

Reading ASSIST<sup>®</sup> Institute's

Summer 2011

# SOUNDING OUT!

## A Knight to Remember: RAI's 2011 Student Party

Twenty-nine RAI students received their gold medals at RAI's annual Student Party at Westminster Presbyterian Church on May 19. Students and their families, tutors and fellow students gathered to fête them royally with medieval-themed games, races and delicious fare fit for kings. Knights and Damsels enjoyed digging for treasure in the "Mystery Moat", stormed the castle in the ball toss, and raced in medieval garb. Finally, our medieval architects created their own fabulous and fantastic castles and dragons from boxes, tubes and other discarded household objects.

RAI alumnus Brett Webb addressed the gathering, saying "I use the skills I learned from RAI every day reading blue prints on my summer job as a construction apprentice."



*Student tests his speed in the Dragon Egg Relay*

RAI students earn their gold medals upon demonstrating acquisition of skills listed on RAI's "Reach for the Gold" chart. The annual student event is planned and implemented by RAI's volunteer tutors. This year's committee consisted of Chair Ellen Coulston, Ruth Ansel, Wendy Dunbar, Cara Duncan, Rosalind Freeman, Marlys Kerr, Carol Slomski and Debbie Wat. 📖



*RAI's 2011 Gold Medal Winners and Their Tutors at the Annual Student Party*

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## Dolores Kern Receives Betty Kane Award

"Shocked!" That is how Dolores Kern, past first grade teacher and now RA volunteer tutor at Heritage Elementary School, describes her reaction to being awarded RAI's top honor, the Betty Kane Award, for outstanding volunteerism.

"It is quite an honor when you think of all the tutors who work with RAI," explained Kern. "I am still floating on a cloud!"

Kern received the Betty Kane award at RAI's annual Appreciation Luncheon at

**Betty Kane Award** cont. pg. 3

## MISSION

To improve the literacy skills of children at risk for reading failure.

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## From the Executive Director



*It really is happening! Spring looks like it is on its way with summer to follow soon. After this last winter, I was beginning*

*to wonder if we would ever see anything but snow, ice, and cancelled events! But I do remember the fun I had on those snowy days curling up with a good book and a cup of coffee while reading to my heart's content. And as I write this column my thoughts turn to those who struggle to read who are deprived of that simple pleasure. Something I take for granted is denied to many and it doesn't have to be.*

*To those who are reading this, think for a moment how much you depend on reading in the course of your day.... at work, at home, for leisure or out of necessity. How would your life be different if you could not decode those words or comprehend what you have read. Not a pretty picture. Yet today many of our young people struggle with something you find so easy. That is why all of us at RAI have developed such a passion for our mission. With your*

*support RAI works to ensure that a child who might not ever learn to read will be able to because of you.*

*Volunteers, staff, mentors, instructors, testers, funders, and supporters, all are the keys to our success as an organization. Each time a volunteer commits to tutor a child, or a mentor helps a tutor improve their skill, or a funder contributes money so our programs can continue, or a supporter sings our praises to anyone who will listen, that individual unlocks the door to helping a struggling reader learn to read. What a wonderful legacy!*

*At our recent Appreciation Luncheon, I ended my remarks with the following quote:*

*"A hundred years from now it will not matter what kind of car you drove, what kind of house you lived in, how much you had in your bank account or what your clothes looked like but the world may be a little better because you were important in the life of a child."*

*Make no mistake about it, our strength, our commitment, our programs depend on all of you. We can never thank you enough for helping us to "make a difference in the life of a child."*

*- Marilyn Monahan*

## Donors Give the Key to Unlock the Written Word

RAI board and staff are grateful to all those who gave in support of Reading ASSIST® Institute's mission in the 2010-2011 fiscal year. Your generous donations have helped us to reach more struggling readers than ever before and give them the key to literacy and success in life.

John & Kristy Ambrogi  
Eugene Anderson  
Barbra Andrisani  
Ruth Ansel  
Stephen & Mary Cay  
Armstrong  
M/M George Barber

James Becker  
Suzanne & Robert Beeman  
Nancy Bell  
Delores Block Berger  
Lawrence & Ginger Biasotto  
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Cheryl Bolinger

Howard Borin  
Steve Brauerman  
Stanley Budner  
Judie Caroleo  
John Chabalko  
Kathryn A. Christensen  
*Donors Give cont. pg. 7*



2011 Betty Kane Award winner Dolores Kerns is, as always, there for the children at RAI's Student Party

**Betty Kane Award** cont. from cover

the Waterfall Banquet and Conference Center in April. The Betty Kane award is given each year to an RAI volunteer who exemplifies the spirit of Betty Kane, an early volunteer with RAI and member and treasurer of RAI's first Board of Directors. While the award's namesake passed away in October, her daughters, Kathy Irwin and Ellen Kane presented the award in their mother's memory at the luncheon.

