

Carol Thompson Cole

February 17, 1997

CHILDREN'S MERCY HOSPITAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Ellen
Seidman

DATE: February 19, 1997
TIME: 1:05 pm - 2:10 pm
LOCATION: Children's Mercy Hospital
Kansas City, MO
FROM: Pauline Abernathy

I. PURPOSE

To participate in the announcement of a new program at Children's Mercy Hospital and in the community in which doctors will prescribe reading to young children and give children books when they visit the doctor.

II. BACKGROUND

Announcement: The hospital will announce that it is expanding a small and unpublicized pilot program in their neonatal clinic throughout the hospital and into the community. The program is modeled after Barry Zuckerman's Reach Out and Read program, in which volunteers read to children in the waiting room, doctors involve books in the medical exam, and then hand the parent a prescription to read aloud daily and give the child an appropriate book. The hospital is in the process of obtaining funding from the community for books for the expanded program and local doctors will receive training from Reach Out and Read's staff in Boston. The hospital expects to reach over 30,000 Children's Mercy patients each year. The hospital also plans to expand the program to the private clinics and doctors in the community who serve children on Medicaid, including those doctors who are part of the same Medicaid managed care plan as Children's Mercy. Adele Hall will help the hospital obtain funding for the books.

The new program will be based on the success of a pilot program begun about five months ago in the hospital's neonatal clinic, which provides serves until age three to children who received care in their neonatal intensive care unit, often because they were born prematurely. The pilot program was inspired by Drs. Barry Zuckerman, Perri Klass, and Robert Needlman, the original founders of Reach Out and Read in Boston, and by the American Library Association's Born to Read Program, mentioned in *It Takes A Village*. The pilot program is very similar to Reach Out and Read. Volunteers model reading to children in the clinic's waiting room while parents fill out a survey on reading to their children and their own reading skills and are referred to a local literacy program if appropriate. Information on the local library, recommended books, and library application forms are also available in the waiting room. During the doctor's visit, the

Ric Tascalia | Judy Tascalia

doctor gives the parents a prescription for reading and tells the children they can pick out a book in the waiting room. Because the program only operates two mornings a week and limited resources, it has only given away about 150 books since it began.

Background on Children's Mercy Hospital: Children's Mercy is a private, independent, not-for-profit children's hospital currently celebrating its centennial anniversary. You had to miss their centennial dinner last week due to the memorial service for Pamela Harriman, but sent a video. Children's Mercy is the only children's hospital between St. Louis and Denver, and was recently named one of the top 8 children's hospitals in the nation by *Child Magazine*. Last year the hospital logged 40,300 patient days and 210,000 outpatient visits. With the help of Adele Hall, the former chair of the hospital's board, the hospital successfully raised more than \$67 million for its expansion and renovation. Its main campus is in the midst of renovation, and the hospital just last month opened a new seven-story in-patient tower.

Children's Mercy has also established a program to research the correct dosage for children of specific drugs currently on the market or drugs now being developed so that information can be included in the label. The Administration is currently looking at ways to ensure that such pediatric dosage information is included on the labels of more drugs.

III. PARTICIPANTS

Remarks:

-David Oliver, Chairman of Children's Mercy Hospital Central Governing Board. He is a partner at the local law firm Byran Cave LLP (formerly Smith Gill Fisher & Butts), on the board of the Partnership for Children, and is the son of the Judge John Oliver, appointed by President Kennedy.

-Dr. Michele Kilo [KYE-LOW], M.D., chief of Developmental Medicine and Behavioral Science at Children's Mercy. She will lead the new program at Children's Mercy and coordinate the effort in the community, and is a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

-Dr. Rand O'Donnell, Ph.D., President and CEO of Children's Mercy Hospital, whom you know well. He used to be CEO of the Arkansas Children's Hospital.

-HRC

Audience at Remarks:

-Approximately 70 local people from the hospital community, local librarians, book sellers and book donors, and others who will be involved in the program, and Adele Hall, former chair of the hospital's board.

Book Reading Participants:

-Dr. Wendy Turnbull, Ph.D., Developmental Psychologist in Children's Mercy Neonatal Clinic. She runs the pilot program in the hospital's neonatal clinic.

-HRC

-About 12 children, ages 3-5 from the hospital.

IV. SEQUENCE

- HRC arrives Children's Mercy Hospital
Greeter: Dr. Rand O'Donnell, President and CEO, Children's Mercy Hospital
- HRC proceeds to William Harsh Community Room, 1st Floor
- HRC, Dr. O'Donnell, and Dr. Michele Kilo are announced into the room by David Oliver
- HRC and participants proceed to seats on the stage in front of a large "prescription for reading"
- Mr. Oliver introduces Dr. Kilo
- Dr. Kilo makes remarks and introduces Dr. O'Donnell
- Dr. O'Donnell introduces HRC
- HRC makes remarks from podium
- HRC exits stage left, works rope line left to right, and departs
- HRC goes to private, closed press "meet and greet" with about 14 members of the hospital's trustees and board of directors in a waiting room. Guests will be positioned in a U-shape.
- HRC proceeds to a clinic to read to about 12 children from the hospital aged 3-5, along with Dr. Wendy Turnbull. HRC will sit on a couch with children.
The children's book is still being selected and will be submitted for your prior approval. [Copies of the book we had initially selected for the Cleveland School event did not arrive on time due to the inclement weather on Friday.]
- HRC meets privately with Adele Hall at location TBD at the hospital or hotel.
- HRC departs.

V. PRESS

Open Press.

VI. REMARKS

Provided by June Shih.

draft #3 -- sent to TIME

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
TIME MAGAZINE
JANUARY 1997**

The night after the Inaugural, Bill and I gathered with our family in the Solarium on the third floor of the White House. After dinner, our toddler nephews Tyler and Zachary climbed up on the couch with their Uncle Bill to hear him read a story. They accompanied him with words, sounds, pointed fingers and a few tussles over who held the book.

