. Every year, MBNA contributes about $1.2 million in this matching program. In addition, MBNA supports many institutions of higher education such as the University of Delaware, the University of Maine, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities as well as numerous nonprofit organizations whose emphasis is on reading. These organizations include Reading is Fundamental, Reading Assist Institute, Read Aloud, and Literacy Volunteers of America.

MBNA has partnered with the Gannett Company in its Newspapers in Education program, providing educational supplements to teachers and their students on three topics per year. In September, the focus is on making a difference; in February, on diversity (to celebrate Black History Month); and in the spring, on the Holocaust. Recently we have also joined in promoting the nationwide Read Across America celebration. All these programs promote reading and writing through the use of daily newspapers.

In addition to our grants programs that help teachers raise students' achievements, MBNA offers two community scholarship programs so that students can realize their dream of college. MBNA has awarded more than 1,700 scholarships for a total of almost $30 million through these programs:

- Students who graduate from high schools where our foundation has offices and go to four-year accredited colleges or universities within their states can earn up to $30,000 over four years based on need.
- Students who elect to attend one of the 91 Historically Black Colleges and Universities are eligible for up to $30,000 over four years based on need.

Also, eligible children of MBNA people who are accepted at two- or four-year institutions of higher education are eligible for up to $3,000 or $6,000 respectively per year to help defray costs. Additionally, they can vie for competitive scholarships each worth up to $6,000 per year.

MBNA's scholarship programs give more than money. Not only are students awarded financial support, but they are also mentored and advised throughout their college years. They are offered the opportunity to work as summer interns at MBNA to gain valuable work experience, and are provided with summer education classes on company time to improve their college and work skills. The success of the MBNA scholarship programs is shown by the number of students who graduate—MBNA scholars have a much higher rate of graduating in four years than the college norm. We believe this success is due to the scope of our program.

Building on our grants programs, volunteer efforts in schools, and college scholarship awards, MBNA continues to look for effective ways of partnering with teachers and schools to help all children develop strong literacy skills that will enrich their lives.

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I am grateful for the privilege of appearing before you this morning. I wish you well in your deliberations and would be happy to provide any additional information you may find helpful.

Thank you.

## *APPENDIX G -- WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR. MIKE RAWLINGS, PRESIDENT, PIZZA HUT, INC., DALLAS, TEXAS*

Statement from Mike Rawlings
President and Chief Concept Officer, Pizza Hut, Inc.
"Literacy Partnerships That Work"
Subcommittee on Education Reform
Committee on Education and the Workforce
October 8, 2002

Good Morning. I want to thank you for your invitation to testify on the subject of "Literacy Partnerships That Work."

Pizza Hut's "literacy partnership" is a national reading incentive program called BOOK IT! If any of you have children who attended elementary school in the last 18 years there's a good chance you may be familiar with it – nearly 70 percent of all elementary schools in the nation participate in the BOOK IT! Program. The acceptance and popularity of BOOK IT! among so many educators…so many schools…and so many children…is just one of many indicators that this is a literacy partnership that "works."

I am here today to tell you about the BOOK IT! Program -- what it is and why it works. But first let me tell you how it came about.

Some 20 years ago, the president and CEO of Pizza Hut at the time saw his own young son struggling with reading. He felt strongly that reading is the single most important skill for any child's future success. And it was heartbreaking to watch his own son have difficulties. He wanted to do something, so he started thinking about incentives as a way to motivate and make reading fun. And he thought about how this might apply to any child for whom a little bit of added motivation might help develop a passion for reading. So he developed the idea for a program that provides pizza, praise and recognition to children. With the input of educators and librarians, the BOOK IT!

Program was born. It was tested in Kansas, the birthplace of Pizza Hut. And in the fall of 1985 it became a national program.

This month, BOOK IT! begins its eighteenth year. More than 20 million schoolchildren across the country will be setting their reading goals for the next six months and looking forward to earning praise, recognition and – yes, pizza – for reaching their goals. They will find reading a little more fun, and reaching their reading goals a little more rewarding, as a result of participating in BOOK IT!

Let me give you a few highlights about BOOK IT! today:

-- BOOK IT! is the nation's largest and longest-running reading incentive program. BOOK IT! will reach 875,000 classrooms in 50,000 public, private and parochial schools this year.

-- We also will reach our 300 millionth BOOK IT! student, as a lifetime total. Young adults who were BOOK IT! students in the 1980s are now BOOK IT! teachers, and they are parents with children of their own. So we are entering into a second generation of BOOK IT! kids.

-- Pizza Hut created the program and we are the exclusive sponsor. Pizza Hut has invested nearly a half billion dollars in BOOK IT! since its inception. We have given away close to $200 million in free pizza certificates, and we have invested in classroom materials, educator research and other literacy partnerships over the years.

