



N.M. Lions Crane Reading Foundation

Monthly Report to Board

February 1, 2008

The purpose for this communication is to present a brief report to the Board of Directors concerning NMLCRF activities. This report covers the period from December 1, 2007 through January 31, 2008

Summary

The NM Lions Crane Reading Program is an integrated program that combines both the latest computer technology and other proven activities. It includes six key components.

- Adjustment of desk height
- Use of templates
- Eye examinations and prescription lenses
- Development of gross motor skills
- Reading practice using computer programs

- Writing composition

NMLCRF Activities

1. The NMLCRF operates a successful Reading Laboratory at the Dream Center in Las Cruces. The Dream Center is a 501c3 facility which distributes USDA commodities to needy residents and offers recreational and entertainment opportunities for children from a disadvantaged neighborhood. NMLCRF operates a successful Reading Lab at the Dream Center. The activities at the Reading Lab include vision screening, template training, gross motor skill development and computer reading practice. The Dream Center has a fully equipped optometric office and can provide eye exams for students and parents. Since August 1, 2007, 171 children have been enrolled at the Dream Center Reading Lab.
2. Lion Eldon Steelman arranged to have Fastwave connect the Dream Center to the internet (with proper controls) at a 50% reduction in price.
3. The NMLCRF is conducting eye screenings in Dr. Joan Kalkwarf's Reading Laboratory at Gadsden High School. Dr. M. English, a Las Cruces optometrist, conducts eye examinations for students needing glasses. The eye glasses and Dr. English's fee are provided by NMLCRF through grants received from the N.M. Community Foundation and El Paso Electric.

Christina Cruz, one of the students who received an eye exam last school year, was hit in the eye with a ball last spring. Her vision went from 20/30 to 20/400 in both eyes. Dr. Jesse Sowards examined her and found that she had a hemorrhage in her retina and he referred her to SW Retina. Lion Eldon Steelman arranged with the N.M. Community Foundation to pay her bill
4. The NMLCRF has conducted eye screening and helped to install Lexia at the Mesilla Valley Christian School in Las Cruces.
5. Lion Allen Crane will conduct training sessions for all interested volunteers. The sessions will start during February, 2008.
6. Lion Eldon Steelman has submitted a proposal to the Wolsager Foundation. This proposal targets English Language Learners and, if successful, the NMLCRF will conduct two six week sessions at the Dream Center. In addition, funds will be available for travel and snacks for children and parents plus funds for a coordinator and some operating funds.
7. The NMLCRF Operations Group continues to meet every Tuesday at 1:30PM in the Dream Center.

Supplemental Information

(Provided by Lion Eldon Steelman)

A. Eye examinations and prescription lenses - The American Optometric Association states “80 percent of learning depends on vision and, yet, 86 percent of children entering school have not had a thorough eye exam.” The Dream Center has a fully equipped optometric office and will provide eye exams for students and parents. An optometrist at the Canutillo Texas School District found that 38% of their Hispanic kindergarten students needed glasses while 58% of the fifth grade students needed glasses. Thus Hispanic children are likely to need glasses. Half of the children needing eye exams may be covered by Medicare but this request seeks \$744 to provide eye exams and glasses. The LCRP also uses a Visagraph to detect eye teaming problems and to document reading performance and fluency.

B. Development of gross motor skills - Students with poor gross motor skills are often mislabeled ADHD and dyslexic. LCRP uses the Bal-A-VisX system to develop gross motor skills, which alleviate these symptoms and prepare the student for reading. The Bal-A-Vis-X (Balance/Auditory/Vision Exercises) program uses multiple principles and activities from Educational Kinesiology requiring coordination and focus. All Bal-A-VisX activities require the participant to pass items from one hand to the other, thus helping to coordinate the two sides of the brain. Bal-A-VisX activities also provide a break from computer usage.

C. Reading practice using computer programs: Computers can obtain and grade more responses per minute than a teacher. The Reading Center has 20 computers and 20 licenses for *Reading Plus* (English only) and *Lexia* (both English and Spanish). The Center also has 6 licenses for the English version of *My Reading Coach* and seeks funds for the Spanish version. Spanish versions of *Lexia* and *My Reading Coach* give instruction and interaction in oral Spanish while teaching English sounds and words. Both

Lexia and My Reading Coach use Orton-Gillingham based phonics instruction techniques to help teach basic reading skills, in keeping with the National Reading Panel's guidelines. The computers are equipped with headphones allowing the program to 'speak' to the user. Each computer can be equipped with two headphones which will allow the parent and the child to hear the same response from the computer. Melissa Mathis, Administrator, K- 8 Curriculum and Title One Director, Chattooga Schools, Georgia reported: "The children worked on My Reading Coach approximately fifteen days. 17 of the 23 made passing scores on the retest. They averaged a 17.2 point gain. These results are amazing. One student had a 40 point gain in just three weeks!"

These results plus our experience at the Reading Center led to the decision to schedule the courses for four days per week for six weeks or a total of 24 hours of reading instruction. If a student needs more instructional time s/he can be scheduled into the Reading Center outside of the regular class time or if circumstances require, the student can continue in the next course. The computer programs track the mastery of each topic, i.e., short vowel sounds and the reading speed for each child or parent. Thus, evaluation of reading gains is a simple matter.

D. Use of templates: Most problems found on the VMI or Bender Gestalt visual perception tests can be remedied in 18 sessions, 15 minute each using the template program. Each student will be given a template and the parents will be instructed in the use of the template.