Childhood Literacy

LEADERS FOR GEELONG
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1 Acknowledgements

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- Glastonbury Child & Family Services
- GSDM Marketing
- Helen O’ Connor – Coordinator Northern Bay College Family Centre
- Jenny Atkinson – Librarian, Northern Bay College
- Leonie Dillon – Rosewall Best Start Program Co-ordinator
- Rotary of Ocean Grove
- Sandra Kelly – Newtown Primary School
- St Laurence
- Students at Bostock House
- Students at Newtown Primary School
2 Team Members

The ReadOn Project Team comprised six participants from the 2009-2011 Leader for Geelong group.

PAUL RAWSON – Internal Quality Auditor, St Laurence

BRIDGETTE KELLY – Senior Associate, Harwood Andrews Lawyers

WENDY MALONEY – Principal, WHK

SIMON HEFFERNAN - Branch Manager, Direct Recruitment

STEPHEN FERNANDES - Business Manager, G.P. Association of Geelong

LEIGH HARRY - Senior Manager, LBW Accountants
3 Executive Summary

3.1 SUMMARY

Literacy is undoubtedly one of the most important aspects of a person’s life.

_In Australia today, one in five adults do not have the literacy skills to effectively participate in everyday life (Australian Council for Adult Literacy, 2001)._ 

It has become increasingly evident that literacy skills should be initiated from birth and not at the commencement of formal education.

Our Research Project team focused on developing a program to improve literacy levels in young children in the Greater Geelong region especially in hard to reach or marginalised families.

3.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS

The Greater Geelong area has pockets of disadvantage especially in the sphere of literacy.

In Corio and Norlane, the completion rate for Year 12 or the equivalent for the total population is 23%, compared with Victoria at 44% (Community Infrastructure Analysis for Corio and Norlane, 2009) and literacy levels in Geelong North, Whittington and Portarlington are almost 10% lower than the Barwon South West Region and Victorian averages.

There are numerous literacy programs operating in the Geelong area. Many over these programs have had very good success. However there continues to be significant need in the Greater Geelong area for better access to books in homes.

Public libraries are available and free to all individuals and families. However public libraries are not the most effective means of providing access to books as the target market of “hard to reach children and families” may not utilise local library facilities and services.

Despite there being some successful literacy programs in the Greater Geelong area, our research showed that there was still a need for further literacy research and programs which focused on children’s access to books

3.3 READON PILOT PROGRAM FINDINGS

_The pilot program was possible due to the generous support of St Laurence, Glastonbury and Bethany who provided us with initial funding._

ReadOn’s concept in principle is very simple. It involves the development of community networks that collects pre-loved books from children who no longer need them and re-distributes them to children in another area of Geelong.
The aims of ReadOn are:

- To provide children with greater access to children’s books in the family home.
- Encouraging children to read more books and share stories amongst other children in the Geelong area.
- The promotion of the concept that in gifting and sharing books, children are contributing to the wider community in which they live.

A number of marketing initiatives were undertaken to ensure the program was well received by the schools and in particular the children. The design of marketing material was bright to attract the children’s attention and create interest.

Participants gifting books were provided with a reader bag, bookmark and sticker as a thank you for contributing to the program.

Each child receiving a book also received a bookmark and/or a sticker in each book chosen by them.

A character was also created which accompanied marketing material which was aptly named “Wordy”.

### 3.4 THE FUTURE OF THE PROGRAM

Based on the success of the pilot program coupled with the positive feedback from all key stakeholders of the program, the Project Team has confidence that ReadOn is a valuable and meaningful program in the Greater Geelong area.

The Project Team wanted to ensure that ReadOn can continue successfully into the future and provide social and ultimately economic value to the Geelong region.

