

## An Apple from the Teacher



*Irene Olson shows off new books provided by Page Ahead.*

My association with Page Ahead began nearly ten years ago while working as a librarian at Hazel Valley Elementary School in Burien. The demographics of our student population—poverty, transience, and a high number of English language learners—posed a challenge. We were searching for a way to increase parent involvement in student home reading. Then I learned about Page Ahead and applied for books. Those first books infused the school with excitement about reading. Parent interest and participation increased. Students, empowered by book ownership and the freedom to determine their reading experience, dove into books.

Page Ahead also helped Hazel Valley develop partnerships with outside community agencies and businesses. Boeing President Harry Stonecipher launched a Boeing book drive at Hazel Valley. Vice president Al Gore held a nationally-televised Town Hall Meeting about literacy and libraries at Hazel Valley. Over the years, I've experienced the way in which Page Ahead encourages the commitment of the entire community to improve the reading opportunities of youth. Literacy no longer remains the concern of only educators and parents, but is embraced by the community in which families live. A child's incentive to read gains momentum as he/she recognizes that the love of books is shared by those outside the school. Reading emerges as a unifying community force; one which connects the generations while simultaneously giving our at-risk children greater opportunities in school and in life.

I now am reading teacher and Vice Principal at Bryn Mawr Elementary in Renton, a school that is demographically similar to Hazel Valley. Although new books and personal home libraries provide motivation for at-home reading, many Bryn Mawr families do not have the economic resources to acquire new books. Reading events and book distributions make a big difference to these families. Parents often attend a reading event because they want their child to receive a new book. When parents show this kind of interest, we are thrilled. Page Ahead provides us with a concrete and powerful means to convey to students and parents the importance and value of reading at home to improve academic and personal success.

Page Ahead's dedication to ensuring that all children can read has earned my highest respect, admiration, and gratitude.

*Irene Olson, Bryn Mawr Elementary School  
Page Ahead recipient since 1995  
Educator since 1967  
Volunteer, Page Ahead Program Committee*

## Community Partner Profiles

We express our appreciation to the architects and designers who made a case for literacy during "Book Nooks." The bookshelves were displayed at **Northwest Folklife Festival** and either auctioned on ebay or consigned at **Modele's Consignment Home Furnishings** in Seattle to benefit Page Ahead. Thanks to all of the Book Nook designers, sponsors, and participants.

Many thanks for the books that resulted from drives held by the following companies: the **Washington Lottery** at the Mariner's games on May 9, July 18 and September 12; **The Children's Place**, a clothing store in Westlake Center; **Harland Financial** in Bellevue; **Methany Chiropractic Center**, located in Bellevue; **New London Hair Salon** in the Pike Place Market; and **Chiron Corporation** for designating Page Ahead as the beneficiary of money raised at their employee book fair.

Employees at **The Boeing Company** concluded their annual "Books & Backpacks" drive, exceeding their goals again this year. Widespread participation was encouraged at Community Awareness Fairs, where **Scholastic** generously offered one free book with each purchase.

"Pennies for Page Ahead" was the name of a book drive sponsored in May by **Lake Forest Park Elementary**. The grand total of contributions was announced at the School's "Young Authors' Conference," featuring children's author **Janet Wong**. Thanks to teacher Cindy Bruce and her students for 2,029 books and \$525 in cash.

Page Ahead is pleased with the plentiful pennies and the plentiful support given by all of these partners to provide new books for at-risk kids.

## Board Books

## Opening Chapters

Several individuals joined Page Ahead's board of directors in September:

A certified financial planner with Piper Jaffray, **Meena Cheng** is also a published author. Meena was the creator of Page Ahead's fundraising event, Cooks for Books.

**Gene Leonardson** has just completed a year of working for Page Ahead as a VISTA volunteer. He has returned to work as a management consultant with LaMarche Consulting Group, Inc. Gene has a PhD in Economic and Social Development.