-- In 1998, we developed a second program, BOOK IT! Beginners, as a read-aloud program to reach pre-school and pre-kindergarten children. As many of you are aware, early childhood development is expected to play a fundamental role in turning around America's declining reading skills.

We at Pizza Hut are not educators, but we know something about fun – and what kids enjoy. So our unique contribution has been to create programs, with educators and reading experts advising us, which bring more fun to reading.

Let me briefly explain how the BOOK IT! Program works:

-- There are four "Fs" to BOOK IT! The program is free to all elementary schools. The goal of the program is to motivate children to read more, and instill a lifelong love of reading. We do this by making reading fun. Teachers set monthly goals, and Pizza Hut provides rewards, praise and gift certificates for – food. And I probably don't have to tell you that pizza is children's favorite food. Reading goals are set individually to allow all students, at all levels, to participate. So the program is designed to be flexible and can be used in conjunction with virtually all reading instruction programs. We give the teachers the tool kit and let them decide how to best use those tools in their own classrooms. So, free…fun…food…flexible. That simple formula has been the foundation of America's most successful reading incentive program.

-- And, parents are encouraged to help their children meet BOOK IT! reading goals by reading with their children at home, helping teachers track reading progress, and taking their children to the library.

I'd like to explain a little about why the program works:

The BOOK IT! Program would never have achieved such a high level of acceptance unless it was perceived as a valuable addition to the classroom. Maintaining the integrity of the program remains our highest priority.

We regularly seek guidance and feedback from educators and our Advisory Council, which includes The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, the American Library Association, and many professional associations involved in education.

The result? Our numbers tell the overall story. And we have received countless letters from teachers who have thanked us for the program and said, quite simply, that it works.

Pizza Hut recently commissioned a survey of teachers participating in the BOOK IT! Program. The results indicate the program has a positive impact on students' behavior and attitudes about reading.

Overall, more than 90 percent of all teachers said the program met or exceeded their expectations.

- Teachers said the program had a positive impact on students' vocabulary skills (90%);
- They said students read "more often" for enjoyment (89%) and their interest in reading increased (88%);
- And they said BOOK IT! had a positive impact on students' overall attitudes toward learning (85%).

Another reason for the success of the program is that it has been a part of the education landscape for such a long time. Schools and teachers have a wealth of experience with the program and great institutional knowledge about tailoring it to their needs.

The longevity of our commitment and the credibility of the program reflect Pizza Hut's core values – integrity and belief in people. We have a shared vision of who we are

and where we're headed, and it's reflected in everything we do. We are committed to uncompromising quality. We invest in our people to help them reach their full potential. We encourage them to think for themselves. And we give them the freedom to make contributions. So, just as the integrity of the BOOK IT! Program reflects Pizza Hut's values, it also mirrors our commitment to giving people room to grow and rewarding them for their accomplishments.

As a company, we believe in giving back to the community. Pizza Hut supports the BOOK IT! Program because it's the right thing to do. But there's another reason that we care about literacy. A large number of young people will gain their first work experience in the restaurant industry. We, like other employers in our category, help prepare these young people for future careers in a wide range of fields. But we also want to see this work force arrive prepared – able to read and comprehend.

Pizza Hut and the BOOK IT! Program alone have not, and cannot, reverse the nation's overall decline in reading achievement. However, although the problem is serious, we agree there are some good reasons to be optimistic about the future. We see throughout the nation that we are making reading a top priority, from the highest levels of government to the grassroots community level. While Pizza Hut was never alone in advocating youth literacy, we have more company than ever before joining in the chorus. We welcome that partnership. We look forward to standing side by side with educators, parents and policymakers who care about youth literacy. We at Pizza Hut also welcome the contributions others in the private sector are willing to make.

The ability to read at an early age is arguably the most important answer to the most difficult long-term questions faced by our country. Focus is what's needed behind this critical issue. And we need to stay with it until the problem is solved.

Youth literacy has captured a lot of attention recently. We all need to make sure the spotlight remains on this issue until real progress is made. For Pizza Hut, this is not a "cause" that we support by attending a fancy dinner once a year and writing a check. We believe in this issue. We believe in the contribution made by the BOOK IT! Program. So do the teachers, parents and kids who have participated in it.

We look forward to many more years of BOOK IT! We will continue to look for ways to make our program even more responsive to the needs of children today. And we expect to help another generation of readers learn to love books and have some fun doing it.

