



Sharing the love and joy of reading aloud

Planet

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THE BRIDGE THAT BOOKS BUILT

by Maureen Nettles & Patryce Samuel

Fathers Bridging the Miles program

Some children of incarcerated fathers don't know where their Daddy is; some do. Some don't remember Daddy; some want to forget. Then a package arrives, and the bridge is started.

Some daddies don't know how to talk to their children. Others think they cannot make a difference because it has been too long and their children don't remember them or don't care about them anymore. But then the reading begins, and there is hope.

All too frequently, children of imprisoned parents experience poor academic achievement and a range of emotional and social disorders directly and indirectly attributed to having one or more parents in prison (Gadsden, 2005). Often they are confused, angry, hurt, lonely and afraid. It is alarming how often children of imprisoned fathers become the incarcerated parents of the next generation of underachieving and dispirited children. Who cares? Who understands?

The "Fathers Bridging the Miles" program does. In an effort to bridge the gap created by the incarceration of fathers, Hawaii inmates imprisoned in Eloy, Arizona send recordings of books to their sons and daughters ranging in ages from two to ten years.

Some books are goofy; some are sad. Some teach; others simply comfort. Together, both father and child share the joy of discovering each other through books such as *Today I Feel Silly* and *Other Moods* by Jamie Lee Curtis, *The Hungry Pua'a and the Sweet Sweet Potato* by Leonard J. Villanueva, or *Guess How Much I Love You* by Sam McBratney.

Night after night, the children in the program fall asleep listening to Daddy's voice reading treasured stories such as *Tikki Tikki Tembo* by Arlene Mosel and *Love You Forever* by Robert Munsch. Some proudly carry to school *How Does a Dinosaur Go to School?* by Jane Yolen for show and tell. Still others take comfort in the message conveyed in *I Promise I'll Find You* by Heather Ward. Eager to build on their relationships, the fathers read aloud and encourage the children to read along as they make silly animal sounds, discuss vivid illustrations, sing songs and blow good night kisses. The bond created through shared reading fosters a positive and stronger connection between father and child. With his selection of books each father sends a different message in his own way, but all send their love.

For the fathers and the children, each book that is recorded becomes a cable of love, an affirmation of a family bonding and reconnecting.

Gadsden, V. L., J. E. Davis, C. Jacobs, M. Edwards, V. LaPoint, W. R. Muth, & D. Slaughter-Defoe. (2005, April). *Children of incarcerated parents: The implications of parent absence for children's lives at school and home.*



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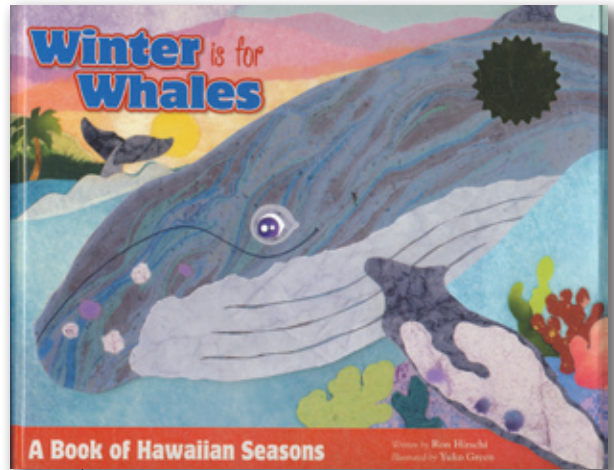
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Although people often insist that Hawai'i has no seasons, it is evident to the locals that there are. We realize seasons in the blossoming African tulip trees, the ripening mangoes, and the arrival of migrating kole'a (golden plovers) and humpback whales.



For those interested in learning how nature manifests itself in seasonal times in Hawaii, Island Heritage has published a delightful book, appealing to all ages, called *Winter is for Whales: A Book of Hawaiian Seasons*, written by Ron Hirschi and illustrated by Yuko Green. The humpback whale is only one of several seasonal subjects explored.

The illustrations are excellent, and the text just enough to whet one's appetite to learn more about the subjects. Little flaps give additional information on each spread, adding to the interest of the book.

