



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Congresswoman Nita Lowey Visits Young Children at White Plains Hospital Center in Support of Reach Out and Read Literacy Program**

**(White Plains, NY) August 7, 2008** -- Doctors at White Plains Hospital Center are sending families home from check-ups with free books and a very important prescription – “read aloud to your children.” Congresswoman Nita Lowey (18<sup>th</sup> Congressional District) visited the Family Health Center at White Plains Hospital to follow doctors’ orders by reading to families and children who participate in the Reach Out and Read program. As part of her visit, Congresswoman Lowey had the chance to see firsthand how Reach Out and Read (ROR) brings reading to children.

"Reading aloud to children plays a vital role in their education and development," said Congresswoman Nita Lowey (D-Westchester/Rockland). "Reach Out and Read's innovative model of providing books to children at medical check-ups promotes literacy among parents and children. I will continue to support federal funding for Reach Out and Read so children continue to receive the resources they need to grow and develop."

White Plains Hospital Center participates in Reach Out and Read of Greater New York (ROR GNY), a program that trains medical providers to advise parents about the importance of reading aloud and to give free books to children at check-ups from 6 months to 5 years. The books are new, carefully chosen, and developmentally appropriate - starting with board books for babies and moving on to more complex picture books for preschoolers. Through Reach Out and Read, each child starts kindergarten with a home library of up to 10 books and a parent who has heard at every well-child visit about the importance of books and reading with their children. Additionally, volunteers read stories with children in clinic waiting rooms, thereby modeling for parents reading aloud techniques.

"We want to thank Representative Lowey for her support of our innovative approach to literacy; by providing books to children at medical check-ups and encouraging parents to read aloud to their kids. She really understands that literacy is a key part of every child's development," said Traci Lester, Executive Director of ROR GNY.

#### About Reach Out and Read of Greater New York

White Plains Hospital Center is one of eight program sites in the 18<sup>th</sup> Congressional District that participate in Reach Out and Read of Greater New York, providing books to more than 13,400 children annually. Across the region, 163 Reach Out and Read of Greater New York program sites serve over 244,000 infants, toddlers and preschoolers each year and distribute over 400,000 books. ROR GNY partners with the Open Book, an intergenerational literacy program of JCY/Westchester Community Partners, where volunteers open up the world of reading to children in the pediatric and foster care waiting rooms at both White Plains Hospital Center and Westchester Medical Center. For more Information about ROR GNY visit our website at [www.reachoutandreadnyc.org](http://www.reachoutandreadnyc.org).

### About Reach Out and Read

Reach Out and Read (ROR) is a national, nonprofit program that is working to make literacy promotion a standard part of pediatric primary care. ROR trains medical providers to advise parents about the importance of reading aloud and to give books to children at check-ups from 6 months to 5 years, with a special emphasis on children growing up in poverty. Endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, ROR 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.

Since 1989, more than 50,000 pediatricians, nurses, residents and health professionals have been trained in the ROR model of early-literacy promotion. This year, ROR will provide 5.4 million books to more than 3.3 million children, at 3,797 hospitals and health centers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin Islands. For more information about Reach Out and Read visit [www.reachoutandread.org](http://www.reachoutandread.org).

### About White Plains Hospital Center

Established in 1893, White Plains Hospital Center is a 292-bed voluntary, nonprofit health care organization with the primary mission of offering high quality, acute health care and preventive medical care to all people who live in, work in or visit Westchester County and its surrounding areas.

The Hospital is a regional leader in several clinical areas including orthopedics, obstetrics and neonatology, and cancer care and has the busiest Emergency Department in Westchester County. A major expansion of the Emergency Department is underway, launched in response to growth of the population in White Plains and surrounding communities.

White Plains Hospital Center has a reputation for both clinical excellence and outstanding personalized care. The Hospital is a six-time winner of the Consumer Choice Award, an honor given to the nation's top hospitals by the National Research Corporation.

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**Congresswoman Nita Lowey reads to children at  
the Family Health Center of White Plains Hospital.  
All Photographs courtesy of Gerald Peart**



**Congresswoman Nita Lowey (seated) takes a moment with families, staff and friends of the Family Health Center at White Plains Hospital. Back row from left to right: Chakayla Blount (parent), Margaret Crilly, RN; Kristen Lawton, RN, Timothy Haydock, MD; Joli Yuknek, MD; Daniel Blum, Traci Lester (ROR GNY) and Janice Kirschner (Jewish Council of Yonkers). All Photographs courtesy of Gerald Peart**