We are delighted to have partnered with Glastonbury Child & Family Services who are willing to
auspice the ReadOn program. Moreover Best Start and Rotary Ocean Grove are prepared to be involved to support Glastonbury Child & Family Services with elements of the ReadOn program. The Project Team will ensure there is an initial "core governance group" from the organisations listed above together with existing members of the Project Team to establish and evolve the ReadOn Pilot Program model.

Donna Mathers General manager of Client Services at Glastonbury says

“Glastonbury is delighted to be the auspice agency for the Leaders For Geelong Childhood Literacy Project ReadOn. We understand how important children’s literacy is for their life course prospects and much of our work relates to intervening as early as possible with children and their families, to help promote the children’s wellbeing and development. Research tells us that the first three years are the most critical time for a child’s brain development and this development is promoted through parents repeatedly playing and reading to their children.”
4 Introduction

Literacy is a key determining factor in the quality of life for not only Australians but for individuals in countries and communities around the world. There are many programs and incentives in Australia and especially in Victoria aimed at improving literacy levels of children.

The Read-On program has been developed to provide another avenue to improve literacy levels in the Greater Geelong area. Our aim is to work in partnership with schools and other agencies in the community to provide young children with greater access to books so that they become excited about reading and sharing and develop a love and enjoyment of books and reading.

Research suggests that poor literacy is associated with loss of employment opportunities, lower incomes and consequent disadvantage in terms of housing and health. Our project is targeting young children in the community to provide them with more access to books to help increase early reading in a child’s development of literacy skills.

The concept in principle is very simple. It involves the development of community networks that collects books from children who no longer need them and re-distributes them to children in another area of Geelong. Our overall aim is for these wonderful pre-loved books to reach those children who may be disadvantaged, at risk or not have access to such books. It also ensures sharing of books to all children within the Geelong community. The program promotes the idea that in gifting and sharing books, children are being encouraged to contribute to the wider community in which they live.

It is very difficult to engage the most ‘at-risk’ families in the community and this process can be quite time-consuming, therefore our intention with the Read-On project is to reach a broad cross section of families in the specifically allocated regions through primary schools, maternal health centres, doctors and dental practices, Best Start program and local community family days.
5 Research Findings

5.1 WHY IS LITERACY IMPORTANT

Literacy is an imperative skill that all individuals must ascertain to reach success in life and school (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006).

The Australian Bureau of Statistics' Aspects of Literacy Survey established that approximately 46% of Australians aged 15-74 years have very poor to poor ‘prose literacy’ (ability to read documents), and 47% had very poor to poor ‘document literacy’ (ability to understand and use information from a variety of text sources) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006).

A reduced level of literacy preceding school entry runs the risk of reducing the likelihood of success in literacy later on in life, and increases the risk of children ceasing formal education (Centre for Community Child Health, 2008).

Evidence illustrates that reading difficulties are prominent amongst children from disadvantaged homes (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996), and children who ‘fall behind’ are unlikely to catch up (Stanovich, 1986).

Increased levels of literacy have been associated with enhanced academic and occupational success, increased self esteem and motivation to learn, participation in and a commitment to education, socially acceptable behaviour, positive regard for one’s abilities and prospects leading to empowerment, a reduction in the need for programs required to address illiteracy and a subsequent reduction in the social and financial costs associated with illiteracy (Centre for Community Child Health, 2008).

5.2 LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

Children who begin with the most favourable literacy skills tend to succeed better academically, compared to those who get ‘left behind’ (Stanovich, 1986).

Research supports the notion that promoting early literacy skills triumphs over attempting to better those skills later on. Children who portray difficulty with literacy in school have shown signs of poor emergent literacy skills prior to school entry, which supports the idea of a ‘critical period’ for developing emergent literacy skills (Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), 2005).

The advantages of parents reading to their children are unquestionable (Persampieri, 2006). In 1985, the National Academy of Education reported ‘the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading, is reading aloud to children’ (Huebner and Meltzoff, 2005).
5.3 INFLUENCES ON LITERACY LEVELS

5.3.1 Parent Involvement and Effective Coaching

Espinosa (2002) stated that "children's exposure to and interest in literacy experiences are influenced by the adults who care for them" and "parents who believe their children are interested in reading are more likely to provide abundant print related experiences".

