

THE Reading Team

LITERACY FOR LIFE



2012 Annual Report

Message from the President and Founder



Dear Friends,

While school closings, drop-out rates, unemployment, and poverty grab headlines, a root source of these problems – illiteracy – rarely does. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters who understand the

importance of early language development, many of Harlem’s vulnerable children will not be consigned to a life of hardship caused by poor academic achievement.

Each year, our supporters have enabled us to help more disadvantaged children at high risk of reading failure to become strong and enthusiastic readers, writers, listeners, and speakers, and to develop the skills, habits, and behaviors that support their success. The Reading Team started small in 2001, serving 72 four- and five-year-old children. In 2011-2012, 400 preschoolers and 90 children in grades K-5 attended our programs. To date, we have served more than 2,500 youngsters.

This past year, our Preschool Program grew from 350 to 400 children, and we expanded our After-School Program to serve 5th graders, increasing enrollment from 75 to 90 children. We also added a computer-based research and writing program for 3rd through 5th graders and hired a second kindergarten Literacy Mentor to serve a larger-than-ever kindergarten class.

It is impossible to overstate the impact early language development has on learning generally. Reading is education’s threshold subject. Children who do not become readers in the early grades simply cannot learn. They flounder in school and invariably sink in the larger social system. The Reading Team’s timely and intensive early literacy intervention corrects this problem so that children can reach their academic potential and become contributing members of society.

This annual report focuses on our growth and describes the effectiveness of our instructional model in narrative and through the voices of the children who benefit from it. While the report documents who we are and how we help restore the foundations of learning for greater numbers of children each year, there is nothing like a visit to one of our programs to witness the transformations taking place in the children we serve.

If you would like to come see what we do, please email me at maureen@readingteam.org. You will be enthralled by the children’s enthusiasm for learning and proud to see how your support is improving their lives – today and for the future.

Sincerely,

Maureen Rover
President

Success Attracts Attention

Interest in our small but effective Harlem-based literacy organization spiked in 2011-2012, thanks to the literacy progress our children make and to enhanced outreach efforts, including a brand overhaul, a web site redesign, and a Facebook revitalization.

We Premiered on Broadway!

From February 3 to April 3, 2012, some 75 million people who passed through Times Square learned about the Reading Team's unique educational programs from a short video that was broadcast on the David Letterman Screen on 42nd Street. Executives at CBS provided the high-visibility advertising space after they saw our web site and read about the remarkable progress Reading Team children make.



Images shown on CBS Jumbotron in Times Square

New York *Amsterdam News* (AM), with a print and electronic circulation of more than 15,000 subscribers, profiled the Reading Team in an article, "Reading Team: Keeping Harlem's Children on Top" (April 23, 2012). After visiting our facilities, AM staff writer Stephon Johnson laid out an overview of our mission and



readingteam.org
facebook.com/thereadingteam
twitter.com/thereadingteam

described how our focused programs close the opportunity gap between vulnerable children and their more advantaged peers.

The number of views to our new web site and Facebook page has tripled. Visitors are reading about our programs, educational model, and growth, and viewing photos of our children enjoying Reading Team activities. They also are exploring an array of scholarly and independent research reports about developments in early literacy education. In addition, they are viewing videos and articles about language, children's literature, and tips for nurturing academic success.

Yes, we're tweeting too. So like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

The Reading Team fielded a substantially larger volume of inquiries from educators, business professionals, parents, caregivers, and the media this year. We responded to inboxes filled with inquiries about our programs, volunteering, employment opportunities, contribution procedures, and more.

In the end, it's not what we say that counts; it's what they do. We would have nothing to celebrate, nothing to promote, without the strong and enduring academic progress that our children achieve each year through the effort, energy, and enthusiasm they bring to their work at the Reading Team.

We Keep on Going and Growing

In 2011-12, we increased our enrollment and enriched our curriculum to help more children avert reading failure.

This past year, we inaugurated our 5th grade class in the After-School Program, which focuses on helping children learn to reason logically, communicate their thoughts clearly and concisely, and use factual information to test and support their ideas. We hired a 5th grade Literacy Mentor and expanded our lending library for this age group. So productive was this initial class that the Fordham University Quinn Library exhibited books the children had written and hosted a young author's reception in celebration of their creativity.

