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## **2009 Chapter Reading Rally Recap**

### **EWI of Birmingham**

We had two reading rally projects in 2009. We went to Children's Hospital in Birmingham and supplied books for the activity and waiting rooms. We also supplied books for the library at Jessie's Place, an organization for homeless women and children in the Birmingham area.

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### **EWI of Charlotte**

The Annual Reading Rally of EWI of Charlotte entertained 60 first graders on October 23, 2009 at the Merry Oaks Elementary School. The Chapter coordinated the "Be a Leader - Be a Reader" Reading Rally with the Greater Enrichment Program (GEP) of Charlotte. The GEP provides after school services to several Charlotte Mecklenburg Elementary Schools designated as under-performing, as well as services in neighborhood community sites. Students are selected on basis of residence, income and need. GEP has provided after school programs annually to over 350 children in grades K - 6. Cathy McIlwain is the Executive Director of GEP and attended the Reading Rally.

As Chapter members arrived, each received a "Be a Leader - Be a Reader" t-shirt. As our young guests arrived, all 60 of them, along with teachers, marched enthusiastically into the school gymnasium. They were so excited to be a part of this wonderful EWI experience that EWI of Charlotte and other Chapters of Executive Women International support every fall.

As each child received their "Be a Leader - Be a Reader" t-shirt, it was fun watching them wiggle into their shirts. The children knew there would be a program, including a fun book being read to them. The title of the book was "*When Donkey's Fly*" written by Ginger Hodges. During the reading of the book, and when the reader stopped, the children soon learned to yell out....."WHEN DONKEY'S FLY"!

Following the reading, each child received a certificate for finding the hidden "Donkey" in copies they were given from pictures in the book. At the conclusion of the book reading, the children and all assisting, were ushered into an adjoining room where tables were filled with pizza, snacks, and drinks. As the event wrapped up and before the children left the school, each child received a "Goody Bag" filled with surprises donated by member firms of EWI of Charlotte.

This is such a wonderful event encouraged by the Corporate Staff of Executive Women International. A Chapter putting on a "Reading Rally" comes away with a true feeling of helping our young people. Thank you to all EWI of Charlotte representatives.

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### **EWI of Columbus**

EWI of Columbus partners with the Franklin County Library's Summer Reading Program. We purchase 54 bikes (one girls' bike and one boys' bike) and helmets for each of the 17 libraries for the winners of the



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program. Last year EWI worked at the kick-off celebration by handing out bagels and drinks to the children and their families and we were also present at several of the winner presentations at the end of summer. Both events provided photo opportunities.

Last year we held a casino night to raise the money for the bikes and helmets. We have purchased the bikes and helmets at a local Wal-Mart for the last several years.

Besides raising money, the organization of the pick up and delivery of the bikes and helmets, was the most work. Luckily, the company I work for supplied a couple men and their trucks.

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### **EWI of Dallas**

Last year EWI of Dallas adopted Mi Escuelita Preschool for our Reading Rally. We bought books in English and Spanish. We also donated items such as paper towels, toilet paper, Kleenex, etc. Several member firm representatives were there the day of the event to help. We adopted the book " *When Donkeys Fly*" from Corporate's suggestion. We split up in groups and went to each room and read the book with the children. Afterwards we all met up and had two college kids act out a skit about brushing their teeth. The school had also mentioned that a lot of the kids did not have a toothbrush at home. So we collected enough for all the students at all locations. (approx. 457). We also had snacks for the children.

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### **EWI of Dayton**

We held our Reading Rally in October, 2009. We have 'adopted' a charter school. During the summer I consulted with a language arts teacher at our school and she recommended The Secret Life of Bees. I obtained 25 copies from our local library and distributed them to the students who were interested in this 'book club'. The language arts teacher met weekly for discussion groups; interested members of EWI also read the book and participated in the final discussion celebration. Our EWI Chapter funded the catering for a special lunch for these special students. A lively discussion ensued. The students got to network with business women from the community. It definitely was a win-win for everyone.

