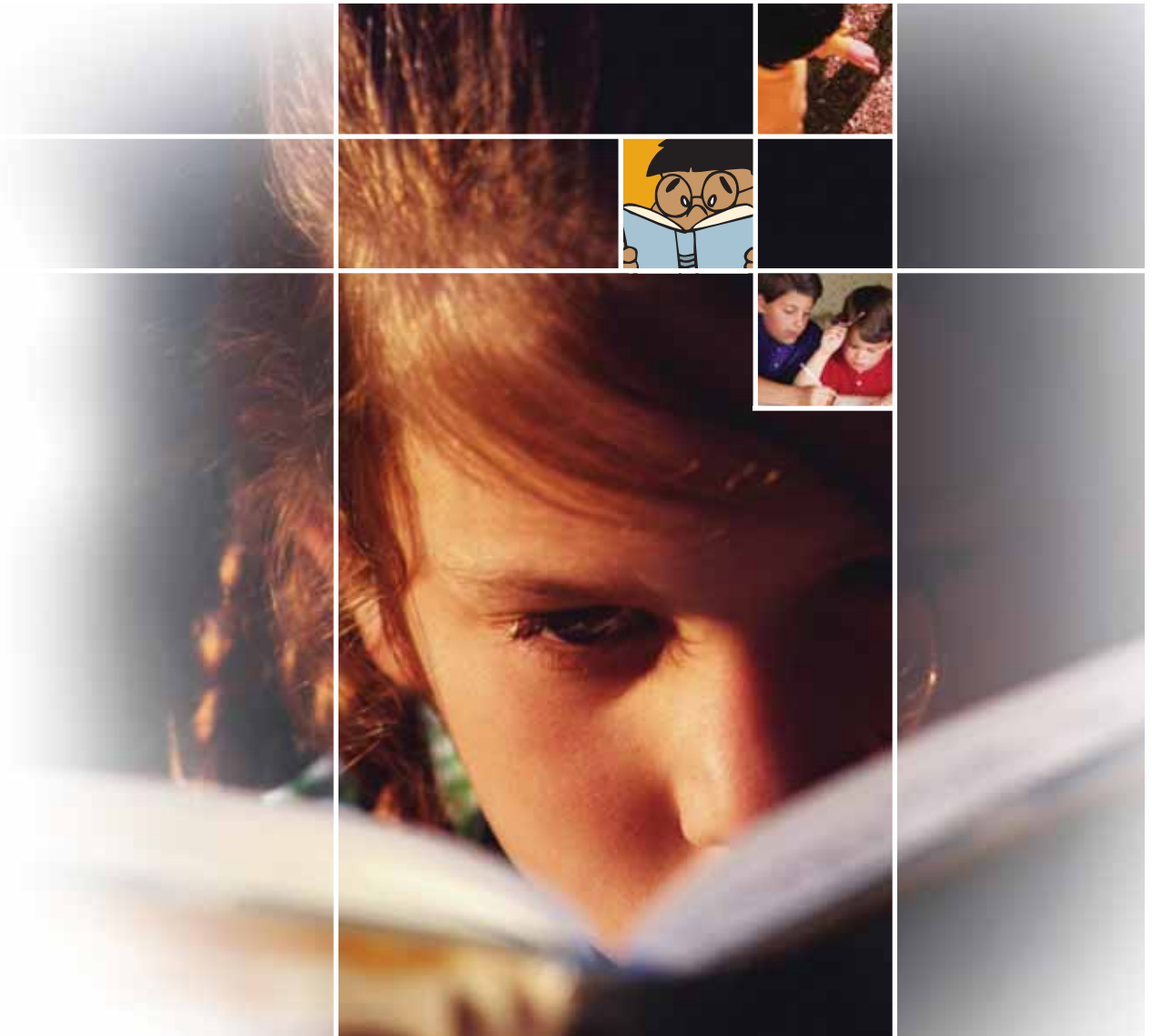


Kiwanis

READ-A-THON

Helping elementary schools improve and promote literacy

School Guide



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KIWANIS CLUB



OF OTTAWA INC.