In addition, we enhanced the research and writing curriculum in grades 3-5 with the purchase of 10 computers. Led by a Technology Literacy Mentor, the children learn basic Internet research methods and write research papers, essays, and stories based on their



explorations. Children we serve rarely have access to computers in school or at home; preparing them for a lifetime of technology use is as essential as teaching them to read and write.

We also opened mindfulness learning to all children in the After-School Program to teach them how to calm and focus the mind in times of stress. This program is already bearing fruit. As more of our children participate in these sessions, we are observing marked improvements in their behavior and academic progress. Mindfulness strengthens children's attention and focus, self-management skills, and understanding of themselves and their environment.

Finally, we hired a second kindergarten Literacy Mentor to reduce the size of the reading groups that have grown from expanding enrollments. In all, the number of children we serve in the After-School Program grew from 75 to 90, and our Preschool Program grew from 350 to 400 children.



What's So Special About the Reading Team?

After a year in one of our programs, the reading ability of our students improves on average between 50 and 70 percentiles – typically from about the 20th percentile to well above the 80th percentile. In a neighborhood where only 30 percent of 3rd through 8th graders pass the New York State English Language Arts Exam each year, 100 percent of Reading Team children do so.

Key Effectiveness Factors

Corroborating studies have identified the factors that make the Reading Team's programs so effective:

- **Higher adult-to-child ratio than the typical preschool or after-school program** – Our instructional groups are intentionally small, and students who need expert assistance can meet one on one with a reading specialist. Every child receives the attention and recognition required for the brain to associate reading with enjoyment.
- **Language-intensive environment** – While speaking is innate, reading is not. Our brains must be primed for written language. Since many of our students live in homes where reading and writing are uncommon, our core programs incorporate a range of activities that immerse children in the images, sounds, and meanings of words.
- **Curriculum customized to needs** – Our **Preschool Program** intervenes before a lack of academic success impairs these youngsters' natural curiosity and desire to learn. Prekindergarten instruction strengthens the children's language awareness – visual, contextual, phonological, phonemic – and prepares their brains for school success. Our **After-School Program** addresses the larger obstacles to learning with nutritional snacks, mindfulness exercises, developmentally appropriate instruction in small groups, and cutting-edge instructional technology.

- **Qualified and motivated staff** – Our instructors are experienced teachers and graduate students of education whom we train to implement our unique educational model. The results of our programs validate the quality of their contribution. Their dedication is inspiring.

- **Caring and consistent adult-child interactions** – Our staff exudes a particular calmness, patience, self-awareness, and early literacy expertise uncommon in educational settings. They model more than using tools and deriving meaning; they model empathy, self-respect, and acceptable social behavior.

- **Safe, stimulating, and spacious site** – Our flagship site is located in the heart of Central Harlem. Our facility is comfortable, colorful, and generously stocked with books, puppets, puzzles, technology, and other instructional tools and games.

Longitudinal studies have shown that investing in high-quality early-learning interventions not only reduces long-term social costs but contributes to economic growth. Teens and adults who participated in programs like ours as children are **less likely** to commit crimes, receive welfare, or have babies out of wedlock. They are **more likely** to own homes, be gainfully employed, and pay higher taxes.

The annual rate of return on this investment has been calculated to be as high as 16 percent and the cost-benefit ratio as high as 1 to 17. In other words, **every dollar that you donate to the Reading Team today, over time, will save our economy \$17.**

Sources: "Reading and the Brain" by Frey and Fisher *Early Childhood Education* 2010; "Early Childhood Program Effectiveness" www.developingchild.harvard.edu; "Early Childhood Education Initiative" Institute for Competitive Workforce, US Chamber of Commerce.



My Big Day at the Reading Team

The Reading Team **instructional model** is concentrated on literacy, attentive to the whole child, responsive to each child's unique learning styles, and portable so that children, parents, and teachers can transfer and apply what they learn here to other environments. The model features a unique combination of literacy building blocks (shown in bold typeface below) whose multi-dimensional approach tackles all the individual, social, and environmental obstacles to literacy proficiency and academic achievement.

