

should conduct risk assessment, based on scientific evidence, and cost-benefit analysis before implementing new regulations.

TRIBUTE TO MING PAO DAILY NEWS

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 29, 1998

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ming Pao Daily News. Ming Pao Daily News celebrated their first anniversary on April 8, 1998.

Since Ming Pao Daily News' entry into the northeast market last year, it has quickly grown to become one of the most widely circulated daily publications within the tri-state area. Ming Pao Daily News' circulation in Hong Kong, Canada, and now the United States, has made it one of the most influential Chinese newspapers internationally.

For the past year, Ming Pao Daily News has reached out to New York's Asian community and forged a positive and hopefully long lasting relationship. Ming Pao Daily News has hosted various charity fundraisers, events, and activities that not only benefitted the Asian community, but all of New York City.

It is the media's responsibility to accurately, objectively, and timely report international, national, and/or local news to their audience and I encourage Ming Pao Daily News to continue with that role. It is that valuable service that their readers have come to rely upon.

It is my pleasure to recognize Ming Pao Daily News on the auspicious occasion of their first anniversary and their contributions this past year.

RECOGNIZING "HIRE A VETERAN WEEK" IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

HON. GEORGE E. BROWN, JR.

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 29, 1998

Mr. BROWN of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring the attention of the Nation to the cause of improving the employment opportunities of our military veterans and to the commendable efforts of the State of California during its upcoming "Hire A Veteran Week" of May 3-9.

One of the commitments we make to the men and women who serve our Nation in the military is to provide them assistance in finding employment when they re-enter the civilian economy. Most of our military service members develop skills and personal attributes that will serve them well in the civilian economy. But even in the best of economic conditions it can sometimes take a long time to find a job, and as a Nation we should help shorten that time for our military service members.

I have sponsored efforts in Congress to improve veterans' employment prospects, and I have admired the efforts made on behalf of veterans in these areas day-in and day-out by service organizations and by employment specialists with federal and state agencies. The State of California is continuing a strong tradi-

tion of assistance to veterans' employment prospects by sponsoring "Hire A Veteran Week" this first full week of May 1998.

I commend California for this effort, and I commend the men and women of California's public-and-private-sectors who will take part in promoting veterans' employment this coming week and year-round.

MINNESOTA AMERICA READS PROGRAM

HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 29, 1998

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the work of Minnesota volunteers participating in the America Reads program. There is perhaps no issue more important to the future of this nation than education. The volunteers I speak of have shown a true dedication to the welfare of our youth by ensuring that children in Minnesota elementary schools get the attention and assistance they need to improve their reading skills.

Twenty-three Minnesota colleges and universities are currently involved in the America Reads program, which was started by President Clinton in 1996. The goal is to ensure that every child can read well and independently by the end of third grade. We all know of the links between literacy and future success. However, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 40 percent of America's fourth graders aren't reading at basic levels. The America reads program reaches out to children and gives them the individual attention necessary to make sure they don't fall through the cracks of the system.

If children lose interest in reading early, their chance of being successful later in life is difficult. Quoting an educator who recently visited with me, "In the first three grades, children learn to read. The rest of their lives, they read to learn". Volunteers help students realize that reading is not only fundamental, but fun. The time spent with tutors enables children to relax and enjoy books, which is something that can't always be done in the classroom.

I have attached an article from the Saint Paul Pioneer Press for my colleagues' review. It describes the America Reads program in Minnesota, and highlights just one of the many success stories this initiative has produced. I applaud the efforts of these volunteers, and wish to thank them for their dedication to the education of our youth.

I am especially pleased to note and thank some familiar names and friends who are highlighted in these reports—our former colleague Senator Harris Wofford, Saint Paul's former Mayor James Scheibel, and his spouse Mary Pat Lee. Their willingness to share their time, talent and energy is an extraordinary example of public service, and I wish them continued success in their endeavors; helping students learn to read so that they might read to learn!

[From the Pioneer Press/Pioneer Planet,
April 20, 1998]

VOLUNTEERS REAP THE REWARDS OF TEACHING
YOUNGSTERS TO READ

(By THOMAS J. COLLINS)

No tear-welling crescendo or awe-inspiring fireworks marked the encounter last week

between a middle-aged Minneapolis bar owner and a bubbly St. Paul first-grader.

Life-changing moments rarely are showy. If you see them at all, they are reflected briefly in a gleam of an eye or a confidently raised chin—unspoken signals between David Arone and Kiara Renfro as they read together in a Daytons Bluff Elementary School classroom.

Yet it is partly as a result of this encounter that the 44-year-old Arone, whose family has owned Arones Bar in Minneapolis since 1935, has decided to pursue a new career by becoming an elementary school teacher.

For Kiara, 7, the encounter also has been a transforming experience, giving her the help she needs to continue to teach her brothers to read.

Scratch the political pronouncements and doomsday warnings about the decline of America's public schools and you'll find enclaves, like this one created by Arone and Kiara, where just the reverse seems to be true.