**Tamara Reznik** has donated her legal services to Page Ahead in the past. She is an attorney with Expedia and has a JD and a degree in English.

**Charlene Richard** is a human resources manager for the King County Library System and holds a master's degree in public administration.

**Marisa Rodriguez** is currently a marketing consultant and a member of the Page Ahead marketing committee. She has tutored reading at elementary schools and holds a degree in English.

**Lindsay Schwartz** is employed by the Social Development Research Group. Previously, she was a first grade teacher and served as a board member with the YMCA/YWCA at Washington University. She has a master's degree in education.

Board books are made of cardboard thick enough to withstand the abuse heaped onto them by small children—jam prints, clumsy page turns, and repeated chewing. But the books selected by Page Ahead's board of directors are board books of a different sort. Here are their favorites:

**Christine Odegard.** When I was small, I loved a book that told the story of a neighborhood in which all the houses were painted the same color. Mr. Brown decides to repaint his house to make it different—then all the others do the same. Mr. Brown restores his house to its original color in order to be different yet again. The book said to me: "it's good to be different." Now I enjoy reading "When Mama Comes Home Tonight" (by Eileen Spinelli) to my son. As a working mother, I find comfort in it. My son loves it because he identifies with each of the things that occur between a parent and a child when they've been separated all day and come together in the evening.

**Beryl Simpson.** As a child, I loved reading mysteries. As an adult, I still prefer mysteries to any other genre. I've recently finished the last Harry Potter. My favorite character is Hermione. She's smart, in the tradition of my favorite detective from childhood, Nancy Drew.



*Drawing by Alexis*

**Sanjeev Narang.** Returning from a trip to Denmark, my father brought for me the stories of Hans Christian Andersen. We read that book together a million times. "The Little Mermaid," "The Ugly Duckling," "Thumbelina." Andersen is read everywhere—USA, Denmark, India.

**Sarah Jane Gunter.** As a child, I loved "Bounce and the Bunnies" by Henry Walck. It was beautifully illustrated by Ruth Carroll, and is unfortunately out of print. A puppy falls into a rabbit hole; the rabbits struggle to push him back out. It was a thick book, which meant that it was always a bedtime favorite. As an adult, my favorite kids' book is "Harold and the Purple Crayon" by Crockett Johnson. This child draws his own reality—a great metaphor and a great message.

**Mary Jo Bruckner.** I remember huddling under the covers, late at night, flashlight in hand, devouring every page of "Little Women," by Louisa May Alcott. My mother always caught me reading, which made it an even greater guilty pleasure. As the mother of three boys, I treasure Maurice Sendak's "Where the Wild Things Are," perhaps because Max's fantasies, adventures, and spirit match those of my sons.

**Jerry DeMuro.** "Oh, the Places You Can Go" is a terrific book—for kids small and large. I give this Dr. Seuss classic to fellow employees as a parting gift when they are reassigned or promoted.

**Jeanette Jarvis.** As an older child, I was fond of biographies. I loved to read about challenges and successes, particularly about sports heroes like Babe Didrikson Zaharias and Jess Owens. When my daughter was younger, we couldn't get enough of "More Spaghetti, I Say." It brought out our mutual silliness.

Proud Page Ahead Sponsor and Literacy Advocate:

**LOCALLY OWNED. UNIQUELY NORTHWEST.**

**The Seattle Times**  
  
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**Allen Eskelin.** “Frog and Toad” was one of my favorite childhood books. I see their optimistic/pessimistic personalities reflected in many of the people I know today. My love of reading has grown; I now read daily. My wife’s record is 23 books in one month. I’m not sure if I can top that but, like Frog, I’m optimistic.

**Brooke Doyle.** My current favorite is “Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge,” by Mem Fox. Wilfrid lives next to a retirement home, and his favorite resident is 96-year-old Miss Nancy. Everyone says Miss Nancy has lost her memory, but Wilfrid doesn’t know what memory is. Through the book, he discovers the meaning of memory: “something from long ago,” “something that makes you laugh,” “something warm.” He begins to collect memories of his own: seashells collected last summer, a puppet with a goofy expression, a fresh egg still warm from the hen.

