



Giving kids in need the chance to read



Autumn 2005

Sky High Books by Chip Wolf

In 1995, the children's library of the Northwest Indian College (NWIC) was little more than a corner of the main library containing 100 threadbare volumes of "Miss Piggle Wiggle" vintage; it was visited by fewer than five children per week. A couple of years later, the NWIC children's library was regularly used by 60-75 patrons a week and literacy programs played to a sell-out crowd.

What made the difference? Brand new, up-to-date, high quality books—10,000 of them over the years from Page Ahead to Lummi youth starved for literature. Back in 1995, finding those books for these Native American kids seemed to me like pie in the sky until I heard about Page Ahead's mission to put books in the hands of kids across Washington. As it turns out, pie in the sky is my favorite kind!

A visit to the Lummi Peninsula is a bittersweet experience. Abject poverty and magnificent scenery exist side by side. The grandeur of Mt. Baker is reflected in the waters of Bellingham Bay, while the majority of Lummi families live in run-down trailers or cookie-cutter government pre-fabs. In the homes of Peninsula residents, indoor plumbing is by no means assured.

Approximately 75% of the potential wage-earning adults on the Lummi Peninsula are either unemployed or earn an income that is beneath the federal poverty line. Every single child attending the Lummi Nation School qualifies for the federal free breakfast and lunch program. By necessity, buying children's books is low on the list of priorities for most Lummi families. Yet, the children desperately wish to use and enjoy books. It is this wish that Page Ahead grants. By providing books that children can own and keep, Page Ahead inspires kids to read and use the library. Owning books and borrowing books go hand in hand.

Over the last ten years, books from Page Ahead have helped me to increase the reach and scope of the children's library. Recently, the tribe decided to close the children's library at the College and move the collection down to a new, \$24 million K-12 school. Although much is changing here, the reaction of Lummi children to receiving a book from Page Ahead does not change. Every year I witness the same stunned response from kids who choose a book and are told that they can take it home. It's a look that says, "This book is *mine*? I don't have to bring it back? It's really, really *mine*?!"

It's thrilling to have a new library to offer books and services to Lummi kids. And for their willingness and ability to make the most of that new library—for that, I thank Page Ahead.

At the age of 40, Chip Wolf left a profoundly unsatisfying career as a postal letter carrier to become the children's librarian at the Northwest Indian College. According to Chip, his motivation for building the book collections and literacy programs for Lummi children is "10% career and 90% calling."

Upcoming Events

October is National Book Month!

Oct 1-31 'Corny Books' book drive in Yakima

Oct 24 Mercer Island H.S. Day of Service at Valhalla Elementary

Oct 31 RIF contracts due

Nov 24-25 Office Closed

"By providing books that children can own and keep, Page Ahead inspires kids to read and use the library. Owning books and borrowing books go hand in hand."

Reading and Revolution

On October 4th, KCTS Television and the Family Literacy Coalition of Puget Sound aired the documentary *Making Schools Work* to King County teachers, administrators, and parents. The documentary highlighted the quiet revolution occurring in U.S. public schools to improve academic achievement among disadvantaged students. The event provided the opportunity to discuss programs that boost student performance and close the achievement gap, such as the *Success for All* elementary school reading program presented in the documentary. Leeta Scott, Family Involvement Program Coordinator at Page Ahead, said, "It was exciting to see that Page Ahead's focus on reading, providing books in the home, and family reading time is absolutely central to the kind of academic success possible for every single child in Washington State. We're on the right track!"

To find out more about this two-hour documentary, contact KCTS at 206.443.6798 or pmallinson@kcts.org.

Book Program Begins 15th Year by Jacki Crowther

Between September 2004 and August 2005 Page Ahead provided 149,121 books to 50,195 children across Washington. Some of those books were purchased through the "Reading is Fundamental" Program, publishers donated some, and many came from individuals participating in book drives. We couldn't have done it without our dedicated volunteers, who logged 3,300 hours last year. Some of these folks are new to Page Ahead, but others have been volunteering their time consistently for ten years.

