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**Congresswoman Yvette Clarke Promotes Summer Reading  
at Brownsville Multi-Service Family Health Center  
*Congresswoman Clarke Reads Aloud to Children in Support of  
Reach Out and Read Literacy Program***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – (Brooklyn, NY) August 21, 2009** -- Doctors and other health care providers at Brownsville Multi-Service Family Health Center are sending families home from check-ups with free books and a very important prescription – “read aloud to your children.” **Congresswoman Yvette Clarke, who represents some of the families served by the Health Center in the 11<sup>th</sup> New York Congressional District, paid a visit to Brownsville Multi-Service Family Health Center** to follow doctors’ orders by reading to families and children who participate in its Reach Out and Read (ROR) early literacy program. She also used the opportunity to tour the facility and see firsthand how ROR helps instill a love of reading in area children.

"Today I had the opportunity to read aloud to children at Brownsville Multi-Service (BMS) Family Health Center. There I got the one-on-one chance to interact with the children and see firsthand how my presence impacted their learning experience," stated Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke. "It is critical that parents read to their children at an early age to stimulate their cognitive abilities. I am grateful that this program reaches out to underserved communities and encourages these children to read. As a Member of the House Education and Labor Committee, I believe that education is the gateway out of poverty, and I am proud to join the Reach Out and Read Literacy Program in combating illiteracy among our children."

ROR works with medical providers across the greater New York area in advising parents about the importance of reading aloud to their children and provides free books at each check-up for children ages 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 ROR, each child starts kindergarten with a home library of up to 10 books and a parent who has learned through 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.

"At BMS, we love Reach Out and Read," said Dr. Katherine A. Golar, MD, Chief Medical Officer of the Brownsville Community Development Corporation, parent organization of BMS. "I attended the medical school where ROR was launched (Boston Medical Center) 20 years ago and I am so impressed by the growth of the

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organization over this period of time. BMS is proud to partner with ROR GNY. We take pride in being an organization that recognizes the importance of pediatric literacy.”

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

**Brownsville Multi-Service Family Health Center** is one of 10 ROR program sites in the 11<sup>th</sup> New York Congressional District that participate in ROR, providing books to more than 28,600 children annually. Across the region, 176 ROR program sites serve over 277,000 infants, toddlers and preschoolers each year and distribute over 454,000 books. For more Information about ROR of Greater New York visit our website at [www.reachoutandreadnyc.org](http://www.reachoutandreadnyc.org).

#### **About Reach Out and Read**

Reach Out and Read 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 52,000 pediatricians, nurses, residents and health professionals have been trained in the ROR model of early-literacy promotion. This year, ROR will provide over 6 million books to more than 3.8 million children, at more than 4,500 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 Brownsville Multi-Service Family Health Center**

The **Brownsville Community Development Corporation (BCDC)** provides for and seeks to inspire the cultural, economic, medical, and educational well-being of every individual and family in its communities. In 1982, BCDC established the **Brownsville Multi-Service Family Health Center (BMS)**, an Article 28, family health center uniquely responsive to the health care needs of the residents of Brownsville, East New York and portions of Ocean Hill, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Crown Heights, and Canarsie. Originally established with just one National Health Services Corps physician, today, BMS is a comprehensive health and wellness facility, and the only freestanding health center in Brooklyn to be accredited by the *Joint Commission*. We are the second largest non-government employer in Brownsville, employing more than 250 professional and support staff, many of them community residents.

The Health Center's geographic service area currently encompasses four of the 17 zip code areas identified on the State level as Brooklyn's high need areas. In 2007, BMS served approximately 20,000 patients – a testament to our mission to: *“provide and promote integrative and high quality medical, dental, and social services to enable every individual and family in the communities we serve to achieve total health.”*

#### **Additional Contacts:**

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