Preschool Program



To learn the letter C I sing, "I start at the top and curve around." – Janiyah



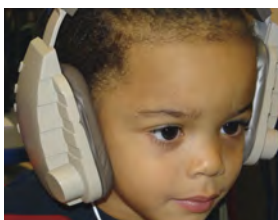
My Literacy Mentor shows me a book in the big **Reading Team library** and explains how to read the title and the name of the author. – Noel



In my **small group**, I like reading "Mac and Tab" with my Literacy Mentor Mr. Adam. They are like "Tom and Jerry." – Jhriyus



Ten times a year, Miss Maureen (President) sets out books (**book distributions**) for us to pick out and take home for free. – General



I like singing "Blue Bird" and making a lot of Bs on my paper during computer time (**Waterford Early Reading Program™**). – Denim



I am happy when I write letters in my **small group** at the Reading Team. – Jadelis



I have so much fun in **Creative Dramatics**, playing with puppets. I was a Papa Bear in the story. I like to sing too. – Zachary



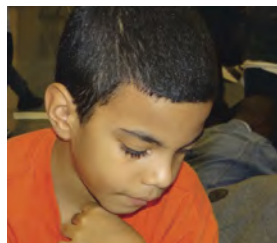
Day care teachers bring us to the Reading Team and take us back to day care. They also study here about being teachers (**preschool teacher training**). – Dynasty and Taina

My Big Day at the Reading Team

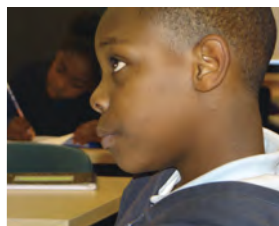
After-School Program



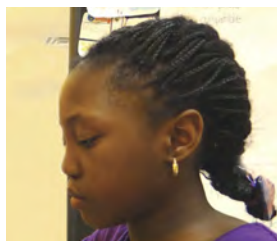
Eating a **healthy snack** at 4 p.m. gives me energy to learn. – Deriel, Kindergarten



I borrowed all the “Magic Tree House” books and others from the **lending library**. It’s great!
– Immanuel, 3rd grade



Mindfulness exercises make me calm. I close my eyes, let go of negative thoughts, and think about something happy.
– Christian, 4th grade



The Internet has fun ways to learn. The Reading Team gets kids interested in reading, learning, and **technology**, which helps them later in life. – Alysha, 5th grade



One-on-one instruction is fun. I visit reading specialist Miss Gloria, and learn how to sound out letters and make words.
– Clyde, 1st grade



I love it when we get books to bring home and keep for free. I always choose fairy tales. (**Book distributions** take place ten times a year.)
– Amanda, 2nd grade



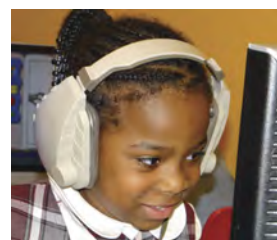
In my **small group activities** with Miss Monique, I have fun learning about writing sentences. – Shania, 1st grade



Sometimes, my mother comes for a **parent meeting** with Miss Margaret to discuss my academic options.
– Nicholas, 2nd grade (with his mom Jenny)



Miss Joanna shows me how to use the computer (**Waterford Early Reading Program™**). I enjoy doing word puzzles.
– Merveille, 2nd grade



My cousin Ricky picks me up at the Reading Team at 6 p.m. He knows that I want to read because I want to be smart.
– Tashae, Kindergarten

The Core Programs



The Reading Team offers two core literacy programs: our **Preschool Program** that served 400 children and our **After School Program** that served 90 children in 2011-12.

Preschool Program

Research reveals that three-quarters of children who grow up in homes where adults do not read to them, engage them in conversation, or provide them with access to books and educational toys are unlikely to learn to read by 2nd grade and will have a hard time catching up with their peers in school and throughout life.

The Reading Team **Preschool Program** addresses this problem by introducing four- and five-year old children in Central Harlem – a community beset by poverty, unemployment, and low adult literacy rates – to important early literacy skills and concepts so that they are prepared and eager to learn when they enter school. We intervene early to prevent academic failure from inhibiting a child's natural enthusiasm for learning. Our targeted programs, delivered in a safe, stimulating, and nurturing environment, close the gap between children we serve and their counterparts in more advantaged communities.