## *APPENDIX H -- WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MS. JUDITH STOIA, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER OF "BETWEEN THE LIONS," BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, ACCOMPANIED BY THEO THE LION*

Testimony of Judith Stoia
Subcommittee on Education Reform
"Literacy Partnerships That Work"
October 8, 2002

Good Morning. My name is Judith Stoia, I am an executive producer at WGBH television in Boston. Most recently, I have overseen the production of BETWEEN THE LIONS, a daily series on PBS that helps young children learn to read.

We began BETWEEN THE LIONS with our partners, Sirius Thinking, in response to the urgent literacy crisis among America's children. We began developing the project in 1996. At the time 70% of America's fourth graders read below grade level. At that time there was one television program focused at all on reading skills and that was Sesame Street, which teaches the sounds of the alphabet. Today, six years later, 68 % of fourth graders read below grade level, a miserable statistic. Yet, the market for children's television has exploded. Twenty nine broadcast and cable channels offer 279 separate programs which, when repeats are counted, add up to 1324 hours of programming each week aimed at children. Of these, two programs, Sesame Street and, now, BETWEEN THE LIONS, try to help children learn to read. Sesame Street still does a brilliant job teaching the alphabet and its sounds. BETWEEN THE LIONS goes much further in teaching vowel sounds, how sounds go together to make words, how words make sentences you can read. In short, BETWEEN THE LIONS helps young children crack the code to become readers.

The window for cracking the code is perilously narrow: if a child has not gotten it by the third grade, chances that he or she will ever become a proficient reader are slim. Put

more bluntly, if we fail to reach a child by the third grade, he or she may grow up to become one of the 44 million Americans who are functionally illiterate: who have trouble understanding directions, filling out job applications or reading to their children. People for whom the world of books and the pure joy of reading are beyond their reach.

So, on the one hand, we have a literacy crisis of towering proportions and a tiny window of opportunity. On the other hand, we have television, which many people say is part of the problem. Often, they're right. We believed, back in 1996, though, that television could be part of the solution, too. That television had unique properties that could help kids learn to read: television can make all the vowels on a page bounce and say their sounds, we can make word endings sing, we can highlight text as a story is read then rearrange all the words and do it over again. In short, what makes television so objectionable at times – its frenzy, its silliness – also makes it uniquely suited for teaching reading.

Our producers worked for a year on a detailed reading curriculum before we even thought of how to produce the program. We met time and again with the country's top reading experts and assembled a group of kindergarten and first grade teachers who worked very closely with us in deciding what BETWEEN THE LIONS should teach. Through them we identified the latest evidence-based practices and built our series on them. We came out of that year with a detailed curriculum that guides every element in our program. BETWEEN THE LIONS looks like a lot of fun, and it is, but there is nothing random about the program. Every element teaches a reading skill. Those reading advisors and

teachers have stayed with us every step of the way – they consult on scripts, view rough cuts, and lay out each season's curriculum. Indeed, we have had a fulltime reading advisor on our staff from the start. This is one reason BETWEEN THE LIONS is so popular with teachers: what they're teaching in the classroom we're reinforcing on television.

But does it work? Does our television program actually help young children learn to read? Most television programs are not quantifiable. They may be wonderful shows, but there is no way of measuring their effect. That's not true with BETWEEN THE LIONS. Whether or not children are learning from our program *can* be measured.

Two summative research studies using experimental and control groups show that children who view BETWEEN THE LIONS demonstrate marked improvement in their reading skills. The first was a controlled study by the University of Kansas,. It showed that kindergartners who watched BETWEEN THE LIONS made dramatic gains in key reading skills compared to the control group that did not watch the program.

The second research study was quite unusual. With the help of Senator Thad Cochran and his staff, we saturated two communities in Mississippi with our materials. Our advisors and producers conducted teacher workshops at the Choctaw reservation and in Indianola in the Delta. With grants from PBS, CPB and the U.S. Department of Education's Ready to Learn program, we provided every Head Start, childcare, kindergarten and first grade classroom with a set of 55 videotapes, books, teachers' guides and song sheets, as well as bags of books for children to take home. It was all free

to them. In exchange, the teachers agreed to show BETWEEN THE LIONS regularly, do related classroom activities, and continue working with our advisors over the course of the school year. Mississippi State conducted a yearlong research study, which we've just received. I'm delighted to report that the Mississippi children who watched BETWEEN THE LIONS showed marked improvements in important early reading skills over the children who did not. The researchers told us they were surprised and impressed at how well the children did in so many important early reading indicators. Details of the Kansas and Mississippi research studies are in the materials we are leaving with you as well as information on the Department of Education's Ready To Learn program and what it is doing in your state.