Research has shown that family practices of literacy have a significant impact on a child’s academic achievement (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2005). This impact can result from both:

- Direct practices - such as frequently reading books to pre-school aged children which focus on meanings and extend children’s book language.
- Indirect practices - such as supporting reading at home.

Such undertakings have been found to be associated with children’s higher achievement (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2005).

Evidence also concludes that children rely on parents to assist them to establish social literacy practices as a functional and vital component of their lives, and to model literacy as useful for solving problems (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2005). Children will learn from parents how to use literacy to engage in problem-solving activities, and numerous studies have indicated the effectiveness of parent coaching in holding children’s attention, asking questions, interacting with text-relevant comments and providing feedback to their children (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2005).

5.3.2 Environments

Research has also indicated that the environment a child grows up in will also impact upon their literacy abilities. An environment that allows access to materials such as books, crayons and paper will support literacy development (Centre for Community Child Health, 2006). A child’s home is the most practical and accessible venue for early literacy activities to take place and is strongly encouraged. Studies have shown that there are strong correlations between the literacy environment in the home and pre-school aged children’s language abilities (Centre for Community Child Health, 2006).

5.3.3 Activities

Activities such as reading aloud, playing games, conversations, naming objects, rhyming and singing nursery rhymes will all have an impact upon literacy levels. Some of the particular aspects of reading with children that have been found to be of importance include:

- Regular shared reading with children form a young age is positively linked to children’s scores on vocabulary tests - this finding is consistent with other research that has found
that the frequency of book reading at home influenced children’s vocabulary development (Centre for Community Child Health, 2006).

5.3.4 Socioeconomic Status

Converging evidence has provided considerable documentation that both emergent and conventional literacy skills of children from low socioeconomic status households differ in comparison to those of their peers from middle and upper socioeconomic status households (Spedding et al, 2007).

Research investigating literacy amongst disadvantaged families found that these homes were limited in their ability to promote a healthy literacy orientated environment, suggesting that less books were found in the home, considerably less time was devoted to ‘reading aloud’, affording the child language exposure and less visits to the local library (Teale, 1986).

5.4 GEELONG DATA

In 2006, 14,366 children aged 0 to 5 years lived in Geelong (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006).

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) results for 2009 illustrate that the region of Geelong falls below the national state average of children who are developmentally vulnerable in relation to language and cognitive skills. The table below portrays the particular areas within Geelong of children who are highly susceptible to being developmentally vulnerable.

Although a number of projects aimed at improving literacy already exist in Geelong, it is crucial to further develop other initiatives to improve the overall average of literacy. By instigating a program such as ReadOn this will provide another piece to the puzzle in the overall scheme of improvement.

Corio is one of Geelong’s biggest and most diverse suburbs (Lets Read, 2006). It is held to be in the top six most disadvantaged regions in Australia according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (Index of Social and Economic Disadvantage (SEIFA) and the Jesuit Social Services Study). Corio has an increased average rate of single parent families and unemployment rates are over double of the state average (Lets Read, 2006). In Corio and Norlane, the completion rate for Year 12 or the equivalent for the total population is 23%, compared with Melbourne at 49% and Victoria at 44% (Community Infrastructure Analysis for Corio and Norlane, 2009).

Tony Vinson’s study “Dropping off the edge” (2007) indicates that the 3214 postcode sits between the 13th and 18th most disadvantaged postcodes in Victoria based on the cumulative effect of 23 indicators including levels of unemployment, single parent households, reliance on benefits, literacy, and educational attainment.

