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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Literacy Champions Honored at Charity Event

*Hoda Kotb of the TODAY Show Introduced Honorees
Justin Tuck of the NY Giants and Children's Book Author Emma Walton Hamilton*

New York, NY (May 4) – Medical providers joined hands with the publishing, entertainment and sports industries to raise money for **Reach Out and Read of Greater New York (ROR GNY)**, an organization that puts books into the hands of children through pediatricians, nurses and other health care providers. Hoda Kotb of the 4th hour of the Today Show on NBC emceed the organization's 10th Anniversary Celebration, a gala dinner and auction held on Monday, April 20, 2009 in Tribeca. Justin Tuck, record-breaking Defensive End for the NY Giants' and his wife Lauran, were honored, as well as Julie Andrews and her daughter, Emma Walton Hamilton, a well-loved book writing team.

The night included a silent and live auction with all proceeds benefiting children in the New York region served by **Reach Out and Read of Greater New York**. New York Giant's Defensive End, **Justin Tuck** and his wife, **Lauran Tuck** received Literacy Champion Awards. The Tucks founded *R.U.S.H* (*Read, Understand, Succeed, Hope*) for Literacy in 2008. This new initiative donates books and other reading materials to schools in New York and Justin's home state of Alabama. "It was an honor to be recognized for our philanthropy by Reach Out and Read, a non-profit that shares our belief that by helping children get access to new books, and showing them the joy of reading those books, we can both make the world a better place," the Tucks said.

Literacy Champion awards were also presented to **Emma Walton Hamilton** who accepted on behalf of herself and her mother, **Julie Andrews**. Together, Ms. Walton Hamilton and Ms. Andrews have co-authored a number of popular children's books, including the *Dumpy the Dump Truck* series, *Simeon's Gift*, *Dragon: Hound of Honor*, and *The Great American Mousical*. Ms. Walton Hamilton's latest book, *Raising Bookworms: Getting Kids Reading for Pleasure and Empowerment*, published in December 2008, offers helpful advice for parents to instill a love of reading in their children.

Over the past years, ROR GNY has witnessed extraordinary growth. First launched with 35 program locations, ROR GNY now serves more than a quarter million children in 175 hospitals and health centers throughout the greater New York City region. ROR GNY's Executive Director, Traci Lester, credits the program's success to the dedication of the "champion" physicians who work directly with families: "Pediatricians play a critical role as advisors to parents of young children. When a doctor gives a book to a child, and the child's face lights up, that doctor is introducing to parents the idea that a life-long relationship with books can start as early as infancy."

ROR GNY serves the five boroughs of New York City, along with Long Island, Westchester, Rockland, Putnam, Orange, Dutchess, Ulster and Sullivan counties. Its mission is to make literacy promotion a standard part of primary pediatric care.

About Reach Out and Read

ROR GNY is affiliated with the 20-year-old national Reach Out and Read (ROR) program. Nationally, ROR serves 3.8 million at-risk children – including 25% of America's most underserved young children – who will receive over 6 million books. More than 20 million books have been distributed through ROR programs at 4,535 nationwide sites. Visit their website at: www.reachoutandread.org



From left to right: Literacy Champion Honorees Justin and Lauran Tuck, and Emma Walton Hamilton (Photo Courtesy of Gerald Peart)



From left to right: Honorees Justin and Lauran Tuck, ROR GNY Board Chair Maria Gotsch, Honoree Emma Walton Hamilton, ROR GNY Executive Director Traci Lester, Benefit Committee Chair Keith Dawkins (Photo Courtesy of Gerald Peart)