Dear Educators,

Welcome to the Kiwanis Read-a-thon!

The Kiwanis Club of Ottawa is delighted to share this innovative literacy improvement program with your school or organization. Read-a-thon can be run regardless of location in the world, and it's free. The program is designed to encourage children to become better readers, by reading more often, trying out new books—and having fun doing it!

The Read-a-thon was developed by the Young Children Priority One Committee. The creative inspiration flows from the Hopewell Avenue Public School Read-a-thon (Ottawa, Ontario, Canada) held every year in April. The Kiwanis Club of Ottawa developed Read-a-thon to share their resources with educators worldwide.

The program has been an unconditional success, both in promoting literacy and in financial terms when used as an optional fundraiser. Each year teachers report improved reading skills and more enthusiastic readers. Parents write to us that their children have discovered the joy of reading through Read-a-thon.

Working with you, we want to bring the positive potential of Read-a-thon into your school. The Kiwanis Club of Ottawa has put together this School Guide and a Tool Kit containing everything you'll need to launch the Read-a-thon in your school, from Backpack Handouts to classroom activities and much, much more. It's all here to get you started.

Thank you for coming on board and making a commitment to introduce Read-a-thon in your school. We are confident that the effort you put into those three weeks of Read-a-thon will be well rewarded. By shining a spotlight on literacy, you can help to ensure that your students are excited and energized by reading. What could be better?

Good luck—and let's get ready to read!

The Kiwanis Club of Ottawa

“SERVING CHILDREN OF THE WORLD”

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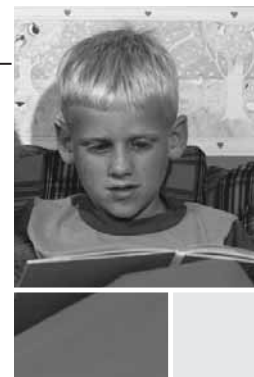
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Ready ...

Set ...

Read!

Welcome

The Kiwanis Read-a-thon is an exciting Kiwanis Club of Ottawa literacy program specially designed for schools. The goal of Read-a-thon is to help children from Kindergarten to Grade 8 become better readers and better learners by nurturing a joy of reading.

Through Read-a-thon, students are challenged for three weeks to read more at home and at school. Special classroom activities and school-wide events help children share the reading experience and have fun doing it!

This School Guide provides an overview of how the program works, and the accompanying Tool Kit provides everything you need to organize, launch and run a Read-a-thon in your school. Resources include:

- Program overview
- Step-by-step implementation advice
- Easy-to-do ideas for classroom and school-wide activities
- Materials for communicating with your school community (including student handouts), media and other target audiences
- Literacy Links

Take 10 minutes and read through the School Guide. If your school decides to organize a Read-a-thon, please register at www.kiwanisreadathon.org to receive access to the Tool Kit, where you'll find everything you need to build a successful Read-a-thon at your school.



Launching in your school

The basics

During Read-a-thon, the emphasis is on reading and building literacy skills. For three weeks during the school year, students agree to read every day and keep track of what they've read and/or minutes read by filling in their individual Student Reading Records. Parents, teachers or caregivers initial the Student Reading Record to verify what the student has read. Reading takes place in the classroom and at home.



At the end of the program, students tally up their individual reading, and class totals are tallied as well. The totals are brought together to create a grand total based on school-wide participation. The totals are important if your school is working toward a financial goal or school resources such as library books, class book sets and other literacy tools.

Make a school-wide commitment

Read-a-thon works best when teachers, library technicians and administration are all committed to the program. During Read-a-thon, we ask that each teacher find a way to put the focus on reading in the classroom. This helps to build momentum and excitement around reading since everyone at school is involved in some way. We recommend scheduling an orientation session with staff well in advance of the launch; it's a good way to introduce the learning potential of Read-a-thon and bring teachers on board.



Note: if the entire school is reluctant to participate in Read-a-thon, don't let this stop you from promoting literacy in your classroom! Individual teachers can easily hold a classroom Read-a-thon.