In a comparative study of the 2005 and 2007 Corio Norlane Community Surveys, residents were asked to rate specific education services, the following differences between the two times were observed:
Leaders for Geelong 2009/2011

- 6% fewer Neighbourhood Renewal Area (NRA) participants rated kindergartens as good in 2007 and;
- 6% fewer NRA participants rated primary schools as good in 2007. (Corio Norlane Neighbourhood Renewal Survey Comparison 2007).

In Corio and Norlane the completion rate for Year 12 or equivalent for the total population is 23%, compared with Melbourne at 49% and Victoria at 44%;

- 51% of residents of Corio and Norlane aged 20-24 have not completed Year 12, compared with 25% for Greater Melbourne and 29% for Victoria;
- 68% of residents of Corio and Norlane aged 15-24 have not completed Year 12 compared with 46% for Greater Melbourne and 50% for Victoria (ABS Census 2006)

There is a growing consensus in academic literature that while parents and carers with low literacy levels often have an absence of books in the home, the provision of books to such families may in itself be insufficient to increase reading aloud activities (Hewer & Whyatt, 2008; Klass, 2003; Oberklaid, 2005). Providing comprehensive and contextually relevant and supportive early literacy intervention has been shown (Espinosa, 2002; Hewer & Whyatt, 2006; Oberklaid, 2005; Seden, 2008) to increase shared reading activities (i.e., parent/child reading).

Some of the key strategies of such interventions can include:

- Developing partnerships between service providers to provide literacy and pre-literacy activities in universal health and community settings.
- Training other child development professionals to promote reading aloud in parallel to their service provision.
- Modelling and/or training parents in reading techniques; and building an atmosphere in which reading is experienced by parents as well as children as an enjoyable experience (CCCH, 2004).

Public libraries are available and free to all individuals and families. Most, if not all libraries have children’s materials and librarians who have knowledge in choosing appropriate materials and in reading aloud to children yet not all families feel comfortable to use them. The use of primary health professionals, in particular child health nurses, to play an active role in the promotion of reading to children has been shown to be an effective strategy with “hard-to-reach” and marginalised families (Hewer & Whyatt, 2006; Klass et al., 2006).
6 Research Conclusion

6.1 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE READON PROGRAM

Our research indicated the following:

- That reading aloud to young children assists in language development and literacy skills.
- The significant need for greater access to books in homes.
- A clear and continual need for literacy to be at the forefront of children’s development.

Our meetings with numerous organisations such as The Smith Family, Ardoch, Department of Early Childhood Development, Geelong Central Library, Geelong English Language Centre, primary school principals and teachers showed that it is very clear that there are numerous literacy programs operating in the Geelong area and many of these programs have had very good success.

Despite there being some successful literacy programs in the Greater Geelong area, our research showed that there was still a need for further literacy research and programs which focused on children’s access to books.

Specially, we learned from our research and our initial meetings with various community organisations that there were two emerging themes that substantiated the continued and significant need in the area of literacy in the Geelong region. These emerging themes were:

- Ongoing below average literacy skills in pre-school and early primary school years; and
- A need for more books including interactive books in homes.

After considering these emerging themes and also current literacy programs already offered in the Geelong area the Project Team developed the concept of a book redistribution program where primary school students gifted their once loved books to other children in the Greater Geelong area.

The ReadOn program was then developed.
7 The ReadOn Pilot Program Outline

7.1 PILOT OUTLINE

ReadOn’s aim is to provide young children greater access to books through a community oriented program to promote, collect, collate and distribute once loved children’s books to a targeted section of the community to enhance early literacy learning. This in turn will have considerable benefits to young children’s development and enhancement of the home learning environment.

Community benefits of ReadOn are:

- To focus on outcomes for young children and their families.
- To deliver a project with a focus on the grass roots level
- Have a significant impact on improving literacy development of children.
- Explore the leverage points where books can be distributed in the local community which can intervene to improve the impact on literacy development specifically in our younger generation.
- Work with local primary schools & community workers/volunteers to achieve a united partnership to fulfilling our objectives.
- Provide mechanisms that build awareness of key social issues through ‘real’ engagement.

