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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - January 13, 2011**

**Miss Teen USA Kamie Crawford Visits Children at Brooklyn Hospitals in Support of Reach Out and Read Early Literacy Program**

**(Brooklyn, NY)** - (Brooklyn, NY) - Miss Teen USA Kamie Crawford visited hospitals in Brooklyn to read books to children and encourage families to read together. Through a partnership with Reach Out and Read early literacy program, Miss Crawford visited children at Kings County Hospital Center and at SUNY Downstate Medical Center.

"Reading to the kids was a great experience," Miss Crawford said. "It was wonderful to see them get excited about reading! I also loved having the opportunity to tour the pediatric clinic and meet the staff who encourage the Reach Out and Read Program." Miss Crawford read "Chicka Chicka Boom Boom" and "Harry, the Dirty Dog," among other well-loved children's books. Children who participated in the events were given a chance to try on Miss Teen USA's sash and tiara.

Yogendra Saxena, M.D., Medical Director for Pediatrics at Kings County Hospital Center said "Miss Teen USA had a very inspiring and exciting visit with our children at KCHC. She was interactive with the kids, generating lots of smiles and laughter."

In 2010, doctors in Brooklyn distributed over 118,000 new free books to infants, toddlers and preschoolers as part of the Reach Out and Read program. Doctors also advise parents about the importance of reading aloud with their children. When asked about the program Dr. Saxena said, "KCHC has operated a Reach Out and Read program since 2002, and we cannot think of a better way to enhance a child's health and well-being than through nourishing their minds."

"It is critical for children to develop good reading skills at an early age," said Stanley Fisher, MD, Professor and Chair of Pediatrics at SUNY Downstate. "It is something they can carry with them and benefit from the rest of their lives."

Over a third of New York's children enter kindergarten without the basic language skills they will need to learn to read. Studies show that exposure to books and the printed word marks the difference between prepared and unprepared students. Yet, almost 1 in 4 children in low-income homes have fewer than 10 books of any kind in their household. Children who participate in Reach Out and Read start Kindergarten with a library of 10 new books from their pediatrician and a parent who has heard, at each checkup, about the importance of books and reading aloud with their kids.



Miss Teen USA for a day at Kings County Hospital Center



Miss Teen USA at SUNY Downstate Medical Center



Miss Teen USA at Kings County Hospital Center

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**Reach Out and Read of Greater New York** distributes books to over a quarter of a million children annually at 183 Reach Out and Read clinical locations throughout New York City, Westchester, Putnam, Rockland, Dutchess, Orange, Sullivan and Ulster Counties. In 2010 Reach Out and Read programs in Brooklyn distributed over 118,000 books to over 77,000 children. For more information, visit our website: [www.reachoutandreadnyc.org](http://www.reachoutandreadnyc.org).

**Reach Out and Read** is an evidence-based, national nonprofit organization that 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 currently serves one-third of the most impoverished children in the U.S. The Reach Out and Read model is endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the program has one of the strongest records of research support of any primary care intervention. For further information, please visit Reach Out and Read's website at [www.reachoutandread.org](http://www.reachoutandread.org).

**Kings County Hospital Center** (KCHC) has a rich legacy for its pioneering role in medicine. Today, with more than 627 beds, our hospital remains on the cutting edge of technology and provides the most modern procedures with state-of-the-art equipment. Built in 1831 as a one-room infirmary for publicly supported care of the sick, Kings County Hospital Center continues to be a leading healthcare facility whose mission is to provide care to everyone, regardless of their ability to pay. The hospital provides a wide range of health services, and specialty care in all fields of medicine. More than 100 clinics provide a wide array of ambulatory care services.

Kings County Hospital Center operates a world-renowned Level 1 Trauma Center, one of only three in the borough, which serves more than 2.6 million residents of Brooklyn and Staten Island. As the anchor facility of the Central Brooklyn Family Health Network, Kings County Hospital Center is linked with Dr. Susan Smith McKinney Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, East New York Diagnostic and Treatment Center, the Bedford Stuyvesant Alcoholism Treatment Center, as well as several Family Health Service sites. KCHC is a member institution of the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC). The hospital is academically affiliated with SUNY Downstate Medical Center. For more information, visit: [www.nyc.gov/kchc](http://www.nyc.gov/kchc).

**SUNY Downstate Medical Center**, founded in 1860, was the first medical school in the United States to bring teaching out of the lecture hall and to the patient's bedside. A center of innovation and excellence in research and clinical service delivery, SUNY Downstate Medical Center comprises a College of Medicine, Colleges of Nursing and Health Related Professions, a School of Graduate Studies, a School of Public Health, University Hospital of Brooklyn, and an Advanced Biotechnology Park and Biotechnology Incubator.

SUNY Downstate ranks eighth nationally in the number of alumni who are on the faculty of American medical schools. More physicians practicing in New York City have graduated from SUNY Downstate than from any other medical school. In 2006, SUNY Downstate Medical Center established a Reach Out and Read program that serves over 3,400 children and distributes over 5,200 books each year.

**Miss Teen USA**

The Miss Universe Organization, producers of the MISS UNIVERSE®, MISS USA® and MISS TEEN USA® pageants, is a Donald J. Trump and NBC Universal joint venture. Miss Teen USA spends her year building relationships with organizations devoted to education and action, such as Best Buddies, D.A.R.E., Girl Talk, Sparrow Clubs, Project Sunshine and the Same Sky Trade Initiative. For more information, visit: [www.missteeenusa.com](http://www.missteeenusa.com).

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