He is a volunteer in Metropolitan State University's America Reads programs and spends 15 hours a week helping first- through third-grade students at Daytons Bluff improve their reading.

She is a first-grader on a mission to make something of herself despite challenges that define her inner-city elementary school—high poverty and student mobility as well as many students who do not speak English. And, of course, looming in her future is a deadline: National research shows that if she doesn't learn to read by the end of third grade, she'll be more prone to a lifetime of ignorance and poverty.

On this particular day, Arone is leaning over Kiara as they read a book about fishing bears. Together they sound out difficult words, "shh . . . shh . . . shake." She glides over words she recognizes. "Good job!" he says, as she masters each page.

Later, he bends close to Kiara and whispers in her ear: "Some day you will write a book."

MINNESOTANS HEED THE CALL

It is not only Kiara's life that has been changed, thanks to President Clinton's plan to mobilize 100,000 work-study students and other volunteers under the America Reads program. Arone's life has taken a new turn as well.

"From my experience here at Daytons Bluff, I've decided to change careers and go into teaching," he says, with a hint of shyness in his voice. "This is going to sound corny, but I knew this is where I needed to be. I love this atmosphere. I love kids, and I've loved being here."

Clinton's call to improve reading for young students seems to have been embraced with particular enthusiasm in Minnesota.

Metropolitan State in St. Paul was the first Minnesota college or university to join more than 70 colleges and universities nationwide that joined the reading program in 1996, its inaugural year. The school, long involved in community partnerships to help educate children and their parents, also developed a college course to better prepare its student tutors for their often challenging urban K-12 students.

Twenty-two other Minnesota colleges and universities now have developed programs of their own to buoy educational and community partnerships and training provided by the 45 members of the Minnesota Campus Compact. The wide-ranging programs include reading to at-risk children and a study of ways to strengthen the housing stock and economy of the Daytons Bluff neighborhood.

The campus compact takes seriously its goal of changing lives and communities, says Mark Langseth, executive director of the compact.

"There has been much too much effort elsewhere on the romantic and recreational notions of volunteerism," he said, noting that his coalition is in the second year of a 10-year focus on early- and family-literacy programs, of which America Reads is part.

To that end, Harris Wofford, a key player in the America Reads program nationally, will address the Youth Service Leadership Conference later this morning at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

The campus compact also is co-sponsoring a gathering Tuesday in Minneapolis of 20 college and university presidents, 20 superintendents of Minnesota public schools and various corporate and foundation leaders. The meeting is expected to result in stronger campus community and school partnerships throughout the state, Langseth said.

NEW APPROACHES

The compact's interest in America Reads and other literacy programs was piqued by a startling statistic: Four of every 10 fourth-grade students failed to attain the basic level of reading on the National Assessment of Education Progress in 1994.

The resulting trend was equally alarming: Students who fail to read well by fourth grade have higher dropout rates and often have much more difficulty learning to read later in life, explains Catherine Korda, the compact's VISTA literacy coordinator.

However, she noted that national research shows "sustained, individualized attention and tutoring after school and during the summer, when combined with parental involvement and quality school instruction, can raise reading levels."

Armed with the knowledge, Clinton called for college presidents to increase their work-study allocations to finance 100,000 America Reads tutors. As of Feb. 23, more than 900 colleges and universities nationally have accepted the challenge.

Congress allocated \$52 million to improve and expand existing programs that support children's and literacy programs as well as training teachers to run them. The Corporation for National Service got an extra \$24 million for VISTA programs, \$25 million for AmeriCorps, and \$19 million for the National Senior Service Corps. programs to aid in that effort.

Beginning in July, 14 VISTA workers will be assigned to Minnesota college and university campuses to organize literacy programs like America Reads in elementary schools. In a break from the past, college students no longer will have to be eligible for federal work-study programs to participate in America Reads.

"This is such a natural fit for college and university students to tutor other students," said Jim Scheibel, senior adviser to Wofford and a former St. Paul mayor. "You can't sit with these kids and become part of their lives and not be committed to paying attention to the kinds of schools we have for young people."

Scheibel understands the process all too well. For the past four years, he has served as a mentor/tutor for Antonio Murden, a poor Washington, D.C., public school student.

Scheibel and his wife, Mary Pat Lee, successfully sued the district school system to help Murden, now 17, get the education he needed in a private school for special needs students. (The Pioneer Press profiled Scheibel's efforts to help Murden two years ago.)

"We've seen great improvement in Antonio," Scheibel said. "He recently went up another level in school. His spelling is terrific, and I've seen his whole self-image greatly improve as he's learned to read."

"We have to do this just like that—one student at a time, one school at a time, one

neighborhood at a time. Just look at the work Metro State has done in St. Paul."

'AN INCREDIBLE OPPORTUNITY'

Metropolitan State's tutors and volunteers in the America Reads program this year have served more than 200 students at Daytons Bluff and the Richard R. Green Central Park School in Minneapolis, said Susan Giguere, director of the university's Center for Community-Based Learning.