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### **EWI of Detroit-Windsor**

During the month of October 2009, the children in grades 2-5 from Maybury Elementary School were given goals to complete 20 minutes per day of reading, for four weeks. The children were supplied with colorful log in sheets, and the teachers were supplied with a "Tinsel Town" box of trinkets for the children to take upon the completion of their reading goals each week. At the end of the four weeks, through the efforts of our teachers and volunteers reading to the children, along with their reading goals, the children were surprised with a EWI RED CARPET STAR READER AWARDS.



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The old saying “a picture is worth a thousands words”, left some of us speechless as we watched the expressions on the Star Readers and their peers, as they were called to walk the Red Carpet to receive their medal, book and certificate award for being either the Top Accelerated Reader, or the Most Improved Reader from grades 2-5.

EWI RED CARPET STAR READER AWARDS were supported by volunteers and staff from our member firms. These wonderful people who read to the children, participated in a room activity, and cheered them on for being a Star Reader.

Approximately 200 children participated in this event, along with approximately 60 parents. The Red Carpet setting included a red carpet, Hollywood signs, lights, and capturing the excitement of these children from grades 2-5 with group photos.

In March 2010, for four weeks we also provided a reading program for grades K-1. The same goals of reading for 20 minutes a day for four weeks were given to the children. Every Monday the teachers were given a “teaser sheet” with items from a book to talk about during the week. This helped get the children excited about what book would be read to them on Fridays when our “Mystery Readers” came to their classrooms. On the last Friday in March, the children assembled in the gym and the EWI volunteers presented them all with a medal, book and certificate for completing their reading goals.

Many of our Chapter members and their firms’ staff personnel played a huge part in the success of this event.

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### **EWI of Honolulu**

Our EWI of Honolulu 2009 Reading Rally was held on Saturday, October 17, from 11 a.m.-1 p.m., at Barnes & Noble Bookstore - Kahala Mall. Volunteers participated by donating their time to read a book/help with a craft (card making)/snack distribution. The following items were donated by our member firms: cookies, juice, hotdogs, and coloring books/crayons. We were also lucky to have Sheri's husband dress up as Tigger which highlighted our event. We printed a flyer in our monthly publication to recruit volunteers. Please let me know if you need any other information.

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### **EWI of Indianapolis**

“Take Flight and Soar to New Heights” – that was the theme for the Reading Rally held on October 16<sup>th</sup> at the Central Catholic School for 81 students in the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grades. Ironically, the SOAR stands for Successful Outstanding Awesome Readers! With the help of storyteller, Cindy Childers from the Shelby Branch Library, we shared the book “*The Soaring Feather*” with the students. Students were engaged in the story of a little bird looking for his soaring feather. Prior to the Reading Rally, students had the opportunity to write their own story. One winner from each grade was selected by EWI members and awarded a prize. After the event, Principal Sara Browning shared that for at least two of the winning students, this was a tremendous self-esteem boost for them!



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All of this could not have been orchestrated without the generosity and assistance of many. The EWI membership came through, once again, and overwhelmingly provided most of the school supplies (or a monetary donation) needed for the classroom baskets which included hand sanitizer, books, snacks, binders, hats, gloves, scarves, and lots of teacher supplies. For a school where about 70% of the students have reduced or free tuition, we were able to share our soaring feathers with them.

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### **EWI Kansas City**

For the past several years our chapter has held our Reading Rally at the Salvation Army Children's Center here in KC. The Center provides lodging for children who have had to be taken out of their home for various reasons. The Center can house up to 20 children ranging in age from infancy to 18 years old. Membership had generously donated books of all sizes, shapes, difficulty levels, etc. before our event. Those members participating met at the Salvation Army Children's Center on October 28<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. to join the children residing there for dinner (this year we provided pizza and cookies). We hosted 14 children of various ages this year.

We invited a wonderful storyteller from the Kansas City Public Library who gets all ages involved in her stories. Everyone enjoyed Nancy Stegeman, re-enact "*The Ghost With One Black Eye*", "*There Was an Old Woman Who Ate a Fly*" and several other stories. They all seem to love her! After storytelling, the children are allowed to choose 3-4 books and are given a Reading Rally t-shirt. The rest of the donated books are given to the Center to be distributed to other children throughout the year. We usually have a nice turnout of members who enjoy coming and participating in this event.

