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Operation StoryBook Volunteer Information

Read-A-Thon: Friday, September 11, 2009

Well-told stories have power for young children. Stories develop a love and understanding of language that is the precursor to strong reading skills. Stories build connections between the teller and the listener. Stories instill life lessons about character and the choices we make. Stories not only take us to other cultures and other lands; they also provide common language and experiences that unite us with our own community. As a volunteer in the Operation StoryBook Read-A-Thon, you can bring the whole world to a child by sharing your love of reading. Considering that 90% of a child's brain develops in the earliest years of life, you can have a lifelong impact on a child and on their contribution to our community.

What will I do?

Each volunteer will spend 30 minutes to an hour sharing books and stories in a Sheltering Arms classroom, under the supervision of professional Sheltering Arms teachers. We serve infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, so whenever possible we will try to place you with the age group you most enjoy. There are many different ways you can choose to participate:

Be A Reader: To make sure you have a successful experience, we take our cue from the children. Children can cycle through sleepy, energetic, and attentive many times during the day, so you may be asked to read to an entire classroom during story time, or you may read to individuals or small groups of children during their learning center time. You might even be asked to read on the playground! You may bring age-appropriate books yourself to share, or you may use books that we have on hand in each classroom's library.

Show and Tell: This year's Operation StoryBook featured title is "The Archer and the Sun." It is a Chinese folk tale about an archer who causes the sun to set and three animals—a lion, a rabbit, and a rooster—who try to make the sun rise again. Do you speak Chinese or have you traveled to China? Do you have a pet rabbit? Can you lead preschoolers in experiments and activities to learn more about the sun? Do you have some other interesting hobby or show-and-tell that relates to another children's book? Come and share!

Fun, Games, and Drama: Exercise your creativity to think of an entertaining, playful way for children to explore a story. Schedule your Scout Troop to do a puppet show. Narrate a story and have the children act it out. Sing your story or play an instrument and let children retell a story through dance. Bring an age-appropriate art or craft activity related to a favorite children's story, or volunteer to assist children in a literacy-related project we provide. Use costumes, props, and storytelling skills to bring stories alive for children.

Flexibility is a virtue when working with young children. If you complete the activity you've prepared and still have time left, we welcome you to join in with the children in their daily activities, visiting with them in their learning centers, playing together outside, or helping them at meal and snack times.

When will I be needed?

You may choose a 30 minute or 60 minute time slot between the hours of 9:00AM-12:00PM and 2:30-5:30 PM. If your first time choice has already been filled, we will contact you about optional times. Please report 15 minutes before your assigned reading time.

Where will I volunteer?

Sheltering Arms has 17 centers in Clayton (Jonesboro), Cobb (Marietta), DeKalb (Chamblee, East Atlanta), Douglas (Douglasville), Fulton (Atlanta, College Park, East Point, Union City, Dunbar), Gwinnett (Duluth, Lawrenceville, Norcross)

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and Rockdale (Conyers) counties. Each center will hold a Read-A-Thon. Employees from sponsoring companies will be scheduled for the center supported by their employer. VIP Readers and others who wish to participate will be scheduled for the center most convenient to them.

What else do I need to know?











Dress comfortably, or plan to wear the Read-A-Thon tshirt you will receive as a volunteer. Review the tips for guest readers below to help you prepare. If you'd like suggestions of books to bring, visit the Operation StoryBook page on our website at www.shelteringarmsforkids.com. This will be the friendliest audience you'll ever have for a presentation, so relax and have fun!

How do I sign up?

If you are volunteering through your company, contact the coordinator at your office. If you are volunteering as an individual, or aren't sure who to contact at your company, contact Jason (404-523-9865 / jlowery@shelteringarmsforkids.com).

Tips for Guest Readers

Source: RIF Handbook

-  Choose a story that can be completed in one sitting. Be sure to read the book in advance to develop a feel for the book's language and pace.
-  Set the stage by asking a question that will engage children in the story they are about to hear. It can be a question based on the title of the book, the book cover, or some hint about what may happen in the story that will help younger children anticipate what is about to come.
-  Tell the children the name of the author. Show their name on the book.
-  Don't be afraid to use showmanship to get the story across. Modulate your voice as you move from character to character or perform a series of pantomimes to convey the story.
-  Be flexible. Plan to read in segments of about 10 minutes to accommodate children's varied attention spans. There are opportunities to read to children in large groups, small groups, and as individuals.
-  Do not rush through the story, but stop now and then to ask questions, to explain the meaning of an event, or to let children look at the pictures.
-  Use props, costumes, or music to make the story come alive. Some volunteers wear crazy hats or dress up as storybook characters.
-  Make your reading interactive by holding up a picture book and asking children to explain what is happening or predict what is going to happen. To get children really involved, choose a story in which they can echo a phrase or chime in on a refrain, for example Esphyr Slobodkins' Caps for Sale.
-  Kids need a sense of closure, so be sure to leave plenty of time to finish the story.
-  **For book ideas, visit www.shelteringarmsforkids.com and follow the links to Operation StoryBook and our online wish list.**

For children age birth to 3 choose...

- Board books
- Books with simple, clear pictures with or without words
- ABC books with pictures of common objects
- Poems, songs and rhymes
- Books that let children explore the five senses, with different textures, smells, sizes, shapes, colors, and sounds

For children age 3 to 6 choose...

- Stories about everyday things and experiences
- Simple stories, lots of action, quick and steady pace
- Main characters about the same age as the children
- Playful animals, both real and pretend
- Books that show and classify many different objects (cars, animals, tools, etc.)
- Books with rhymes, rhythms, or catchy phrases children can repeat with you