The objective is to ensure that families have access to books and are focused on reading and home learning in order to encourage literacy development in the home environment.

7.2 METHODOLOGY

- Separate Geelong into four regions.
  - Identify and target an appropriate number of primary schools in each allocated region and request these schools have a book drive to collect ‘once loved children books’.
  - The target being one region per term thus over a four term period all four regions participate in the program.
- Promote the collection of once loved children’s books from primary schools.
- Facilitate collection process from targeted primary schools and delivery to a storage facility.
- Collation of books at storage facility.
Classification and catalogue using colour coding and then packaged according to specific age groups ready for distribution

- Distribution of books – Communication to the specific target area regions to various community groups including, maternal health centres, immunisation centres, play groups, kindergartens, primary schools and community health centres.

The education professionals at each of these facilities will then have a date/time to attend the storage facility and collect boxes of books specifically catalogued for their organisation.

7.3 MARKETING

Each primary school was provided with marketing and promotional material about the ReadOn program including:

- Posters;
- Stickers;
- Bookmarks; and
- Library bags.

The program was also promoted through school newsletters and information sheets to parents which included information about the criteria of books the ReadOn program seeks, age requirements and the preferred condition of books to be gifted.
8 Pilot Program Evaluation

8.1 PILOT PROGRAM SUMMARY

The pilot program was possible due to the generous support of St Laurence, Glastonbury and Bethany who provided us with initial funding.

The ReadOn Pilot program collected children’s books from two primary schools in Term 1 of 2011 school year. The books collected were collated at the end of Term 1 and distributed in the early part of Term 2.

The Program operated in Newtown Primary School and Bostock House and massed approximately 1200 children’s books from a combined number of approximately 350 students. On average this is equated to each student gifting 3.4 of their once loved books to the program.

The Books collected were classified into the following age categories:

- 0 – 3 years 19%
- 3 – 7 years 38%
- 7 – 10 years 36%
- Over 10 years 7%

The greatest number of books received was for the ages 0 - 7 years being approximately 60% of the books received. The balance of 40% was for ages 7 -10 years and 10 years and above.

The quality of the books received was exceptional. Only a very small number approximately 2.5% of the books received were deemed not suitable to distribute to other children in the program.

Rotary Ocean Grove was involved to collect boxes of books from each primary school and delivered them to the storage facility at Northern Bay College.

Volunteers were arranged to sort the children’s books at Northern Bay College for quality and specific age groups.

The children’s books were distributed to the following organisation and bodies:

- Primary Schools
- Maternal Health Centres
- Community Health Centres
- Dentists (Oral health program)
Best Start programs (including to Bethany and Glastonbury Child & Family Services)

Family Fun Play Day (a partnership between Northern Bay College Family Centre, Rosewall Best Start and Corio Library to promote specific early years literacy development focussed activities for children aged 0 – 5 years).

The books were greatly received by children and parents. This was especially so due to the quality of the books gifted to the program with many books appearing to be almost brand new.

8.2 PILOT PROGRAM EVALUATION

The Project Team undertook evaluation of the ReadOn program with all of its key stakeholders including teachers, parents, Rotary, Best Start and the distribution volunteers.

Key findings were as follows:

- The ReadOn program was greatly received by all stakeholders.
- The program was overall relatively easy to co-ordinate and promote within schools.
- Children were motivated to read and remember the story books they previously enjoyed.
- The program enable primary school students to feel a sense of community with other

Newtown Primary School students with decorated ReadOn bags
children in the Greater Geelong area by gifting books they no longer read but which they once thoroughly enjoyed reading to other children.

➢ Children learnt about the joys of giving.

➢ The collection and delivery of books was streamlined and relatively easy to co-ordinate.

➢ Children received access to additional books in their household.

➢ Children who received books read those books with family members or friends.