The program serves children who attend Harlem day care centers and Head Start programs. Twice a week from September through June, preschoolers come to the Reading Team with their teachers in groups of 40-45. The children spend 90 minutes per session at the Reading Team: 30 minutes of reading and literacy activities in small reading groups, 30 minutes of the computer-based Waterford Early Reading Program™, and 30 minutes of large-group Creative Dramatics activities.

In the Reading Center, the children work in small groups with our Literacy Mentors who are graduate students in

education and experienced teachers. We hire and train them to engage the children in a wide range of literacy-nurturing activities, from reading and letter and word games, to writing, conversation, and storytelling. These activities help develop and strengthen oral language, listening skills, reading readiness, comprehension, written language, and general attitudes toward literacy.

Children also participate in the Waterford Early Reading Program™, an innovative computer-based curriculum for four-to-eight year olds. The Waterford program integrates an individualized and carefully-sequenced curriculum that enables each child to learn through complex and engaging lessons and activities, high-quality graphics, classical music, and children's songs from around the world.

During Creative Dramatics, children engage in story enactments, imagination journeys, poetry recitations, theater games, music, and dance. Sessions help to enhance memory, pictorial imagination, listening skills, social skills, and attention to detail.





After-School Program for Children Grades K-5

Our After-School Program serves children in grades K-5 whose obstacles to learning and language development are interfering with their ability to keep up with their classmates and to succeed in school.

Teachers at 23 local area elementary schools refer children to us who are struggling academically and sometimes socially. The children typically enter the program in kindergarten or occasionally 1st grade and may return each year through 5th grade.

During the school year, students come to the Reading Team every day after school. From 3:00 to 4:20 p.m., they receive a healthy snack, assistance with their homework, and time to transition from the classroom to an environment that optimizes their natural curiosity, imagination, and eagerness to succeed. Then, from 4:20 to 6:00 p.m., they separate into grade-level groups for

our instructional program and take part in 35 minutes of reading and writing activities, 35 minutes of the computer-based Waterford Early Reading Program™ for grades K-2, and 30 minutes of Creative Dramatics activities. Instructional activities include:

Small Reading Groups: For 35 minutes, children in kindergarten learn basic early literacy skills and concepts. First and 2nd graders expand their know-how in word pattern recognition, vocabulary, grammar, and identification of main themes and details in fiction and nonfiction texts. Children in the higher grades work on more complex texts, spotting figurative language and literary devices, and learn to write narratives, reports, and persuasive compositions.

Term Papers: Third through 5th graders work on research and writing of well-reasoned term papers on topics of their choosing.

Autobiographies: Each spring, all our after-school children write an autobiographical story. Every child writes, illustrates, and binds her or his own book.

Mindfulness Exercises: Mindfulness enables children to calm themselves when they are unsettled and to improve their concentration. Thirty-minute sessions focus on children's awareness of the external environment and their place in it, body consciousness, and exercises that promote cognition.

Reading Specialists: Children who are struggling to keep up in their reading groups benefit from working individually with one of our Reading Specialists. Students typically receive about 10 sessions of expert instruction and then are able to keep pace with their peers when they rejoin their reading groups.

The Reading Team Produces Extraordinary Results

Preschool Program Longitudinal Study

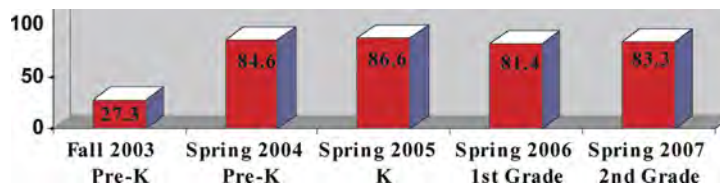
A major study followed two groups of our youngsters through the early elementary grades, comparing children who have participated in the Reading Team Preschool Program with children across the country. The children were given the *Test of Early Reading Ability - 3rd Edition* on program entry and each June thereafter through 2nd grade. In 3rd grade, all the public school children who participated in the study were given the New York State English Language Arts Exam (NYS ELA), an exam that is given annually to children from 3rd through 8th grade in the New York City Public

Schools. Results demonstrate that the Reading Team experience confers a substantial benefit for children:

- Average improvement of more than 50 percentile points in reading ability in one year in the program.
- Literacy gains that endure and continue to develop.
- Third-grade children in both groups outperformed their peers in their own schools, geographic districts, and citywide on the NYS ELA.