**Kris Lambright.** The Nancy Drew series was among my favorites as an older child. I wanted to be a detective just like Nancy. As an adult, I’m asked by my many nieces and nephews to read to them. Anything they choose is my favorite for that day.

**Jim Cook.** I was and am a poor reader. My favorite book was one my mother read to me: “The Little Engine that Could.” That little engine helped me understand that I could do most anything I set myself to do.

**Terry Pottmeyer.** As a child, I was happiest reading books from a series. It was wonderful to know that the story I was reading wouldn’t end on the last page but would continue in book after book. Some of my favorite series were the Nancy Drew Mysteries, The Bobbsey Twins, The Hardy Boys, the Black Stallion, and everything by Louisa May Alcott.

**Annette Sommer.** My favorite books as a child were the Ramona series—probably because she got into trouble all the same.

**Marty Taylor Collins.** I loved “Where the Sidewalk Ends” because it was given to me by my best friend. As an adult, I love reading “Guess How Much I Love You” to my own kids. I ask them the question and they respond, “To the moon and back.” I love that!



Clifford, the Big Red Dog, representing Page Ahead at the Mariner’s back-to-school rally.

## Closing Chapters

The following individuals ended their board service during the last year.

**Kris Lambright** retired after seven years of service. Her depth of knowledge regarding non-profit management has been invaluable during Page Ahead’s rapid change and growth.

**Mark Meyer** also retired from the board after seven years of service, including several as a member of the executive committee. Mark is appreciated for his excellent attention to the needs of Page Ahead’s staff.

As board president for the past two years, **Terry Pottmeyer** led Page Ahead through a period of significant growth. Terry’s leadership and facilitation skills are exceeded only by her commitment to the welfare of children.

Earlier in the year, **Grant Hosford** and **Risa Suzuki** were each offered exciting professional opportunities, which meant losses for Page Ahead’s board. Their contributions were notable and—as with all of these departing board members—they will be missed.

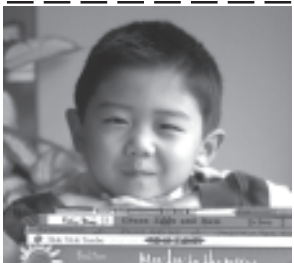


Photo by Chris Karges

Thank you for the book!  
It makes me smarter.  
My parents could not  
buy me a book like that.

-Alex, Sanislo Elementary

Please designate Page Ahead  
in your company’s work-  
place giving campaign.

## Chapters Autumn 2004

*Chapters* is a publication of Page Ahead, a nonprofit organization that advances literacy and strengthens communities by promoting reading activities and providing new books to children at risk of academic failure and their families.

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April 1, 2004 to August 31, 2004

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\*includes in-kind donations



Thursday, October 21, 2004

Chances aren't good you've eaten green eggs and ham. Or cooked green eggs and ham. Or served green eggs and ham. But chances *are* good you've read this Dr. Seuss classic as a child, or to a child.

Helping children learn to read is the mission and the passion of Page Ahead Children's Literacy Program. We invite you to share our passion by dining out on Thursday, October 21 during Book Plates, an event designed to Dish Up Literacy.

Book Plates promises to be an entertainingly edible event. Simply go out to eat on October 21st at one of the many participating restaurants that have generously agreed to donate a portion of their receipts to Page Ahead.

You can get "the skinny" by logging onto [www.pageahead.org](http://www.pageahead.org). We even provide links to restaurants—making it easy for you to learn about hours, cuisines, prices, and locations.

Join with Page Ahead to give all kids the chance to try *Green Eggs and Ham*.

Support Page Ahead by eating out on October 21. *All you need do is chew!*

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