Use this book or others like it as a springboard for other books which will help your children learn more about Hawaii's environment and tales.

Read on!

Related Books

Over on the Island
by Yuko Green and Sarah Tupou
(Island Heritage, 2007),
an island take-off on *Over in the Meadow*.

The Hawaiian Bat: 'Ope'ape'a
by Marion Coste
(University of Hawai'i Press, 2005),
a story about the Hawaiian bat,
including facts and myths about bats.

The Legend of Kuamo'o Mo'okini and the Hamumu, the Great Whale
(Bishop Museum Press, 2004),
a legend about the building of the Mo'okini Heiau.

Honu the Green Sea Turtle
by Barbara E. Berg (2003),
a book for very young readers written in
both English and Hawaiian about Honu
the Green Sea Turtle.



Two Timeless Truths Help Create Writers

by Liane Akana

My 12-year-old son has learned he can impress and shame his mother with his uncanny ability to dissect sentences and spout off parts of speech. The truth be known, I've sometimes wondered whether I was absent on the days when those lessons were covered. I don't remember any of them!

What I do remember is that my high school English teacher, Mrs. Hayslip, read aloud to us every day—fascinating stories like *Frankenstein*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *The Iliad*. She brought the characters to life and made the stuffy old classics intriguing and relevant. It turns out that Mrs. Hayslip, in addition to giving us an appreciation of good literature, was also helping us to become competent writers.

In the Winter 2005 issue of **Classical Teacher**, in an article entitled “1 Myth, 2 Truths: How to turn good readers into good writers too,” Andrew Pudewa maintains that listening (being read aloud to) and memorization are the two most important activities that allow children to store sophisticated language patterns in their brains.

By reading aloud we are able to read above the child's level, introducing new vocabulary and more complex sentence structure. It also provides an opportunity to “discuss words and their nuances, idioms, cultural expressions, and historical connotations.”

If you want to anchor language patterns in your child's brain, then have him memorize poetry or prose. Through the process of memorization, language patterns and rich, expressive language are stored permanently in the brain, ready to be retrieved and adapted in countless ways when called upon. Keep this in mind the next time your child asks you to read his favorite story yet again!

Pudewa summarizes, “Many things about writing can be taught directly, but two timeless truths — the two most powerful ways to nurture competent writers — are to read to them, out loud, a lot, even when they could read it themselves, and to have them memorize great gobs of poetry.”

So even if my son can run circles around his mom in the grammar department, I can still string a decent sentence together thanks to my mom, who read to me when I was a preschooler, and great teachers like Mrs. Hayslip!



artwork by Rosemary Wells

Reading aloud is the single most important activity to prepare children for school



For more information, visit www.ReadToMeIntl.org



artwork by Rosemary Wells

Ten fun & easy read aloud tips

1

Read to your child every day for at least 10 minutes.

2

Create an aura of specialness around read-alouds.

3

Find a comfortable, intimate spot.

4

Pre-read the story.

5

Introduce the titles and authors/illustrators of the book.

6

Have your child predict what the story is about.

7

Change your voice to fit the mood, action, and voice.

8

Discuss what is happening ("How would you feel if you were that character?").

9

Ask your child what he/she enjoyed about the story.

10

After reading, enjoy a related activity together, e.g., act out the story, do a craft, cook.

Read To Me International

Read To Me
INTERNATIONAL

► Who knew staying way past after school could be so much fun?

Ice Cream!



We All Scream for Ice Cream!

by Traci Takehara,

Grade 1 Teacher, Salt Lake Elementary School

Salt Lake Elementary shares the Read To Me International belief that every child should be read to every day for at least 10 minutes. To spread the importance and joy of reading aloud to children, the school organized an Ice Cream Social on December 12, 2007.

Parents and children listened to stories shared by ukulele virtuosos Jake and Bruce Shimabukuro, State Representative Glenn Wakai, and RTM President Lynne Waihee. Over 330 parents and children gathered in the school cafeteria, the music room, and the library to listen to wonderful read-alouds by each guest reader.