➢ Children were provided with ownership of new books in their household.

8.3 CONCLUSION

The ReadOn Pilot Program was extremely successful.

All participants of the program were excited about the concept of redistributing books in the Geelong community and providing children with greater access to books.

ReadOn gave children an added interests and an excitement about books and reading generally. The program encouraged children to recall favourite stories they enjoyed and also provided them with the opportunity to read more books to find another “favourite story”.

ReadOn has longevity due to its relatively simple concept and ease of operation.

The program provided the Geelong community with an opportunity to link together to share stories and books. This reduced the gap which was found in our research of access to books in some households.

By creating greater access to books the ReadOn program enhances children’s ability to read at home and improve literacy skills.
9 Exit Strategy

9.1 THE FUTURE OF THE PROGRAM

Based on the success of the pilot program coupled with the positive feedback from all key stakeholders of the program, the Project Team has confidence that ReadOn is a valuable and meaningful program in the Greater Geelong area.

Our evaluation of the ReadOn pilot program has enabled the Project Team to create a “turn key” model that can be replicated and progressively rolled out through the Greater Geelong region.

The Project Team wanted to ensure that ReadOn can continue successfully into the future and provide social and ultimately economic value to the Geelong region.

We are delighted to have partnered with Glastonbury Child & Family Services who are willing to auspice the ReadOn program. Moreover Best Start and Rotary Ocean Grove are prepared to be involved to support Glastonbury Child & Family Services with elements of the ReadOn program. The Project Team will ensure there is an initial “core governance group” from the organisations listed above together with existing members of the Project Team to establish and evolve the ReadOn Pilot Program model.

Glastonbury Child & Family Services is a not for profit organisation providing a range of community based services for vulnerable and disadvantaged children together with young people and families in the Barwon region (City of Greater Geelong, Surf Coast Shire, Golden Plains Shire, Colac Otway Shire and the Borough of Queenscliff).

Glastonbury Child & Family Services provides Early Intervention Services for children aged 0-6 years of age, Family and Community support Services to children, young people and their families within their homes and also provide Out of Home Care for children who are unable to live with their families.

Glastonbury Child & Family Services also coach and mentor parents to help strengthen their families. Therefore they are in a fortunate position to be able to disperse the donated books to children and families where they can influence the parents to understand the importance of their children being read to and reading for themselves. As reading aloud to young children assists in language development and literacy skills, the operation of the ReadOn program through Glastonbury Child & Family Services will provide significant benefit to many children and families in Geelong.

Glastonbury Child & Family Services will ensure that the most disadvantaged groups within our community are able to benefit from the distribution of the books through the ReadOn program.
Donna Mathers General manager of Client Services at Glastonbury says

“Glastonbury is delighted to be the auspice agency for the Leaders For Geelong Childhood Literacy Project ReadOn. We understand how important children’s literacy is for their life course prospects and much of our work relates to intervening as early as possible with children and their families, to help promote the children’s wellbeing and development. Research tells us that the first three years are the most critical time for a child’s brain development and this development is promoted through parents repeatedly playing and reading to their children.”

The Project Team has been grateful for the generous support from numerous organisations in the Greater Geelong area for the ReadOn Pilot program.

The ReadOn program has recently received financial support from the Geelong Community Foundation. This funding along with further financial support from other organisations will ensure the ReadOn program operates for at least the next two years.

The ability to raise funding for the ReadOn program is evidence of the attractiveness of the program and link to the real community need in Geelong for children to have better access to books.

The Project Team is thrilled that the ReadOn program will continue to benefit children’s access to books and in turn literacy skills into the future together with our auspicing body Glastonbury Child & Family Services together and with partners Best Start and Ocean Grove Rotary.
APPENDIX A - LETTER TO PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dear Geelong Grammar Bostock House Principal and Teachers

We are excited that Geelong Grammar Bostock House is willing to participate in the ReadOn program.