Kern joined the Reading ASSIST Volunteer Tutor Program as a tutor

## Study Affirms Need for Early Intervention

A study released by the American Educational Research Association at its convention in New Orleans in April warns that a student who can't read on grade level by Grade 3 is four times less likely to graduate by age 19 than a child who does read proficiently by that time. Low income and minority students are 13 times less likely to graduate on time than their more proficient peers.

In this study, 88% of the students who failed to graduate had struggled with reading in early elementary school. This makes low reading skills a greater predictor of dropping out of high school than living one year in poverty, which affected 70% of the students who did not graduate.

The study's author, Donald J. Hernandez,

less than three months after retiring from a career of teaching elementary school—a record, according to Volunteer Program Manager, Sue McGrath. Kern says it made sense for her to volunteer with RAI right after leaving the classroom. "As a teacher, I was always the first one in the principal's office to recommend a student be tutored by RAI. The program works."

Dolores is especially fond of working with children in small groups, which she finds allows her to reach out to more children. "Groups cause positive competition", she says. "Kids interact and learn from each other."

The best part for Kern is that kids love to come to tutoring. One boy announced upon his arrival to his tutoring session, "Now I can have a good time!" Kern is uplifted by the increase in self confidence she sees in her students as they improve their skills, and the words, "Hey, I can read" are music to her ears. 📖

a sociology professor at Hunter College, at the City University of New York, says, "We teach reading for the first three grades and then after that children are not so much learning to read but using their reading skills to learn other topics. In that sense if you haven't succeeded by 3rd grade it's more difficult to remediate than it would have been if you started before then."

Says RAI Director of Instruction, Judie Caroleo, "It is critically important that we identify these students who struggle to read as early as possible, provide effective intervention instruction, and monitor progress to ensure that the instruction is successful. 📖

## RAI Launches Speaker's Series



RAI's new *Train with the Experts* series welcomed three prominent literacy researchers and authors to its Wilmington center this winter and spring to present workshops to area educators.

This latest initiative by RAI's Instruction Department, headed by Jude Caroleo, Director of Instruction, attracted an audience of 280 teachers, administrators and reading specialists from around the tri-state area and highlighted the latest in reading research and instructional techniques. According to Caroleo, "It is so exciting to be able to offer a new level of expertise and range of knowledge to teachers in our area."

Guest speakers included Dr. Susan Hall, President of the 95% Group and author of *I've DIBEL'd, Now What?*; educational consultant and professional development provider Deb Glaser; and Dr. Lucy Hart Paulson, a speech-language pathologist with a research focus on early literacy.

On the heels of success of its fall/winter series, RAI will host a summer series, with a return appearance by Susan Hall and featuring Dr. Antonio Fierro, a trainer with LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) and Susan Ebbers, literacy expert and doctoral candidate.

Visit [www.readingassist.org](http://www.readingassist.org) for more information on registering for this series. 📖

# Volunteer Tutor Program Welcomes New Volunteers & New Partner Schools

RAI trained 36 new tutors in FY'11. We celebrate their dedication and thank them for their commitment to our students. In addition, RAI added four new partner schools to the Volunteer Tutor Program.

## NEW TUTORS

Adele Ashley-Axon	Kathy Friedman	Melissa Scott
Janet Bahn	Susan Garner-Ash	Gabby Smyth
Angela Bifferato	Anne Gosner	Lisa Stoddard
Carmen Bowers	Tom Gower	Judy Taggart
Rebecca Brown	Tricia Harling	Evan Taylor
Nancy Campbell	Margie Henderson	Nicole Troy
Sharon Cocoran	Rosa Henning	Ellen Wilfong
Madeline Czyzewski	Tina Ianni	
Maryl Danks	Robin Kershaw	<b>NEW PARTNER SCHOOLS</b>
Melissa DiRocco	Wendy Marvil	Mt. Pleasant Elementary
Helen Englehart	Bonnie Marvin	Lord Baltimore Elementary
Susan Fabris-Jones	Janie Mitchell	Phillip C. Showell Elementary
Pat Fairbend	Kathy Murphy	Southern Delaware School of the Arts
Katie Freer	Ajitha Ravindran	Fairview Elementary (renew) 📖
	Katy Ryan	



