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Councilmember Robert Jackson Begins His “Summer Reading” at the Charles B. Rangel Community Health Center in Harlem in Support of the Reach Out and Read Literacy Program

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – (Harlem, NY) July 23, 2009 -- Doctors at Charles B. Rangel Community Health Center in Harlem are sending families home from check-ups with free books and a very important prescription – “read aloud to your children.” Councilmember Robert Jackson, who represents some of the families served by the Health Center in the 7th New York City Council District and Chairs the City Council Education Committee, paid a visit to the Health Center to follow doctors’ orders by reading to families and children who participate in its Reach Out and Read (ROR) early literacy program. As part of the visit, Jackson read from Dr. Seuss’ “Fox in Socks,” a favorite he had read to his own daughters when they were younger. He also used the opportunity to tour the facility and see firsthand how ROR helps instill a love of reading in area children.

“Reading is no placebo; learning to love reading as a youngster truly does make a life long difference in loving to learn,” explained Jackson during the visit. “Bringing together Reach Out and Read and the pediatric patients at the Charles B. Rangel Community Health Center is ‘good medicine,’ and a natural, holistic way to foster a love for learning.”

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.

“Reach Out and Read has been one of the more valuable services we provide our patients,” said Dr. Evelyn Berger-Jenkins, medical provider at the Charles B. Rangel Community Health Center. “Medical visits can include shots, blood draws, or other experiences that are unpleasant for children. Receiving a book during the visit can make it easier to deal with. It’s such a pleasure to see how excited children are over books and reading.”

www.reachoutandreadnyc.org

About Reach Out and Read of Greater New York

Charles B. Rangel Community Health Center is one of two ROR program sites in the 7th New York City Council District that participate in ROR, providing books to more than 3,200 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.

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**.

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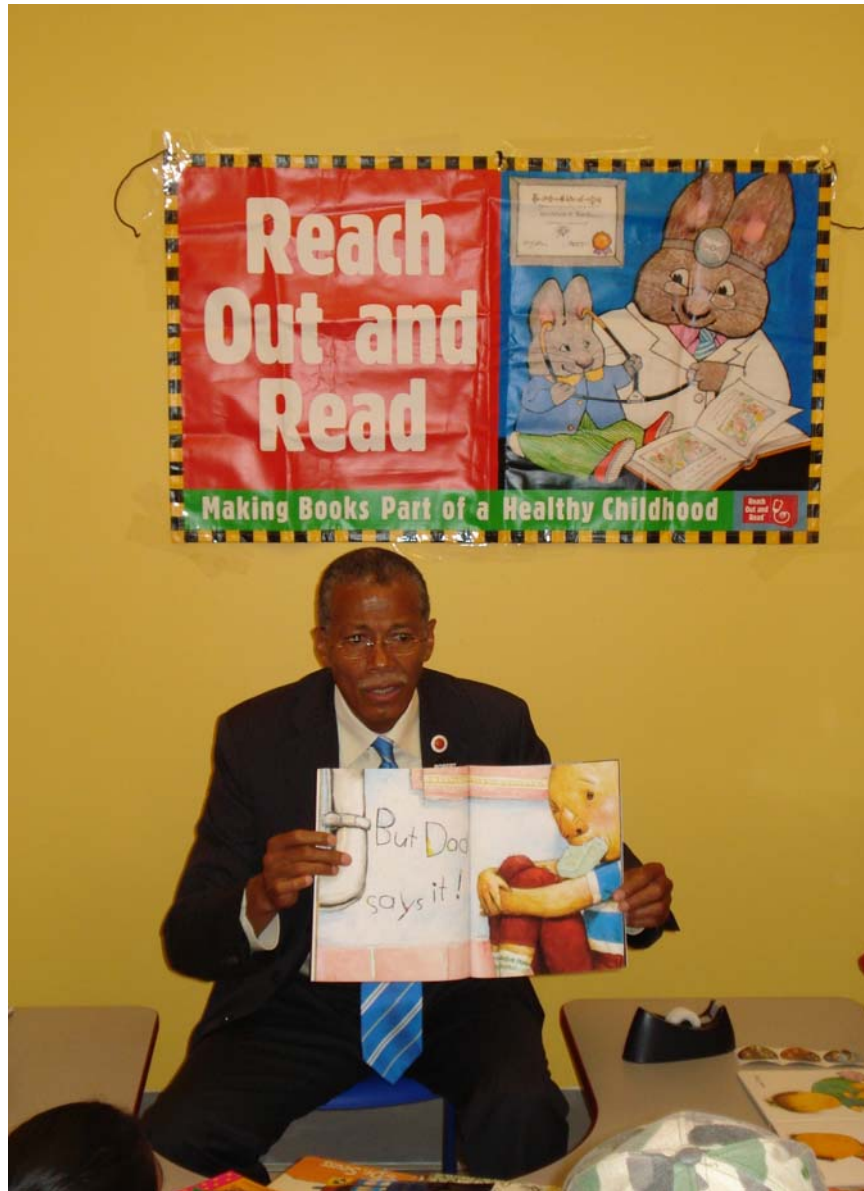
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On Thursday, July 27, 2009, New York City Council Member Robert Jackson read to children at the Charles B. Rangel Community Health Center in Harlem.

Photo courtesy of Reach Out and Read of Greater New York

Hi Res JPEG available via email. Contact: Monique Hardin-Cordero