All told, the university and its community partners provided child and family literacy services to 420 people during the academic quarter ending March 31.

"It's hard to judge from (standardized) testing whether we are making a difference because many of the students you test today will be going tomorrow," Giguere said. "But I can see progress in the eyes of these students. They are reading more now. Even their parents are excited about reading."

Maureen Sauve, 35, a single mother of 2-year-old Hannah, is such a believer in the program that she will begin work on a master's degree in education at the University of Minnesota this summer. Like Arone, she hopes someday to be a licensed teacher.

"This has been an incredible opportunity for me," she said. "At first I was really distracted. The kids have so much energy. But I can see the progress these children are making. All of a sudden, reading clicks for them."

The former legal secretary returned to school after the birth of her daughter to fulfill a lifelong dream of being a teacher. She's getting a taste of that dream on a federal work-study grant through Metropolitan State.

FOUR BOOKS, NO DOUBTS

Arone didn't qualify for a work-study grant because he makes too much money. But he, too, was hooked by volunteering in Metropolitan State's after-school and family-literacy programs at Daytons Bluff.

He decided to return to school two years ago at the suggestion of his wife, Debra, after working in a smoke-filled bar began to irritate his asthma.

Now he gets to work in a smoke-free environmental and has the incalculable pleasure of seeing a young mind bloom with the joy of reading.

His reading session this day with Kiara ends on a positive note. She has read four books, her progress marked by tiny footprint-shaped stickers that eventually will earn her a free book.

Kiara, like her mentor, has no doubt she will achieve her goal.

"I was the first one to learn to read in my family. So I will be able to do more things when I grow up," she volunteers before breaking into a broad smile. "I'm the most responsible one. I do the chores around the house. I also taught my little brother and biggest brother to read."

Arone sits nearby with a big smile of his own, acknowledging later that by fitting him into her busy schedule, Kiara has changed his life as well.

MAY 3RD—POLISH CONSTITUTION DAY

HON. NANCY L. JOHNSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 29, 1998

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, it is Spring, and we live in a glorious time of rebirth and renewal. We meet to celebrate Polish Constitution Day. And how appropriate

it is that we celebrate as well the Senate vote approving NATO expansion.

In 1791, enormous challenges faced Polish reformers. Prussia, Russia and Austria, aggressive, imperial states, threatened the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth. In 1772, they partitioned the Commonwealth, and were threatening to repeat the disgraceful deed. The Commonwealth was but a Russian satellite, and its once powerful parliamentary democracy weakened by political corruption. The moment was now to transform Poland into a new nation, with the full benefits of liberty, equality, and fraternity available to every citizen.

The reformers gathered in Warsaw on May 3, 1791, met the challenge. Motivated by a deep desire for freedom, they set about to liberate themselves "from the disgraceful shackles of foreign influence." "Prizing more than life and every personal consideration, political existence, external independence, and internal liberty of the nation," they adopted a constitution for "future generations, for the sake of the public good, for scurring our liberty, and maintaining our kingdom and our possessions."¹

The new constitution electrified Europe. Shunning the violence of the French Revolution, the Polish reformers revolutionized their government and their society. The King, Stanislaus August, was now a constitutional monarch. The political devices which had opened the way for the corruption of the Commonwealth—the liberum veto (free veto) and the confederation—were abolished forever. Religious freedom was proclaimed. The burgers acquired political rights. The new constitution also implied a radical improvement for the peasant serfs, the largest social class.

Poland's rebirth threatened her feudal neighbors. In 1793 and 1795 they partitioned the Commonwealth twice more. For 123 years, until the end of World War 1, Poland was missing from Europe's map. President Woodrow Wilson supported Poland's rebirth, and independence came again, but it was brief. In 1939, Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia repeated the crimes of their 18th century predecessors; they invaded and partitioned Poland. And at the war's end, Churchill and Roosevelt conceded Eastern Europe to Soviet control.

The memories of May 3rd, of 19th century insurrections against Russia, and of heroism and martyrdom during the Holocaust of World War II, sustained the Polish people during the long-night of Soviet occupation. Poles objected to being cutoff from Europe and confined to an alien empire. In 1956, 1968, 1970, and 1976, Poles protested.

Inspired by Pope John II, Poles underwent a modern rebirth. Solidarity and Lech Walcsa challenged the false Soviet ideology. The weapons were not guns and tanks, but the truth, human dignity and civil rights, and the eternal insistence upon individual freedom. The West hailed the Polish workers' heroic, non-violent struggle. In 1983 Lech Walesa received the Nobel Peace Prize.

The patient struggle finally bore fruit in 1989. The countries of Eastern Europe regained their sovereignty, and the civil empire distinguished.

The Soviet Empire collapsed because of internal pressures, but also because of Western

¹"New Constitution of the Government of Poland established by the Revolution of The Third of May, 1791." (London: J. Debrett, 2nd edition, 1791), 4.