New RAI volunteers in training. l-r: Janie Mitchell, Tina Ianni, Gabby Smyth, Melissa Scott

## Community Support is Strong for RAI

While the economy struggles to recover, RAI continues to receive generous support from faithful community, corporate and foundation supporters. Area and national foundations such as the Cichester duPont Foundation, Christ Church Christiana Outreach Committee, The Christmas Shop Foundation, Crestlea Foundation, Crystal Trust Foundation, the Delaware Community Foundation funds(Stephen A. Morente Fund), the Huisking Foundation, Mid-Del Foundation

and the Shopa Family Foundation have helped to make this past year's Volunteer Tutor Program viable.

Our corporate supporters such as Bank of America, Comcast Cable, Discover Bank, Dollar General, ING Direct, JP Morgan Chase and PNC Bank have also continued to be the backbone of RAI's programming. Funds from these donors support the Volunteer Tutor Program and Parent ASSIST Program as well as capital projects. 📖

## Scott & McIntosh Bring Talents to RAI Board

RAI is pleased to announce the election of two new members to its Board of Directors. **State Representative Darryl Scott and Mr. Timothy McIntosh** joined the Board in February.



Representative Scott has served, since 2008, in the General Assembly as the State Representative for the 31st District (Dover) and is vice-chairman

of the Education committee and Chairman of the Telecommunications, Internet and Technology committee. Additionally, he served three and a half years on the Capital School District Board of Education.

Representative Scott is currently Director of Account Operations at Sitel located in Milford DE.

Says Scott, "RAI has a proven track record for quality programming and results, and I look forward to contributing to their future success."



Mr. McIntosh is a 2010 graduate of the University of Richmond with a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration. He is

employed by Yet2Ventures in Wilmington, a venture capital firm. RAI is thrilled that McIntosh, an RAI alumnus, has returned to Wilmington and has offered to share his experience and expertise with our board. Tim attributes his academic success to his Reading ASSIST tutors Ann Hetrick and Linda Fordham. He has already begun meeting with and contributing to the Board Fundraising Committee. 📖



RAI alum Imani Henry kicks off her summer reading program with "100 Men Reading"

## RAI Alum Initiates 100 Men Reading

When ten year old RAI alumnus Imani Henry's mother Stacy, president of Brandywine Valley Friends, asked her what she wanted to do this summer, she responded that she wanted to promote reading to young children in Delaware. So, Imani co-wrote and was awarded a \$5,000 grant from Macy's and Reading Is Fundamental to do just that.

On June 1, her kick-off event "100 Men Reading", brought together men from all professions and walks of life to read to children at area early childhood centers. Imani greeted the readers at the Chase

Center on the Riverfront and provided each with books to read and distribute to students.

"This is the happiest day of my life," she told the men. "When I was in second grade I had trouble reading. Then my mom took me to Reading ASSIST. I had the best tutor in the whole world. Now I can read just about anything, even things my parents don't want me to!"

Why 100 Men? Imani responded, "Usually women read to children. I wanted kids to see that men read, too." She will continue to share that passion for reading this summer as she travels to daycare centers and preschools to read to children. 📖

## RAI Salutes Downstate Volunteers

RAI held its first-ever downstate Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon at The Buttery Restaurant in Lewes on April 14. Volunteers, school personnel and RAI staff and board members gathered to celebrate the expansion of the Volunteer Tutor Program to southern Delaware and to thank volunteers for their commitment to RAI.

Representative Darryl Scott (Dover) addressed the group, praising tutors for their service to Delaware, saying, "RAI provides a vital service to our state." However, "There is a great deal more

work to do," he acknowledged.

Volunteer Program Manager Sue McGrath thanked each volunteer individually, citing their contributions to the program. Says McGrath, "We are certainly inspired by the proportion of downstate volunteers who go beyond the one-day commitment and tutor multiple days, especially given the distances they often must travel."

RAI's Volunteer Tutor Program in southern Delaware comprises 24 volunteers tutoring in ten partner schools. 📖



Director of Instruction Judie Caroleo presents volunteer Bob Christopher with a special award for outstanding service to RAI. Bob received the Betty Kane Award in 2002.