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### **EWI of Knoxville**

**EWI of Knoxville** has partnered with Weekend Academy for the fifth consecutive year to promote literacy through EWI's Reading Rally "Be A Leader-Be A Reader" program.

**Weekend Academy** fills a special purpose since very few programs in existence focus on the career and future goals of elementary-aged children. The Academy uniquely encourages the joy of learning without focus on tests or grades. While we want students to have fun, we do not just provide recreation. Our participants have been specifically chosen for a three-year period of integrated-subject activities designed to support their academic endeavors. Our students have the benefit long-term commitment from caring adults.

### **Vision Statement**

Weekend Academy provides students with enriched hands-on learning opportunities that support education, increase knowledge of community and business relations, and foster preparation for various future career choices.

### **Mission Statement**

The Weekend Academy is a Saturday enrichment program dedicated to enhancing learning for select students in grades 3-5 from Title One Schools by:

- Increasing self-esteem and zest for life-long learning;



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- Empowering parents with resources for present and future educational support;
- Equipping students to take advantage of future career and life opportunities.

EWI of Knoxville was the first Weekend Academy site, launched in 1996. Since that time, hundreds of students have been positively influenced by the Weekend Academy. Over the years, many graduates who started as 3rd graders have stayed involved as tutor leaders or junior tutor leaders through their middle and high school years. As a result, the Knoxville Academy is a true family unit. Some families that have had students come “full circle” are: the Banks’, the Carters, the Harkins/ Lohreys, the Hills, the Ingrams and the Brights.

We currently partner with the following schools who nominate our 3rd graders: Sarah Moore Greene Magnet School, Dogwood Elementary and Green Magnet School. Knoxville Tutor Leaders are from South Doyle High School, West High School, Austin-East Magnet High School, Farragut High School and Fulton High School. Knoxville Chapter staff includes teachers Ellen Banks and George White, Coordinator Lisa McClain, and Tutor Leaders from the high schools mentioned above.

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### **EWI of Lehigh Valley**

EWI of Lehigh Valley has decided to partner with North East Ministries in a less affluent part of the area. Steve Godbolt who runs the facility has been very happy with our partnership.

Last year in August we held our meeting there, met with the children, brought books and read with them. We then decided to continue working with them and held a Holiday Party Reading Rally in December. The members brought books, did crafts, had pictures with Santa, followed by the reading of the book, *“Twas the Night Before Christmas”*, by the chapter president and some of the older children at the location. A great time was had by all.

We are looking to host such an event at least 3 times a year. We are in the process of planning such a rally on May 1, 2010. The children love the program, the parents love the program, but mostly the member firms love to get involved in the community.

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### **EWI of Little Rock**

EWI of Little Rock has for many years collaborated with the Center for Youth and Families for our reading rally. We host a day of fun, food, games and reading for children of incarcerated parents. We usually have a theme based on the book title.

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### **EWI of Long Beach**

EWI of Long Beach has adopted a middle school. Using philanthropic funds we pay a book author to read to the students, and the students create their own book. We then have an ice cream social, and the students receive a book and a t-shirt. It is during the week after school at the school for about 60 students.

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### **EWI of Milwaukee**

In 2009, EWI of Milwaukee worked with a member-firm in place of holding an actual reading rally. Our member-firm, Milwaukee Achiever Literacy Services, works with people of all ages (and works extensively with adults) to teach them to read. We raised money to pay for reading tutors, had individuals who spent time working with adult literacy “clients” at different times throughout the year, and collected nearly 1800 books for the firm.

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### **EWI of Minneapolis**

We do not hold an actual Reading Rally, we generally donate a sum determined by the Philanthropy committee to a literacy project of a women's based organization. The last two years it has gone to a battered women's shelter to provide them library supplies and a computer.

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### **EWI of Mobile**

#### **2009**

The EWI of Mobile Reading Rally was held on February 3, 2009 at the Penelope House. Representatives from our Chapter donated over 140 Books, 45 coloring books, 32 boxes of crayons, and other items such as notebooks, activity books, flash cards, pens, scissors, rulers, markers, stickers, and Mardi Gras beads.