Use the Tool Kit

The Kiwanis Club of Ottawa understands the competing pressures on a teacher's day, which is why we developed the Read-a-thon Tool Kit. It provides hands-on advice about bringing Read-a-thon into the classroom. The Tool Kit includes ideas for classroom activities appropriate for all reading skill levels—from Junior Kindergarten to grade 8—with lots of room for flexibility built in.

Use it as a fundraiser

Read-a-thon can also be used as a fundraiser for your school. Students are given pledge sheets and encouraged to ask family and friends for pledges for the books they read during the three weeks. Our experience has shown us that parents are happier supporting a fundraiser with an academic focus: improving their child's reading skills. Launching Read-a-thon as a fundraiser can help your school raise much-needed resources for library books and reading resources, or other school priorities. Schools keep 100% of the funds raised.

Share the wealth

Many schools may not be able to run Read-a-thon as a fundraiser due to their specific circumstances. That is why the Kiwanis Club of Ottawa is asking schools that do use the program as a fundraiser to consider making a donation to a "have-not" school in their area.



Kiwanis Champions

Kiwanis Champions are Kiwanis Club members who will help you launch Read-a-thon in your school. Kiwanis Champions are there to help you succeed, acting as a resource for your school staff and parent community as you work together to bring Read-a-thon to life in your school.

Kiwanis Champions will also be available to meet with school councils to talk about Read-a-thon. In several Ottawa-area schools, parent councils have already introduced similar literacy initiatives as fundraisers with impressive results. Please note that using Read-a-thon as a fundraiser is optional—promoting literacy is the primary goal.

It is to your advantage to contact your local Kiwanis Club. Once you explain to them about your school Read-a-thon project, they may be keen to donate volunteer time, funds or prizes. Enter the name of your community to find the Kiwanis Club in your area at <http://classic.kiwanis.org/clubloc/>.

The Kiwanis Read-a-thon is one of a series of child- and youth-centred initiatives sponsored by Kiwanis. The Reading is Fundamental program brings volunteers into high-needs schools for one-on-one story times. Reading is Fundamental is helping early readers build solid reading skills.



Ready ...

Set ...

Read!

Read-a-thon Spells Success...

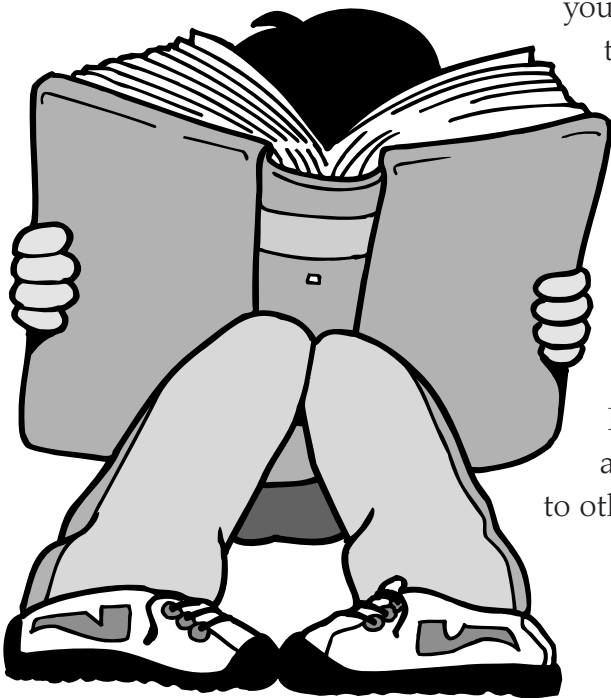
For your school

Improving literacy skills is essential for scholastic success, especially in the early years of a child's education. The challenge for educators is to find innovative ways to engage children in reading—just for the fun of it! Read-a-thon helps teachers do that.

Read-a-thon can be held at any time of the school year: in the fall to kick-start the year, in the winter when the weather keeps us indoors, or in the spring to get ready for school testing. Teachers have told us they look forward to it annually because it acts as a dynamic accelerator to basic reading skills their students have already acquired.

Read-a-thon brings school-wide focus and spirit to an academic priority. By putting the word out to your parent community and beyond that you are launching the program, you are making it clear that literacy is a top priority at your school. This raises your school's profile in a positive way—students reading for fun and enjoyment to improve themselves and their school.

