

2-14-02

send com
to Susan
Cooley
REC'D FEB 19 2002

Dear Randy,

When you were dist. gov. and were interested in Reach out and Read I visited with Susan Cooley and got all the info from her. Then I approached our community health center which at the time was in its infancy and operating out of 3 trailers on the "East side of town" now a new brick building has been constructed to replace the trailers and the management ~~man~~ is receptive to my idea. It was slow in coming but I was nudging it along until the right time.

Front page coverage under the headline isn't bad either -

Just wanted you to know your ^{past} efforts as T/O Dist Gov are still bringing results.

Sincerely,

Tom

Times Record News

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Group reaching out and reading Kiwanis Club offering support

Trish Choate

Times Record News

Reading to children will be doctors' orders at the Community Healthcare Center.

And Wichita Falls Kiwanis Club members are helping fill a prescription for literacy.

They recently donated \$1,000 for books and promised volunteer readers beginning March 11, Dick Woodruff, club president, said.

Reach Out and Read aims to jump start literacy in the very young, Teresa Pontius, center spokeswoman, said. Volunteers will read in the children's waiting room. And kids up to 6 years old will take a free book home from checkups.

That will be a boon since 66 percent of the clinic's patients are below federal poverty levels.

Youngsters in environments cluttered with books, newspapers and magazines are more likely to learn to read on schedule, according to the Reach Out and Read National Center's Web site at www.reachoutandread.org. Reading problems can erode school success. But poor parents might not have money to buy books.

Thanks to Reach Out and Read, the reading to could even start before baby makes his worldly debut.

The local program is for children "0 to 5-years-old," Pontius said. The seeds of literacy need to be planted and growing by the time a child is 6. And if a pediatrician or other physician encourages reading, it makes an impression. The idea is that mom or dad, or grandma or grandpa will read to kids "because the doctor said."

The program needs a constant supply of children's books, though, Pontius said. So she hopes community organiza-

tions and individuals will donate new books and good, used books. Reading material showing diverse races and ethnic groups is especially welcome.

The clinic will apply to become a recognized Reach Out and Read site, she said. If accepted, Scholastic Books will give books to the center. The donation from the civic club allowed the clinic to be eligible to become a site.

"Wichita Falls Kiwanis Club has always tried to support reading here in the community," Tim Short, chairman of the club's Young Children Priority-One Committee, said.

"We have that Red Hot Radical Readers program that's going on now in the school and this was something that really complemented it well."