Perhaps it was the time of the year — just before the Christmas season — but excitement ran high as families arrived, to the delight of the organizers of the event. In the end, to culminate the evening's read-aloud activities, long lines wound through the school's walkways, each



▲ Bruce Shimabukuro (center) and brother Jake (foreground) read to a captive audience.



▲ May we have seconds?

participant waiting patiently for his or her turn to make an individually created ice cream sundae. Some went back for seconds, thirds, and even fourths!

It's still uncertain who enjoyed the evening more, the parents or the children. However, it truly was an evening to remember as each participant went home with a tummy full of ice cream and a heart full of love for reading.





Molokai Keiki Expo – 2008

by **Christie Pentak**

Molokai RTM Coordinator

For the third year RTM participated in the Molokai Keiki Expo, which is held at Mitchell Pau'oli Center. Twenty-seven organizations participated this year, and it was bigger and better than ever. Anywhere between 600-1,000 people attended the Expo, and at last count the Read To Me table had drawn 160 parents and 110 children.

The Read-To-Me display board featured pictures from our Monday night "Read To Me @ Your Library" program. We discovered last year that the display board attracts people curious to see if they or their friends are in any of the photos.

In addition to the display board, we distributed brochures, literature, bookmarks and library card applications, as well as simple paper bookmarks printed with the **Read To Me @ Your Library** scheduled dates for the next six months. We asked parents if they were familiar with our program, and if they were, we added a bit more information; if not, we gave them an overview of the program, along with brochures, and answered any questions they had.

While we were talking with the parents, grandparents or caregivers, the children were given the opportunity to engage in



a craft. The crafts were a hit, consisting of a choice between making a Valentine card or a foam bracelet. The very young ones were given a Valentine coloring sheet. After completing the craft, each child chose a book to take home. They all left with smiles, including the parents.

It is hard to believe that it has been five years since we started RTM Molokai, and while we have lost many of the original volunteers, we get more to take their places and keep building support within the community. As a result of the interface with various organizations at Keiki Expo this year, All God's Children Preschool and Families for R.E.A.L. (Resources and Early Access to Learning) will be distributing the RTM brochures.

We look forward to participating in the Molokai Keiki Expo again next year!



▲ Above: Even Baby enjoys the fair as Mom works on a craft.

▶ Middle, top: Children are busy at work, creating for the special people in their lives.

▶ Middle, bottom: RTM Coordinator Christie Pentak, Myrna Price, and Eriko Takeuchi are all smiles!



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Save Money and Raise Funds for Read To Me!

By visiting the Read To Me website, www.readtomeintl.org and purchasing books through the amazon.com link, you can get great discounts on books and help Read To Me International raise funds for its projects.

For every book purchased through the Read To Me website, amazon.com will donate 5-10% of the purchase price to Read To Me International.

The site offers book lists and reviews for all types of children's literature and parenting resources.

Check it out!



Keiki Story Festival

Kaua'i Keiki Story Festival Draws Children and Families

Those families who attended the Kaua'i Keiki Story Festival last October in the town of Hanapēpē were not disappointed. For the fifth year now, Kaua'i keiki and their families were treated to a day of fun crafts, live entertainment and fabulous read-alouds.

The event, which was kicked off by radio personality and the event's emcee, Ed Kaahea, featured a dazzling array of local talent and celebrities. Among the esteemed guest readers were Mayor Bryan Baptiste, Senator Gary Hooser, and Council members Shaylene Iseri-Carvalho and Mel Rapoza. Entertainment was provided by slack-key guitar master George Kahumoku, Maui radio personality and



▲ Ed Kaahea emcees the Kaua'i Keiki Story Festival.

reggae singer Marty Dread, Excel! Dance Studio, Kelsie Lima, Kaua'i idol Shannon Link, and the keiki from All Saints Preschool. Additionally, Princess Ka'iulani, portrayed by Kaleiu'i Hosaka, made an appearance on horseback.

A big mahalo goes to all the organizations and volunteers who participated and made the event a success. Special thanks go to co-chairs Janice Bond and Mark Jeffers (AKA Russell the Rooster) and to their committed planning committee for pulling together another memorable event!