The children were very excited as they each selected books they would keep for their very own. The younger children were delighted to be read to while the older children enjoyed reading books to our volunteers. We ended the event with a pizza party and all the children were given gift bags filled with goodies donated by members. Additional books and supplies were donated to the Penelope House for use in their new library and Art Therapy Classes. Penelope House is a non-profit organization, to help victims of domestic violence regain social and economic independence. The Family Violence Center is the only shelter for battered women and children in Mobile, Alabama. Services offered by Penelope House include advocacy, community education, counseling, on-site medical care, schools prevention education, transitional living, and victims' support groups.

#### **2010**

The EWI of Mobile Reading Rally was held on February 23, 2010 at the Sybil Smith Family Village. This year's Reading Rally took the place of our regular chapter meeting in an effort to get 100% participation



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from our members. Representatives met for a quick dinner at the Dew Drop Inn and then caravanned to the Shelter.

Representatives from our Chapter donated books, art supplies, DVDs and other goodies for the children. Additional books were donated to the Sybil Smith Family Village for use in their media center.

The children were very excited as they each selected books they would keep for their very own. The younger children were delighted to be read to while the older children enjoyed reading books to our volunteers. We ended the event with cupcakes and refreshments for all the children and their mothers and all the children were given book bags filled with books and supplies donated by members.

The Sybil H. Smith Family Village transitional housing program seeks to help homeless families establish and maintain self-sufficiency. The program combines transitional housing of up to 24 months with on-site support services to help overcome critical obstacles as well as referrals to other community agencies and institutions as needed to complete the self-sufficiency program.

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### **EWI of Northwest Arkansas**

We hold our Reading Rally at the Boys and Girls Club in Fayetteville AR – many disadvantage kids are there. We have a ready made audience that way and the club helps us control the kids. We host up to 6 different groups broken out by age and solicit high school athletics and local celebrities to read to the kids. We buy (or seek donations) a book for each child and fix a “goodie” bag that includes things from our member firms, candy, pencils, erasers, book markers etc. Many times the kids are so excited to have a book of their very own.

Last year we were on the front page of both papers!

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### **EWI of Omaha** **submitted by Bobbie Tvrdik**

At 4:30 pm, on October 20th, EWI of Omaha hosted a Reading Rally at Girls, Inc. for 23 little 9 and 10 year olds who bounced into a classroom with amazing energy and questions. Five EWI reps, along with Shannon Dunning managed to draw their attention to Shirley Gunderson (College of St. Mary) who captivated them with her reading of “*When Donkey’s Fly*”.

Later the girls were each presented with the book, a t-shirt and a goody bag filled with stickers, pencils and 3x5 cards. We asked the girls to write down goals they would like to achieve within the next year, or even longer. The cards were given to Girls, Inc. staff that will redistribute them to the girls a year from now.

Special thanks goes to OPPD for donating the cost of twelve of the books and to Darlis Vauble, Cheryl Hahn (Woodmen), Shirley Gunderson, Gail Thompson (College of St. Mary) who were there to make the day memorable for the girls.

If you would like to see more photos and information from the reading Rally, you can go to Girls Inc.’s



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website under gossip blog for more pictures and comments from the girls. ([www.girlsincomaha.org](http://www.girlsincomaha.org))

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### **EWI of Richmond**

EWI of Richmond partners with our member firm, Virginia Commonwealth University. VCU offered their beautiful historic "Scott House" for us to hold our Reading Rally. We partner with the Boys & Girls Club for an after school literacy program monthly. We invited these children (from the one specific Boys & Girls Club we work with) for our reading rally. We purchased the EWI Reading Rally book for all students to take home. We gave extra copies to the Boys & Girls Club for their library for the kids to read. We did an arts & craft project and they took home the bookmarks they made. We had a catered lunch, and some guest performers (karate and dancers) that taught the kids a few poses. We had a police officer come and talk to the kids. At the end we read the book "*When Donkey's Fly*" and sent the kids home with their copy and a goody bag of pencils, markers, etc.