I noticed two encouraging trends in last year's donated books: improved quality and more interesting stories. My hope for this year is to receive a greater variety of titles. It's so important to offer children a wide assortment of books to appeal to different interests. Varied, high-quality, interesting books prompt kids to read. Many children wrote to Page Ahead last year thanking us for their book about volcanoes, or whales, or planets. The work we do to deserve those letters is the substance of Page Ahead.

The schools receiving new books from Page Ahead held a wonderful range of reading events last year—500 of them, including imaginative events like "camp outs" in the gymnasium where families read by flashlight. Our partners are very creative when it comes to making books and reading irresistible.

I'm also pleased about Page Ahead's expansion across Washington. Placing VISTA and AmeriCorps staff in new counties had a positive effect on book donations. It also helped the schools we serve, especially those in Eastern Washington, put a face to Page Ahead and to celebrate milestones such as "10,000 books for 10,000 kids" in Spokane. As we begin this year with new, energetic staff in place, I'm confident they will build on the foundations that have been laid.

My watchwords for the coming year? You keep new books coming and we'll keep kids reading. We're all in this together!

Dear Page Ahead,

Wow!!! The United Way Day of Caring was FABULOUS! We had thirty-nine volunteers that day. We have never had such a showing of volunteer readers like that before. Thank you, thank you for setting the whole event up. The children are reading their new books, the parents are reading with their children at night AND we had one person say they would come back and volunteer at our school! Thank you so much for the free books for the students. We couldn't have asked for more that day, it was absolutely superb!

Sincerely,
Madeline Shelley
Dower Elementary Librarian

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Contribute **new** children's books
- Organize a book drive with your workplace, school, or social group
- Volunteer on a committee, at an event, or in the office
- Donate 12 conference room chairs
- Make a donation in someone's name
- Designate Page Ahead as a recipient of your pledge to United Way or other workplace campaign
- Sign up to receive this newsletter electronically by visiting our web site
- For more information, to donate, or to sign up to volunteer, call us at 206.461.0123 or visit our web site at www.pageahead.org

Chapters Autumn 2005

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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Proud Page Ahead Sponsor and Literacy Advocate:

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The Seattle Times




Jabez Labret, a volunteer from Nordstrom, reads with students at Cascade Elementary in Renton during United Way's Day of Caring 2005.

Board of Directors New Member Profiles

Derek deBakker is an associate in the business department at Foster Pepper Shefelman. He is a member of the Downtown Seattle Association's Urban Task Force. Derek first came into contact with Page Ahead at *A Taste for Reading*, Page Ahead's luncheon last April.

Darby DuComb is an assistant city attorney for the City of Seattle and has donated her legal services to several nonprofits over the years. She intends to serve on the program committee to learn more about how program sites are evaluated and chosen.

Sandra Haynes is a content development manager at Microsoft Learning. As a 2005 graduate of Project LEAD and a long-time volunteer for literacy, Sandra is passionate about Page Ahead's mission. She admits that her voracious appetite for literature made volunteering on Page Ahead's board an easy choice for her.

Kim Schafer holds an MBA from New York University and is an employee of IBM. Marketing is her area of expertise. She was attracted to Page Ahead through *Book Plates: Dishing Up Literacy*. Her favorite children's books are those by Dr. Seuss: "He uses language in a unique way and combines fun and education magically. Just a few words on a page in a Seuss book have tremendous impact. That notion is at the heart of effective marketing and has influenced me in my career."

Annette Sommer served as an intern on Page Ahead's board last year. Annette is a senior associate in public finance for Seattle-Northwest Securities Corporation and has been active with Seattle Works and United Way of King County. She first participated in Page Ahead as a volunteer at a reading event. "The kids were so excited to have a book of their own to read. They were pre-school and first graders. Many of the kids were learning English as a second language, but a book is universal and kids are kids. The experience warmed my heart!"