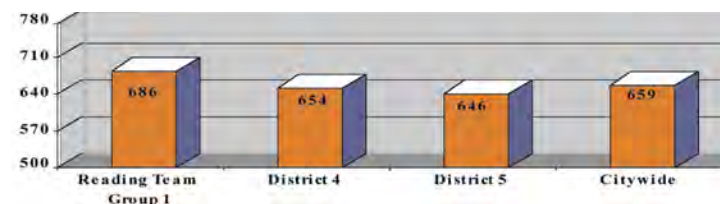
Group 1

National percentile rankings for Group 1 at five time intervals.



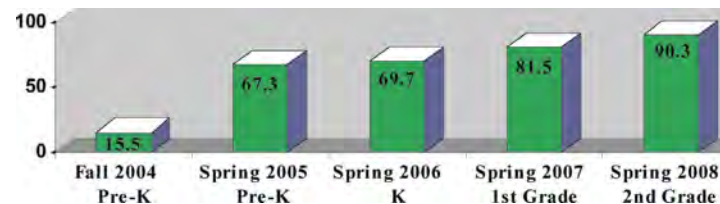
Group 1

Third grade student performance on the 2008 NYS ELA vs. Performance of students in Districts 4 and 5, and citywide, expressed as mean scale scores.



Group 2

National percentile rankings for Group 2 at five time intervals.



Group 2

Third grade student performance on the 2009 NYS ELA vs. performance of students in Districts 4 and 5, and citywide, expressed as mean scale scores.



Our Children's Gains in Reading Proficiency Confirm the Transformative Power of the Reading Team Model

After-School Program Test Results 2009-2012

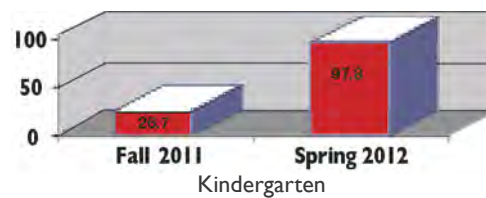
The Reading Team After-School Program children are given the *Test of Early Reading Ability-3rd Edition* upon program entry and each June thereafter through 2nd grade. The results are extraordinary – an increase of between 50 and 70 percentiles during the children's first year in the program – and these gains endure.

The final measure of the effectiveness of the program is the New York State English Language

Arts Exam (NYS ELA) administered annually to all 3rd through 8th graders in the New York City Public Schools. On this test, Reading Team children significantly outperformed the other children in their own school districts and children citywide. While only 55 percent of students statewide, 51.5 percent citywide, and 30 percent of those in our neighborhood schools scored at the proficient level or above, 100 percent of Reading Team 3rd graders did so.

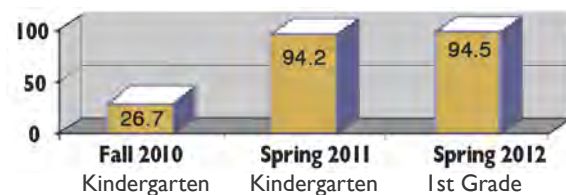
Kindergarten

Kindergarten students' test scores on the *Test of Early Reading Ability – 3rd Edition*, from program entry in the fall of kindergarten through the spring of kindergarten, expressed as percentile rankings.



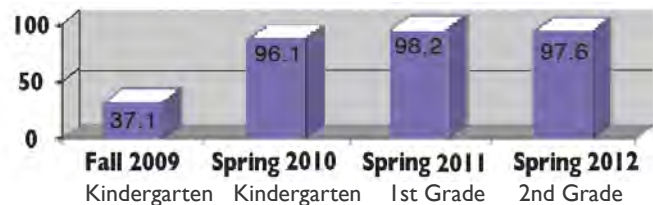
First Grade

First grade students' test scores on the *Test of Early Reading Ability – 3rd Edition*, from program entry in kindergarten through 1st grade, expressed as percentile rankings.