Though it is mainly a literacy improvement program, Read-a-thon can be used as a fundraiser with financial rewards for participation. Children collect pledges from family and neighbours for each book or number of minutes they read. Schools keep 100% of the funds they raise during Read-a-thon, which can be put toward new books and resources for your school library, or dedicated to other school priorities in literacy.



In the classroom

Read-a-thon provides teachers with easy-to-do activities that put the spotlight on reading. In many cases, the program gives a fresh boost to initiatives already under way. Through additional classroom activities and special events, students will discover new stories, learn more about the books they are reading, and share their reading adventures with classmates. Reading becomes a shared experience, with a little friendly competition thrown in to add excitement.

A big “plus” with holding a Read-a-thon is that everyone can be a winner. A student needn’t be the best athlete, best student, or most popular child to succeed. With Read-a-thon, teachers can create a standard for success for each student, encouraging and recognizing personal best and individual effort, as well as class participation.

For the students

Read-a-thon helps to take reading from required to requested! By making reading a shared activity, children look forward to their silent reading every day, as well as the classroom activities planned around reading. Students keep track of books and/or minutes they read (as well as pledges received, if your school is using it as a fundraiser), which engages their innate sense of competition. The positive message is that anyone can win just by taking up the challenge to read every day.

Best of all, Read-a-thon helps make students stronger, more enthusiastic readers. After three weeks of their students reading every day, teachers note a marked improvement in reading and other literacy skills. Children see the benefit immediately because schoolwork becomes easier to do.



Ready ...

Set ...

Read!

Building momentum for Read-a-thon

Motivating children to read is what Read-a-thon is all about. Over and above what goes on in the classroom, momentum can be enhanced through spirit building: PA-based morning announcements, “Reading Moments,” and other contests and challenges are all good ways to get kids excited. An assembly to launch your Read-a-thon on the first day, as well as a celebration to wind it up at the end, also helps. See the Tool Kit for examples of what your school can do.

To build interest in the community beyond the playground, include an article in your school newsletter the month before your Read-a-thon begins. Submitting a similar article to your local newspaper will let those who don’t have children in your school know about the terrific initiative your school is undertaking. There’s always a chance this may prompt community members to offer their time, talents, or ideas towards making your program even more fun and exciting for children. The Tool Kit provides you with draft newsletter and newspaper articles you could use as a basis for your submissions. And don’t forget to take photos during your

Read-a-thon; many newspapers welcome photos to illustrate articles.



Keeping track to measure success

Keeping track of your school's reading during the program is well worth the effort.

For students, a big part of the fun during Read-a-thon is the challenge of reading more, and having more items to record on their Student Reading Records. Along with that comes the potential for good-natured competition between classes or divisions. Keeping track and "comparing" results spur the children on. Experience shows that a little friendly rivalry is an excellent motivator.

For the school, keeping track to measure success will help teachers assess the impact of the program on student literacy skills. School-wide tallies help to create a "baseline" against which your school can measure year-over-year success, both in books read and funds raised (if used as a fundraiser). As well, Read-a-thon activities and outcomes could form part of your school's annual improvement strategy flowing from EQAO results.

For the Kiwanis Club, gathering Read-a-thon results will be important to the future success of the program. They will help us assess how the program is working, where literacy improvement is occurring, and what else we might be able to do to help our children become better readers.

Evaluation forms can be submitted online at www.kiwanisreadathon.org in the Teacher's Centre. A faxable copy is included in the Tool Kit as well. Please take the time to fill them in as soon as your Read-a-thon is over and your results are compiled.



Registration

Kiwanis Club of Ottawa and Read-a-thon sponsors appreciate knowing that schools around the world are using the Kiwanis Read-a-thon materials to promote literacy each year.

Please register online at www.kiwanisreadathon.org to get started!





Our community, the children in our community, people in need in our community—all require the support of a dedicated club with dedicated members.

**Dedicate yourself to a good thing.
Call the Kiwanis Club of Ottawa today.**



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