Along the way, we have enjoyed important partnerships with the business community. Pizza Hut featured BETWEEN THE LIONS in last spring's far-ranging Book It Beginners campaign reaching 96,000 preschool classrooms and 1.5 million kids. Chic Fil A distributed thousands of cassettes with our stories and songs. Cheerios was an underwriter for our first two seasons, along with five wonderful foundations.

The landscape has changed for us now, as it has for so many children's programs with the slide in the economy affecting foundations and corporations who might have been our partners in sunnier times. Just having the program on television is not enough. We must continue producing programs in order to cover all the skills that beginning readers need to become proficient readers. And there is so much to be done off the air. We already are working with the National Association of Childcare Resource and Referral Agencies to

distribute our materials locally, and we have made an alliance with the American Indian Head Start program to use our materials and training in their communities. We want aggressively to expand teacher training and the use of our materials in childcare, kindergartens and first grades around the country. It's frustrating to be scraping for funding because we know that in the midst of the country's literacy crisis, we have a program that actually works.

I don't wish to end on a discouraging note, but I don't wish to conceal our challenges, either. We are determined to build on what we've done and look for support wherever we can find it. We're enormously grateful to be included in today's hearing. Thank you.

Testimony at Subcommittee on Education Reform
Theo

JUDY

I've brought with me someone who is a nationally known literacy expert, whose life work is dedicated to helping young children learn to read, who.....

**THEO**

Thank you Ms. Stoia. I would like to thank the committee for inviting me to here to tell you a little about Between the Lions... straight from the Lion's mouth, so to speak.

Every day on Between the Lions on PBS, my brilliant and talented wife, Cleo and I invite children to visit us in our typical library. Well, it's typical except for the fact that we have a talking computer mouse named Click the Mouse... and a dinosaur named Heath the Thesaurus... and a singing group called the Vowelles who sing vowel sounds... and it's a library run by lions. Except for all that it's typical.

Testimony at Subcommittee on Education Reform
Theo

Anyway, using the brilliant curriculum Ms Stoia spoke about, we try to help children learn how to read. In addition, I personally hope to instill in them my love of reading. I'm a voracious reader! (GETTING CARRIED AWAY) Love everything about it: the tasty vowels and consonants that make up all kinds of scrumptious little words... Love the big words too... you know the ones with lots of syllables that you can really get your teeth into. And I love how the words make mouth watering sentences... and paragraphs... with lip smacking commas... question marks... exclamation points!

JUDY SNAPS HIM OUT OF IT

**THEO**

Oh! Sorry! Got a little carried away there. Maybe I should stop here and answer a few questions. Remember to raise your hand and wait to be called on.

***APPENDIX I -- WRITTEN INFORMATION SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY MR. IVAN SEIDENBERG, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, VERIZON, WASHINGTON, D.C.***

Over the years, Verizon has supported a number of organizations dedicated to individuals with learning disabilities, including The World Institute on Disabilities, Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic, Hawaii Branch of the International Dyslexic Association, and the American Foundation for the Blind.

While the company has supported these organizations, Verizon is committed to being the leader in America's campaign to raise literacy levels by orchestrating a national platform that will increase funding, community awareness and support a wide diversity of literacy programs. During 2001, Verizon invested nearly $20 million toward this endeavor.

Verizon has developed relationships with national literacy organizations such as the National Center for Family Literacy, National Institute for Literacy, Reading is Fundamental and the American Library Association. In addition, Verizon partners with its employees, customers and communities to support literacy nationwide. Literacy is our signature cause at Verizon; passion for this cause permeates the entire organization.

# # #

***APPENDIX J -- WRITTEN STATEMENT SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY REPRESENTATIVE HILDA L. SOLIS, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REFORM, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.***

**Statement of Representative Hilda L. Solis**
**Hearing on Literacy Partnerships that Work**
**October 8, 2002**

Literacy is fundamental to ones academic success, financial security, and personal safety. As a result, it is in America's best interest to ensure the literacy of all its residents regardless of age, gender, race, or country of origin. As a nation, though, we are experiencing shortcomings in our attempts to produce and maintain a literate America. According to the National Institute for Literacy, for example, only 10% of adults who could benefit from literacy programs are being served. Similarly, low-income children are also being underserved. In my Congressional District, 57% of residents say they do not speak English very well. Presumably, this same group does not read English very well, either. This reiterates the importance of targeting resources towards improving literacy.

In order for all our children and adults to become fully literate, we must pay more attention to the special needs of individuals who are learning English as a second language. 76% of my constituents speak a language other than English at home. For many of these individuals, English is not their primary language. Research proves that when teaching this population to read English, special considerations must be taken into account. For example, children learn a second language better after mastering their primary language, highlighting the importance of bilingual education. Adults with little formal education also require more tailored instruction. As we move towards becoming a more literate America, I hope we will not forget these special populations.

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