◀ Councilman Mel Rapoza enchants Rina Takabayashi with a reading of *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*.

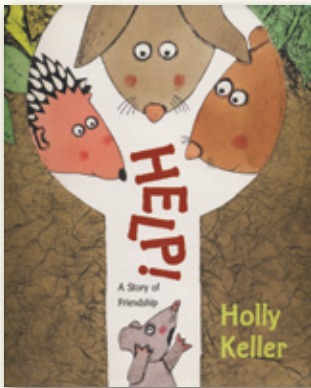


Share a Book and Make a Craft

by Brenda Freitas Obregon

What does friendship really mean, and can it survive gossip?

In Help!: A Story of Friendship, a beautifully illustrated tale by Holly Keller, Mouse learns what true friendship is.



Mouse hears from Skunk that snakes are dangerous to mice, so Mouse goes into hiding to avoid being found by his former friend, Snake. While

walking with Hedgehog one day, Mouse is so distracted by his fear of Snake that he falls into a long, narrow hole. Friends Hedgehog, Squirrel, and Rabbit wish to help, but they discover they are unable to rescue Mouse from the hole. Guess which friend, long and narrow, overcomes hurt feelings to help a friend in trouble. Yes-s-s-s-s!

Snake

After reading the story, have fun making this craft with your child.

Basic supplies:

- 5 bathroom tissue rolls
- 5 papers 4 1/2" x 8 1/2" (construction, newspaper, magazine pages, etc.)
- 4 yarns, 6" lengths
- Small rectangle of red felt, ribbon or paper for tongue
- Glue or cellophane tape, hole punch, crayons or markers

Assembly:

- Cover tissue rolls with paper.
- Punch 1 hole at each end of rolls.
- Tie rolls together by threading yarn through holes and tying knots, remembering to leave some slack so snake can wiggle.
- Draw eyes, and attach tongue to an end roll.
- Finisssssshed.

Brenda Obregon-Freitas, a children's librarian and one of our favorite readers, regularly casts a spell on the children during story hour at the Kalihi-Palama Public Library. Among her many talents is thinking up fun crafts using recycled household items related to a book she has just read aloud.

More suggested read aloud titles:

Small Green Snake
by Libba Moore Gray

Last Laugh
by Jose Aruego

April Showers
by George Shannon

The day Jimmy's boat ate the wash
by Trinka Hakes Noble

Verdi
by Janell Cannon

Snakes!
by David Greenberg

The rattlesnake who went to school
by Craig Strete

Pick a Pet, Gus!
by Jacklyn Williams

Mouse Count
by Ellen Stoll Walsh

Stanley Mows the Lawn
by Craig Frazier

Hide & Snake
by Keith Baker

The Great Snake Escape
by Molly Coxe





Simple Ways to Raise a Reader



Reading is a complex process and a learned skill.

Increase the chances of raising your children to become successful readers by following these simple tips:

- Read aloud to your children every day, even when they can read on their own.
 - Find a special place to read to your children.
 - Find a special time to read to your children.
- Talk to your children throughout the day — even when they are infants — so they can develop good language skills. After all, reading is simply language in written form.
- Set up a reading corner, even if it's just a little shelf, where your children can have their own books and reading materials.
- Let your children see you reading so they, too, will learn to value reading.
- Limit the amount and type of television your children view. Give them exciting reading experiences instead.
- Make the read-aloud experience fun by engaging in activities related to the books you have just read.
 - Bake cookies after reading *The Wolf's Chicken Stew* by Keiko Kasza or *Give Your Mouse a Cookie* by Laura Joffe Numeroff.
 - Write letters to someone special after reading the *Gardener* by Sarah Stewart or *Somebody Loves You, Mr. Hatch* by Eileen Spinelli.
 - Visit the aquarium after reading Marcus Pfister's *The Rainbow Fish* or Nicola Davies's *One Tiny Turtle*.
 - Engage your children in storytelling after reading *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs!* by Jon Scieszka or *The Musubi Man* by Sandi Takayama.



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