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**News Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Reach Out and Read of Greater New York Receives \$360,000 in Funding From The Leona M. & Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust to Promote Early Literacy in the Bronx**

**(New York, NY) August 22, 2011** - Reach Out and Read of Greater New York has been awarded a three-year, \$360,000 grant by The Leona M. & Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust to support the organization's early literacy programs in the Bronx. Reach Out and Read serves 65,222 children throughout the Borough.

The grant award will help support thirteen current and five new Reach Out and Read program sites in Bronx hospitals and community health centers serving more than 13,000 young children and their families. With the award, Reach Out and Read will expand its services to serve an additional 5,000 children. All of the hospitals and health centers under the award are located within close proximity to public schools in school districts #9 and #12 in the Bronx, where the Trust is focusing its major education investments.

Traci Lester, Executive Director of Reach Out and Read of Greater New York, said of the award, "The Leona M. & Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust has shown a true commitment to improving literacy standards among the children and families of the Bronx. This grant to Reach Out and Read of Greater New York will help to strengthen our efforts tenfold and prepare children for success in some of New York City's most challenging school districts. We are tremendously grateful for their vote of confidence."

"Reach Out and Read was carefully selected due to its proven track record of helping low-income children arrive at school ready to learn," said Helmsley Trust Program Director Rich McKeon. "We are excited to be able to extend this organization's impact in Bronx Districts 9 and 12."

**About Reach Out and Read**

Reach Out and Read prepares America's youngest children to succeed in school by partnering with doctors to prescribe books and encourage families to read together. Reach Out and Read trains medical providers to advise parents about the importance of reading aloud and to give books to children at checkups from 6 months through 5 years, with a special emphasis on children growing up in poverty. Endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, Reach Out and Read has one of the strongest records of research support of any primary care intervention. Peer-reviewed studies indicate that parents who get books and literacy counseling from their doctors and nurses are more likely to read to their young children, read to them more often, and provide more books in the home. Low-income children exposed to the program have shown improvements in language development, a critical component of school readiness. Reach Out and Read serves 3.9 million families at more than 4,688 hospitals and health centers in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Reach Out and Read of Greater New York is affiliated with the national Reach Out and Read program, and serves children and families in the five boroughs of New York City, Long Island, and seven counties north of the City: Westchester, Rockland, Putnam, Orange, Dutchess, Ulster, and Sullivan. First incorporated in 1999, the organization celebrates its 12th anniversary this year. Across the Greater New York region, 178 Reach Out and Read Program Sites serve over 272,000 infants, toddlers and preschoolers each year and distribute more than 415,000 books. For more information about Reach Out and Read of Greater New York visit: [www.reachoutandreadnyc.org](http://www.reachoutandreadnyc.org).

Reach Out and Read was recently featured in the *New York Times* article, "[Rx Read to Your Baby](#)", and on MSNBC in a feature titled "[Doctors Encourage Reading Habit](#)."

**About The Leona M. & Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust**

The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust aspires to improve lives by supporting effective nonprofits in health and medical research, social services, education, and conservation. The Trust, established in 1999, is administered by four trustees selected by Leona Helmsley. As a continuation of Mr. and Mrs. Helmsley's generous giving throughout their lifetimes, the Trust supports a diverse range of organizations and has committed more than \$440 million in grants to charitable organizations since 2009.

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