We have prepared and will shortly deliver Posters about the ReadOn program for promotion around your school.

We will deliver ReadOn Reader bags for distribution to each student on Friday 18 March 2011. Inside each Reader bag will be an information brochure for parents and a bookmark and sticker for each student. We will also deliver a number of collection boxes for classrooms for pre-loved books to be stored while awaiting collection by us.

We ask that the program be promoted through the school from Friday 18 March 2011 and children encouraged to participate in the program by bringing pre-loved children’s books to school in their Reader bags from Monday 21 March 2011 until Friday 25 March 2011.

When children bring their Reader bag to school with books they wish to donate please take out the pre-loved books and place them into the collection boxes and return the Reader bag to the student.

Members from Ocean Grove Rotary will attend at your school on the morning of the Monday 28 March 2011 to collect the donated books. To make the collection process easy we request the collection boxes be placed in one central location.

If you have any queries or questions about the ReadOn program please contact Simon Heffernan on 5221 3880.

We appreciate Geelong Grammar Bostock House's participation in the ReadOn program and look forward to working with your school over the next few weeks.

Kind regards,

The ReadOn Team
ReadOn – Share the story is an opportunity for all Geelong Grammar Bostock House students to share their once loved children’s books with other children in the Geelong region. We hope all students will be willing to participate in the program especially as our school is one of the very first schools in Geelong to be involved in ReadOn.

Every student will be provided with a Reader bag in the next few weeks and we request that students bring the Reader bag back to school with children’s books inside it which are no longer required in their home and which they wish to share with other children in Geelong.

The books will be collected by teachers and the Reader bag returned to students.

All children’s books will be gratefully received however it is requested that the books be of good quality.

Updates and more information about the ReadOn program will be in future newsletters.
ReadOn – Share the story is here!

Students will receive their Reader bag on Friday 18 March 2011. Inside the Reader bag will be an information brochure containing further information about the ReadOn program.

Students who wish to participate in the program are requested to please bring the Reader bag back to school with children’s books inside it which are no longer required in their home and which they wish to share with other children in Geelong.

Teachers will be collecting once loved children’s books which students are willing to donate to the program from Monday 21 March 2011 until Friday 25 March 2011. Reader bags will be returned to to students to keep once the donated books are collected by their teacher.

All children’s books will be gratefully received however it is requested that the books be of good quality.
ReadOn IS COMING TO YOUR SCHOOL!
Start looking for books you no longer use so you can bring them to school and give them to other children in Geelong.

“Wordie” says that he loves to read and share his books with others. Hopefully you do too!
APPENDIX E - BOOKMARK TEMPLATE

books are great
reading is fun!

Keep on reading and continue to share your stories
Dear Parent,

Newtown Primary School is participating in the Read-On program.

This program is a community based initiative which has been developed through the Leaders For Geelong program.

ReadOn is a book redistribution program that collects children’s once loved books and distributes them among other children in the Geelong area. We therefore ask that you take a moment, with your child, to look through the children's books you have in your home and decide if you and your child would like to give any good quality books that your children no longer read to ReadOn.

Any books in good condition will be greatly received.

Please place the once loved books in the ReadOn Reader bag supplied and return them to school by _________.

All of the books we collect will be classified on the basis of age suitability and then distributed to appropriate facilities including childcare centres, maternal and community health centres and primary schools in the Greater Geelong area.

The hope is that the joy your children once had from these once loved books will bring the same amount of joy to another child.

ReadOn’s aim is to increase the amount of books being read by children in the Geelong region and, in conjunction with other existing literacy programs, improve general literacy levels in the pre and early school years.

We thank you for your time and any contribution you wish to make to ReadOn.

The Read-On Team

For more information on the Leaders for Geelong program go to http://www.committeeforgeelong.com.au/_leaders.asp

Guidelines for Book Selection

We are aiming to receive books relative to the 0 - 8 age groups.

