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News from the Library of Congress

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First Winners of Library of Congress Literacy Awards Announced

Reach Out and Read, 826 National and PlanetRead Receive Prizes

Librarian of Congress James H. Billington has chosen the winners of the 2013 Library of Congress Literacy Awards, a new program originated and sponsored by philanthropist David M. Rubenstein.

The recipients are:

David M. Rubenstein Prize (\$150,000): Reach Out and Read, Boston, Mass.

Reach Out and Read encourages early-childhood literacy by capitalizing on the relationship between parents and their children's pediatricians. By integrating basic literacy awareness into regular office visits, children are exposed to books and reading at the earliest age, well before they start school. Free books are distributed during the visit as well. Reach Out and Read achieves sustainability because it has integrated literacy education into a widely practiced experience (the well-baby visit).

Today, 12,000 medical providers serve 4 million annually in 5,000 clinics in all 50 states.

The American Prize (\$50,000): 826 National, San Francisco, Calif.

826 National uses unique storefront offices in eight cities nationwide as bases for addressing community problems of both literacy and aliteracy. One-on-one tutoring for at-risk K-12 students is offered along with a range of free core programs, including storytelling, bookmaking, in-school writing workshops and publishing projects. 826 has offices in San Francisco, New York City, Los Angeles, Ann Arbor/Detroit, Seattle, Chicago, Boston and Washington, D.C., serving more than 31,000 students and publishing more than 1,000 student books annually.

The International Prize (\$50,000): PlanetRead, Mumbai, India

PlanetRead in India is an innovative program that reinforces literacy skills, primarily through subtitles for popular musical television programming. SLS (Same Language Subtitling) was developed in India based on solid research. It is simple to implement and easy to replicate, reaching 200 million low-literacy TV viewers in India. SLS is notable as a highly motivational approach for getting low-literacy adults to read, particularly where access to books is difficult.

The Library of Congress Literacy Awards were announced in January 2013 as a program to help support organizations working to alleviate the problems of illiteracy and aliteracy (a lack of interest in reading) both in the United States and worldwide. The awards seek to reward those organizations that have been doing exemplary, innovative and easily replicable work over a sustained period of time and to encourage new groups, organizations and individuals to become involved.

"The generosity of David Rubenstein in instituting this literacy awards program will have a profound impact not just on the winners and their programs, but also on literacy programs everywhere that can benefit by replicating some of the best practices of those who applied for an award," said Billington. He noted that the Library is producing a publication that highlights the best practices in a number of categories as exemplified by the top applicants.

"Literacy opens doors to life's great opportunities," said Rubenstein, a co-founder of The Carlyle Group and a major donor to the Library of Congress National Book Festival. "I am pleased to support the work of these outstanding literacy organizations that are making a profound difference in the lives of so many individuals."

The Literacy Awards Advisory Board, which comprises a broad range of experts in the field of literacy and reading promotion, provided recommendations to Billington, who made the final selections. The award-winning organizations best exemplified the intent of the awards:

- The David M. Rubenstein Prize, for a groundbreaking or sustained record of advancement of literacy by any individual or entity worldwide

- The American Prize, for a project developed and implemented successfully during the past decade for combating illiteracy and/or aliteracy
- The International Prize, for the work of an individual, nation or nongovernmental organization working in a specific country or region

The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress administers the awards, and John Y. Cole, the center's director, also serves as the chair of the Literacy Awards program.

Since its creation by Congress in 1977 to "stimulate public interest in books and reading," the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress (www.Read.gov/cfb/) has become a major national force for reading and literacy promotion. A public-private partnership, it sponsors educational programs that reach readers of all ages, nationally and internationally. The center provides leadership for affiliated state centers for the book (including the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands) and nonprofit reading-promotion partners and plays a key role in the Library's annual National Book Festival. It also oversees the Library's www.Read.gov website and administers the Library's [Young Readers Center](#) and the [Poetry and Literature Center](#).

The Library of Congress, the nation's oldest federal cultural institution, is the world's preeminent reservoir of knowledge, providing unparalleled collections and integrated resources to Congress and the American people. Many of the Library's rich resources and treasures may be accessed through the Library's website, www.loc.gov.

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