Fondest farewells to three board members who have been instrumental to our success: Mary Jo Bruckner, Jerry DeMuro, and Christine Odegard. For years, they provided their talents and commitment and we are thankful for their and impressive efforts.

Recent Contributors

June 1, 2005 to September 30, 2005

\$500 to \$999

Atlas Foods
Azteca Mexican Restaurants
Beth Gifford*
Tom and Carol Hogan
James and Marilyn Cook
Jay Berry's Gourmet Pizza & Pasta
Matt's in the Market
Tacoma Rainiers
Washington Mutual

\$1,000 to \$9,999

Cooper Levy Trust
Curves in West Seattle*
In memory of Mary Davis
Family Learning Center*
Greater Tacoma Community Foundation
Canute Haroldson*
Johnston-Hanson Foundation
Kawabe Memorial Fund
Laurette Koellner
McMenamins Queen Anne
Medtronic Foundation
Microsoft Corporation and its employees*
OfficeMax
Perkins Coie employees*
RealNetworks
The Seattle Times*
Six Arms McMenamins
Marcia Vaughan*
Washington's Lottery*

\$10,000 and above

Bryant Elementary students*
The Boeing Company employees*
Phoebe Haas Trust
Piper Jaffray
Seattle Mariners fans*
ShopKo Foundation

**includes in-kind donations*

It's a Delicious Wrap

Bookplates (buk – plâts) *n.*

1. labels, often specially designed, pasted in the front of a book to identify the owner.
2. an event at which fabulous restaurants raise money to put books in the hands of deserving kids across Washington.

On August 18, *Book Plates: Dishing Up Literacy* was the definition of the day when 51 restaurants across Washington opened their doors to diners with the express purpose of feeding minds as well as stomachs.

This, the third consecutive annual *Book Plates*, was the biggest and best ever. On August 18, a record number of restaurants across the state pledged their proceeds to Page Ahead. Event Coordinator LeAnne Chow reported that, to date, revenue from the event has exceeded all expectations. "Money was raised to provide 3,200 new books to children, and we are still receiving checks," she said.

It is widely known that running a restaurant is no picnic; hours are long and success is iffy. So what would motivate restaurateurs to donate their hard-earned profits to Page Ahead? Atlas Foods manager Elizabeth Davis commented, "I believe that a love of reading must be fostered early. If you are a reader, you realize that anything you yearn to know is always just a book away. Page Ahead provides parents and kids with solutions for finding time to read together and a vocabulary to initiate it." To increase revenue for Page Ahead, Atlas Foods in University Village created a special fixed-

price menu, partnered with their neighbor Barnes & Noble to offer patrons a discount, and sent a promotional email to 13,000 people on their mailing list.

One of the compelling aspects of the event was the tie-in between local residents served by particular restaurants and local schools served by Page Ahead. Each of the 51 participating restaurants across the state featured table tents listing the schools nearby that received books and literacy services. Carla Barajas, manager of the Azteca Mexican restaurants in Spokane, even convinced Azteca's corporate headquarters to purchase radio spots to publicize *Book Plates*.

Bizarro Italian Café in Seattle's Wallingford neighborhood took the theme of *Book Plates* one-step further. Befitting this quirky café—a small room filled with mismatched furniture, hanging window frames, and a giant cello suspended from the ceiling—the staff at Bizarro decided to "dish up literacy" by regaling patrons with readings from children's books. The snatches of dialogue fit right in with the pictures from *Alice in Wonderland* displayed on the walls.

Sam Whiting, Page Ahead's executive director, expressed his thanks for the commitment and creativity shown by all the restaurants participating in *Book Plates*. Atlas Foods' Davis commented: "I love the restaurant business, and participating in *Book Plates* makes something that already feels really good feel even better."



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