Erin Gannon, Reading Specialist, Lulu Ross Elementary School; Tom Chilton, Volunteer Tutor; Todd Fishburn, Principal, West Seaford Elementary School; Representative Darryl Scott (Dover); Gail Phillips, Volunteer Tutor; and Sue McGrath, RAI Volunteer Program Manager at the Buttery in Lewes.



Kimberly Anthony Thompson (Academy of Dover Charter School), RAI Instructor Marlys Kerr; RAI Director of Instruction Judie Caroleo, Barb Rankin, Dave Swatski (Capital School District) and Wendy Higgins (Academy of Dover Charter School) pose for Milford, Delaware's submission to Facebook's "This Place Matters" Campaign

## RAI Honors State Senator

At its annual Appreciation Luncheon, RAI honored Senator Nancy W. Cook for her long time and ongoing support of the Volunteer Tutor Program. Senator Cook was instrumental in helping RAI acquire state funding, first as a "pass through" in the Delaware Department of Education in 1993 and later through the Grant in Aid program in 1997.

RAI Founder Ginger Biasotto describes the scene in Senator Cook's office when she and then Executive Director Lisa Simon traveled to Dover to seek grant-in-aid funding for their organization. According to Biasotto, the senator, who was co-chair of the Joint Finance Committee, announced, "You don't need grant-in-aid. You need a line item!"

"At the time," she continues, "we didn't realize the significance of what Nancy had done, but it soon became clear. The amount of the Line Item would be determined in the mark up sessions of the JFC." In fact, the state funding introduced by Senator Cook continues to benefit RAI and its Volunteer Tutor Program.

In her brief comments, Senator Cook confirmed her support for RAI and its programs. "What you do is so important," she said.



Senator Nancy Cook with Executive Director Marilyn Monahan

Cook represented Kent County's 15th Senatorial District from 1974 to 2010, serving in the senate for 35 years. During the course of her senate career, she served in a number of leadership positions, including those of Majority Whip and co-chair of the Joint Finance Committee.

Senator Cook was the first woman elected to the Delaware State Senate, is a member of the Delaware Women's Hall of Fame, and, at the time she left the Senate, was the longest-serving legislator in Delaware History. 📖

## Sussex Committee Seeks to Expand RAI Presence

In the four years since RAI opened its downstate office and training facility in Milford, RAI's programs have expanded in southern Delaware. With an eye to increasing RAI's presence in Sussex County, RAI has tapped the talents and resources of volunteers and one board member to form its Sussex County Expansion Committee. RAI Board of Directors member Kay McFadden chairs the committee, which is made up of

RAI volunteers Gary and Linda Reddick, Candace Vessella, educator Barbara Rankin and retired principal Pat Harris.

This dedicated group has already begun to identify sources of revenue, volunteer recruitment opportunities and public awareness outlets that will help RAI to fulfill its goal to further expand its programs to struggling readers, their schools and families, below the Canal. 📖



Sussex Expansion Committee members Candace Vessella & Linda Reddick

## Years of Service Awards

At the Annual Appreciation Luncheon, RAI recognized volunteers for their years of service to the organization and the children it serves.

### 15 Years

Patricia Guarino  
Karen Roof  
Debbie Wat

### 10 Years

Libby Hines

### 5 Years

Diane Kesler  
Margie Lutz  
Sherry Seace  
Vanessa Spence

### President's Volunteer Service Award (500 Hours of Volunteer Service)

Vicki Allegor  
Susan Day  
Sylvia Dorsey  
Cheryl Kirk  
June Kornacki  
Sue Lucey

As a volunteer-based organization, RAI is eternally grateful for the dedication and commitment of ALL of its volunteers.

