

## **ServeMinnesota Early Literacy Findings:**

### **Minnesota Reading Corps 2005-2006: Measurable Progress and Exciting Promise**

ServeMinnesota's statewide literacy initiative – the Minnesota Reading Corps – has completed its third year of operations –and results<sup>1</sup> for 2005-2006 are in. Children served by the program recorded continued measurable progress toward becoming successful readers. The results suggest exciting promise as the program expands to serve more Minnesota children, age 3 to grade 3, who struggle to learn to read. The recently released results indicate:

**Real Change in Children's Literacy Skills.** The progress of more than 1,000 Minnesota children receiving Reading Corps support was above that expected for typical students.

Data for 2005-2006 showed an increased number of students reaching performance targets that correlate with reading success by third grade:

- Pre-K children showed growth across a number of key early literacy indicators that are closely linked with learning to read. These indicators include picture naming, rhyming, letter naming, letter sounds and alliteration. In fact, in a matched sample analysis, children in Minneapolis who had participated in Reading Corps during their pre-K years in Head Start recorded significantly greater progress at the end of kindergarten than children of similar backgrounds who had not previously been Reading Corps participants. These results indicate that Reading Corps is helping children arrive at kindergarten better prepared to succeed.
- In K-3, the average literacy growth rate of Reading Corps participants exceeded the target growth rate, indicating that Reading Corps participants are making faster progress toward grade-level expectations. This is especially promising in view of research that shows that children whose reading skills do not catch up to grade level by the end of third grade usually never catch up.

**More Students Served:** In 2005-2006, more than 1,400 Minnesota children age 3 to grade 3 were served by the Reading Corps program. This is an increase from 400 served in the first year – and it's half the number projected to be served in 2006-2007. The Reading Corps is made possible by AmeriCorps members – individuals who dedicate a year to Minnesota Reading Corps service in schools and at early childhood learning sites. In 2005-2006, 75 AmeriCorps members served in Reading Corps.

**High Quality Program Implementation:** Reading Corps is being successfully implemented in pre-school, elementary school and community-based settings across Minnesota. The Reading Corps instructional model is built around best practices developed and validated through early literacy research. Thus, quality implementation is key to the program's effectiveness.

As school begins this fall, ServeMinnesota staff and Reading Corps partners are excited about the possibilities of a new year. With some 150 AmeriCorps members on board, the Reading Corps is expected to soon be working with an estimated 3,000 children at 77 sites. During the year, we will also strive for progress in:

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- Increasing business and community support for the program to enable us to serve more students;
- Strengthening and expanding opportunities for community volunteers and ensuring that volunteers are well trained in proven “best practices” for reading instruction; and
- Incorporating more family involvement to reinforce early literacy at home.

If you would like a complete Summary of 2005-2006 Minnesota Reading Corps Results, please contact us at 612-333-7740 or visit our website at [serveminnesota.org](http://serveminnesota.org).

Thank you for your continued interest in the Minnesota Reading Corps.