When selecting your children’s books to give to ReadOn please ensure:

- All pages are still in the book.
- The books are in a generally good condition.
- There is no writing, drawing or other marks on the cover or pages of each book.
- Any personal information that has been written on or in the front of the book is removed.
- Your child has finished with the book and no longer reads it. We do not wish to receive books from children that are still being read and enjoyed.
Giving Children's literacy a helping hand

A new program that seeks to increase the availability of books to children in the Geelong Region has just commenced at two local primary schools.

ReadOn is a book redistribution program that collects children’s pre loved books and distributes them among other children in the Greater Geelong area. The program offers an exciting opportunity for children of all ages to learn about the joy of sharing by passing on stories they have loved and cherished to other children around the region, in the hope they too will get the same amount of fun and enjoyment.

The inaugural ReadOn pilot program has commenced at Newtown Primary School and Geelong Grammar Bostock House.

ReadOn’s aim is “to increase the amount of books being read by children in the Geelong region and, in conjunction with other existing literacy programs, improve general literacy levels in the pre and early school years. We have been absolutely thrilled by the enthusiasm and interest shown by the participating schools and other interested parties in the community. ” says Bridgette Kelly, ReadOn committee member.

Once pre loved books are collected from the schools involved, books will be classified on the basis of age suitability and then distributed to appropriate facilities including childcare centres, maternal and community health centres and primary schools in the Greater Geelong area. The Committee was particularly interested in using a range a different and non traditional distribution channels to increase the chances of getting books to a wide range of children in pre and early school years.

Of course programs like these cannot function without the support of a range of community groups and organisations and Leigh Harry, ReadOn committee member commented “The ReadOn team is very appreciative of the various community groups and organisations that are working with ReadOn to collect, deliver and distribute pre loved children’s books to children throughout the Geelong area. Organisations include Ocean Grove Rotary, Best Start and Northern Bay College, without their support it would not be possible to get such a program off the ground. We have also been fortunate to obtain financial or in kind support from St Laurence, Bethany, Glastonbury and GSDM Marketing in undertaking the pilot”.

Following the pilot program, ReadOn hopes to continue to operate each school term in a different region of Geelong. Providing children with the opportunity of sharing the story and the fun of reading by passing on books they have loved and cherished to other children in the Greater Geelong area.
APPENDIX J - EVALUATION FORM

ReadOn Pilot Program - Evaluation

Thank you for participating in the ReadOn Pilot program.

This program is a community based initiative which has been developed through the Leaders For Geelong program.

As you know ReadOn is a book redistribution program that collects children’s once loved books and distributes them among other children in the Geelong area. The purpose of the pilot program is to test and evaluate how the program might work in practice.

We would be grateful if you could take the time and complete the following questionnaire to assist us evaluate which areas of the program worked well and which areas need to be enhanced for the ongoing program.

Please note N/A if the question does not apply to your involvement in the program.

Marketing and Communication

1. How useful was the information provided prior to the book drive (i.e. Posters, Text for newsletters, and engagement with ReadOn contact)?

2. How effective was the supporting information provided to the child and the parents (i.e. letter and bookmark)?

3. Specifically how well did the bag concept work and will it be useful for students as a library bag into the future?

4. Would the attendance of your ReadOn contact be useful in promoting the program at an assembly?

5. Other comments associated with the marketing and communication of the program?
Collection and Delivery

6. Boxes provided were sufficient and easy to store?

7. How good was collection and delivery access at the schools?

8. Organisation and contact prior to collection/delivery was adequate?

9. Other comments associated with the collection and delivery process?

Sorting and Distribution

10. Was the timeline adequate to get the sorting/qualifying of books done?

11. Was there enough experience within the volunteers to adequately classify appropriate age-level of books for children?

12. Organisation and contract prior to distribution networks for delivery was adequate?

13. How were the books received from service providers upon delivery?
11 Bibliography


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