## 2010-2011 Annual Report

### STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES July 1, 2010 – April 30, 2011

#### Revenue, Gain & Other Support

Corporate/Foundation/Individual	\$169,629
Government Grants	252,000
Tuition	350,645
Investments	57,200

#### TOTAL REVENUE

**\$829,474**

#### Expenses

Program Services	\$640,556
Management & General	36,395
Fundraising	50,953

#### TOTAL EXPENSES

**\$727,904**

#### Donors Give cont. from pg. 2

Sally C. Coonin	Marion Howell	Karen & Mike Muller
Betsey Corrigan & Carl Ryan	Chris & Julie Hsu	Key Murray
Ellen Coulston	Mary & James Hunter	Sue Muzzi
Karen Coviello	Mary & Thomas Iacovone	Jack & Sharon Nix
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Sara Geuder	Melinda Mann	Robert Ulrich
The Graham Family	Gilbert & Karen Martin	Rita Vasta
Samuel & Virginia Gray	Marguerite McCollom	Candace Vessella
Anne Groo	James/Natalie McCormick	Deborah Wat
Mary Lou Gross	Katharine McFadden	John Weikart
Amy Gutowski	Sue McGrath	Weir and Allen P.A.
Sandie Guzman	Anita McIlvaine	Janet Weiss
Christina Hamm	Marilyn Monahan	Terrence Wolf
Nancy Hetterly	Dr. Susan Moroz	Jack Woodall
	Dorothy Selinger Moskovis	M/M Richard Zaunbrecher

Donors Give cont. on pg. 8

**Yes! I support Reading ASSIST® Institute's services for struggling readers.**

#### I am donating:

- \$1000 Founder's Circle
- \$500 Gold Medalist's Circle
- \$250 Instructor's Circle
- \$100 Mentor's Circle
- \$50 Tutor's Circle
- \$25 Student's Circle
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Gift of My Choice)

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- MasterCard
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- United Way Donor:** DESIGNATION NUMBERS: DE 9061; Southeastern PA 8566; NJ write Reading ASSIST Institute on your Donor Option Card

- Charitable Campaign Numbers:** Delaware State Employees 70104; Pennsylvania State Employees 15876

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- I am interested in Volunteering.
- I am interested in discussing a Planned Gift or Will Designation.

Annual donations support RAI general operations. RAI is registered as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and your contribution is tax deductible.




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A Cat in the Hat fan gets in the "Seussical" spirit with Arlene Sulek

## Anything's Possible at RAI Fundraiser

On November 6, RAI celebrated its mission and confirmed that anything is possible when we teach children to read. The occasion was New Candlelight Theatre's opening performance of *Seussical the Musical* in Arden. RAI family and friends enjoyed a buffet dinner, a silent auction, and thrilled to the music and sights of Jojo and The Who's as they sought to save Whoville... and the right to believe that anything's possible!

This successful event raised funds for the Volunteer Tutor Program as well as introduced new friends to RAI. 

*Donors Give cont. from pg. 7*

### Corporate/Foundation Supporters

- Bank of America
- Chichester duPont Foundation
- Christ Church Christiana Hundred
- Christmas Shop Foundation
- Comcast Cable
- Crestlea Foundation
- Crystal Trust
- Delaware Community Foundation-
- Stephen A. Morente Fund
- Discover Bank
- Dollar General Literacy

- Foundation
- Huisking Foundation
- ING Direct
- JP Morgan Chase
- Mid-Del Foundation
- Shopa Family Foundation Fund

### Other Community Supporters

- American Girl
- Arbonne
- Atlantic Sands Hotel
- Attorney General Beau Biden
- Back Burner Restaurant
- Bank of America United Way Campaign
- Big Fish Grill
- Brandywine Zoo
- Café Verdi
- Celebrity Kitchens
- Cheery Tree Group
- Chick Fil-A Concord Mall
- Christiana Hilton
- Corner Bistro
- Culinaria
- Delaware Art Museum
- Delaware Children's Museum
- Delaware Express Shuttle
- Delaware Theatre Company
- Delmarva Chapter PA Assoc. School Retirees
- Discover Bank "You Care, We Share"
- Deppa

- Dover Downs Hotel and Casino
- Dr. Chad Laurence of Corrective Chiropractic
- First State Bowling
- Friendly Gift Shop
- Friends of the Dover Public Lib.
- Fusion Salon
- Hagley Museum
- Hansel and Gretel
- Hy Point Farms
- Junior League of Wilmington, DE
- Laura Novak Photography
- Linden Hill PTA
- Longwood Gardens
- Michael Christopher Designs
- Modified Thermoset Resins
- Moore Brothers Wines
- New Candlelight Theatre
- Pizza by Elizabeths
- Robert Coonin
- Rusty Suher
- Santora CPA Group
- Sweeney's Bakery
- The Buttery Restaurant
- The Learning Station
- The Public House
- Theatre N
- Two Fish Group
- U.S. Senator Tom Carper
- Val Whiting's Game Shape
- White Glove Car Wash 