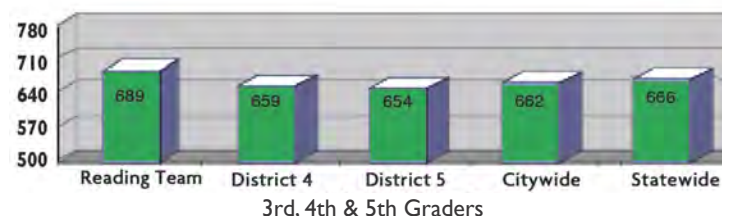
Second Grade

Second grade students' test scores on the *Test of Early Reading Ability – 3rd Edition*, from program entry in kindergarten through 2nd grade, expressed as percentile rankings.

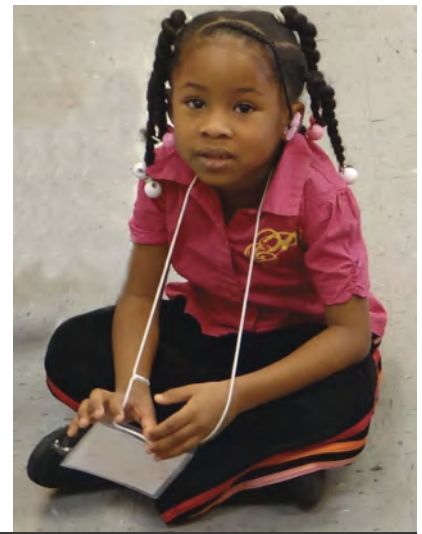


Third and Fourth Grades

Third and fourth grade students' performance on the NYS ELA vs. performance of students in Districts 4 and 5, and citywide, expressed as mean scale scores.



Statement of Financial Position



Selected Financial Data

June 30, 2012 and 2011

Assets	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>
Current assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 300,978	\$ 388,633
Total current assets	300,978	388,633
Property and equipment – net	27,020	23,764
Security deposits	<u>13,000</u>	<u>13,000</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 340,998</u>	<u>\$ 425,397</u>
 Liabilities and Net Assets		
Liabilities	\$ -	\$ -
Commitment		
Net assets – unrestricted	330,998	425,397
Net assets – temporarily restricted	<u>10,000</u>	<u>-</u>
 Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 340,998</u>	<u>\$ 425,397</u>



Statement of Activities



Selected Financial Data

Years Ended June 30, 2012 and 2011

	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	<u>Total 2012</u>	<u>Total 2011</u>
Revenue				
Contributions	\$ 639,959	\$ 10,000	\$ 649,959	\$ 622,002
Interest and dividend income	<u>17</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>85</u>
Total revenue	<u>639,976</u>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>649,976</u>	<u>622,087</u>
Expenses:				
Program services	632,541	-	632,541	476,359
Management and general	68,431	-	68,431	55,213
Fundraising	<u>33,403</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>33,403</u>	<u>27,642</u>
Total expenses	<u>734,375</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>734,375</u>	<u>559,214</u>
Change in net assets	(94,399)	10,000	(84,399)	62,873
Net assets – beginning of year	<u>425,397</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>425,397</u>	<u>362,524</u>
Net assets – end of year	<u>\$ 330,998</u>	<u>\$ 10,000</u>	<u>\$ 340,998</u>	<u>\$ 425,397</u>

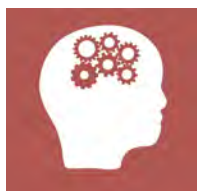


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Educator

The Reading Team Parents Council

The Reading Team Parents Council engages parents in activities that enrich their children's educational experience and makes their association with our programs beneficial. Parents who serve on the council also function as ambassadors for the Reading Team – promoting our programs and initiatives, fostering connections, deepening partnerships with the community, and reaching out to current and prospective families.

Parents Council Members

Aladj Beye	Nicole Smith
Cheryl Drumwright	Abou Toure
Tawanaa Herring	Kisha Presley-Vann
Dominic Lewis	Lavelle Walton
Nadhege Ptah	

The Reading Team Foundation and Corporate Supporters



The Reading Team is thankful for the generosity of the foundations, corporations, government agencies, and individuals who have supported our work. They enable us to achieve profound and lasting improvement in the lives of the children we serve.

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Arthur K. Watson Charitable Trust
West Side Children's Fund
WLXT
Tiger Woods Foundation
NYS Assemblyman Keith Wright

THE Reading Team

LITERACY FOR LIFE



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