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### **EWI of Salt Lake City**

This year EWI of Salt Lake City was thrilled to be working with Academy Park Elementary's Literacy Night, in conjunction with our annual local Reading Rally. Academy Park's student body contains a high percentage of English as a second language, students. Academy Park has designed events such as the Literacy Night to help provide a way for both parents and students to discover both the joy of learning and reading. EWI volunteers assisted teachers and staff with reading stories aloud to children, making bookmarks, creating comic strips and participating in a children's literacy theater. Many thanks to our member firm Send Out Cards, to arranging to have our very own reading clown dressed to the nines and ready to provide balloon animals to every participant.

Due to generous donations, EWI of Salt Lake City donated approximately 800 books to Academy Park's new library space. The whole library used to be housed in a single classroom, but with the new remodel it is now a place where all the students can experience the joy of reading. In addition to the books, our chapter member firms helped fill 30 "Teacher Appreciation" boxes with donated highlighters, pens, post-its, rulers, hand sanitizer, flashlights and other fun goodies.

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### **EWI of Spokane**

EWI of Spokane usually holds two reading rallies in a year...last year we held one at the Boys and Girls Club where we gave out canvas bags, poster boards and a variety of books to the children.



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### **Overview of Boys & Girls Clubs Reading Rally Event**

3:15 Meeting of volunteer workers to review event processes

4:00 Introduction to children done by B&G Club Staff

4:15 Split into separate rooms by grade

\*\* Grades K – 3 children divided up evenly into 3 rooms. Volunteers read “*When Donkey’s Fly*” to children, then children decorated poster boards with “What I Want to Be” theme. Color sheets, stickers and craft supplies will be provided. Children took home posters, books and color sheets.

\*\* Grades 4 – 6 children split into separate rooms by grade. They were given “fill in the blank” poems written by Kenn Nesbitt and were given the time to fill them out. All the students then came together with the volunteers to put words on the board. This was a game for them to see what words they could rhyme. Children decorated canvas bags with glitter and puffy paint and took home the bags and a Kenn Nesbitt book.

5:00 Children returned to the center room for a Ben & Jerry Ice Cream Party.

Our second reading rally was held for 3 participating elementary schools (Browne, Finch, and Ridgeview). 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students are invited to attend the Reading Rally at one of the schools. This year, the event was held at Finch on Saturday, October 17, from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon.

**Kenn Nesbitt**, a well known poet read from several of his books bringing laughter to students and parents alike. He explained his process of weaving real or imagined events into poems and cleverly makes it sound simple. Students are quick to find their own ideas and begin the writing process themselves as Kenn moves among the young writers adding further inspiration! Book-making supplies were provided as well as a snack and t-shirt! Prizes were awarded at a later time for the best writing at each grade level.

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### **EWI of St. Paul**

Our Reading Rally the past 2 years has been held at a local small library in a diverse neighborhood in West St. Paul. It is done on a smaller scale since our chapter is smaller. We put up posters and start advertising at the library about 3 weeks in advance for kids to come. We have a local children’s book author come in and read their book (we have not had to pay them, they do it for free). We then give out copies of their book to the children participating and we also give a backpack that is full of school supplies to each child. The back packs are donated by our chapter and we ask local companies (office supply store etc.) to donate the school supplies. We spend about 3 hours at the library with set up, the reading and handing out the gifts and snacks etc. I would say the past couple years we have had about 20-25 children at each event.

Terry Thomas

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### **EWI of Tucson**

This year we partnered with a local children’s author and the Tucson Festival of Books at the University of Arizona. The author met with 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders from an underprivileged school, read from her book and spoke with the children about what it takes to be an author and sent them home with a folder to start



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a journal. Each child was given an autographed copy of the book to take home. The children and their families were thrilled. We were lucky enough to find an author that donated her time and we purchased the books. We also provided lunch (donated Pizza, Subway sandwiches, Doubletree cookies, apples, water). After our event the children and their families were able to experience the festival of books on the University campus.

In the past we collected (asked our members to raid their home libraries for books no longer used by their children) and purchased books to furnish the library of local Boys and Girls clubs and held a Friday Pizza night when we presented the books.

Both events were fun and well appreciated. Budget for each event approx. \$500 - \$1,000.

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