As I watched them, I thought of all the times Bill and I used to take turns reading stories to Chelsea. Every night one of us (and occasionally both) would stretch out on her bed, hold her in our arms, and make up new tales about imaginary characters who embarked on improbable but breathtaking adventures.

Bill and I did not know about brain cells or synapses or the newest discoveries in neuroscience. Reading to Chelsea became a daily ritual because it's what our own parents and grandparents had done with us and because we wanted to spend quiet time with her every day. Bill's grandmother thought that reading to him would help him develop a strong vocabulary and the language skills he would need in school. My mother and father placed a similar premium on reading, and to this day I still remember the security and comfort I felt sitting in my grandfather's lap when he read me and my brothers stories.

Today, thanks to advances in brain research, we know that reading with a child has intellectual, emotional and physical benefits that can enhance the child's development. The intimacy of sharing books and stories strengthens the emotional bonds between a parent and child, helps a child learn words and concepts, and actually stimulates the growth of a baby's

brain. As I discussed in my book, It Takes A Village, scientists have discovered that children whose parents read and talk to them during the first three years of life create a stronger foundation for future reading success. In other words, what our parents and grandparents knew instinctively is now backed up by scientific evidence.

That's why doctors and nurses are starting to "prescribe" reading for babies along with regular check-ups and vaccinations. Recently I went to Georgetown University's Children's Medical Center with Maurice Sendak, the renowned children's author and illustrator. His book, Where The Wild Things Are, was one of Chelsea's -- and Bill's -- favorites. Mr. Sendak read the story to children and I announced, along with representatives of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Association of Booksellers for Children, and the American Library Association, a national campaign to put books in the hands of parents who bring their young children to the doctor and to get doctors to prescribe daily reading. My husband and I will be discussing this and other activities to follow up on the latest findings about the brain at a White House conference in the spring.

It's important that we take to heart what science is telling us — without losing the heart of the reading experience. In today's high-tech world of e-mail and microchips, it is easy to forget the importance of human connections in our daily activities. Technology has brought many welcome conveniences to our lives. But it also has the potential to create feelings of distance, detachment and isolation among us.

Reading to a child while touching, hugging and holding him can be a wonderful antidote to the impersonal tendencies of the Information Age for both the adult and the child. While critical to building brains, reading is equally important to building trusting and close relationships. That's why many of us remember the warm embrace or the comfortable lap that

cradled us when we read books as children. And that's why reading should not be viewed solely as an intellectual proposition, particularly in the era in which we now live.

If Americans take away one lesson from these exciting scientific discoveries, I hope it's that reading to children is easy, affordable and feasible for parents no matter their level of education or economic station in life. Children's books are available for free at public libraries in every community and can be found at reasonable prices in many bookstores. Doctors, librarians, teachers, book publishers, businesses leaders and the news media can help make books available to families and educate parents about the vital role that reading plays in our children's lives.

It isn't very often that we have before us such a simple, inexpensive and pleasurable way to improve our children's health and development and raise their prospects for a brighter future. Whether you lie down together on the rug, sit together in an old rocking chair, or cuddle on your child's bed the way Bill and I used to with Chelsea, there is no better way to spend time than reading to your child.

And now we also know that there are few better ways to help your baby's brain grow.

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CHALLENGE TO LAW FIRMS TO PARTNER WITH SCHOOLS

- Goal:** Highlight law firms that have successfully adopted a DC school and challenge all DC law firms to do the same. This could be part of a larger Administration effort to partner DC schools with colleges, federal agencies, colleges, businesses and community organizations.
- Event:** Visit the Cleveland Early Childhood Development Center (Head Start/Elementary School) with Holland & Knight lawyers. The lawyers will read books related to Black History Month to the students and *then give them the books* as part of the Reading Is Fundamental Program that gets books wholesale from publishers.

Potential Attendees:

FLOTUS

Riley, Reno (adopted a school), Ruff (DC Corp. Counsel adopted a school)
Holland & Knight -- adopted Cleveland in 1995
Covington & Burling, Stepto, and other firms that have adopted schools
Washington Lawyer's Committee -- facilitates partnering
DC Bar, ABA -- an ABA Committee is studying partnerships to develop a brochure for managing partners on how to establish firm-school partnerships
Becton, PTA and Parents United -- *Becton is actively promoting school partnerships and wrote a letter to the Post to encourage them* (attached).

Background:

About ten DC law firms have formed partnerships with DC schools, but three are particularly strong: Holland & Knight, Covington & Burling, and Stepto & Johnson.

Holland & Knight: In 1996, the firm spent 650 hours working helping Cleveland Elementary -- the equivalent of \$110,000 and spent about \$13,000. Every Wednesday, 2-4 lawyers tutor. The firm provides regular legal work to the parents and the community (e.g. code violations, renovating the playground); about 15 lawyers involved in RIF book donation and reading; 25 people involved in Christmas in April fix up of the school and renovation of the local park and playground that had been taken over by drug dealers; donated computers, supplies, clothing, and take kids on periodic field trips.

Covington & Burling: Partnership with Cardozo High School for five years. The number of attorneys involved varies, but 7-9 employees and attorneys run a Saturday Academy for 8 weeks each semester offering job skills, conflict resolution, field trips, etc. The firm hires Cardozo students each summer (about 1/3 of its summer hires), provides ongoing legal assistance with repairs and to the housing project across the street. Donated computers, wired school, wired security system, and sent people to teach teachers on computers. Sponsor PTA dinners with live entertainment. Book drive and toy drive. Participate in Christmas in April fix up of the school, and much more.