



**BACKGROUND OF THE ROTARACT CLUB OF BIRMINGHAM FOUNDATION**

Rotaract is a junior Rotary club. Founded in March 2004, the Rotaract Club of Birmingham positively impacts our community by developing the next generation of civic leaders. We have quickly grown to over 165 members (under the age of 35) and become the largest Rotaract club in the world. We offer the highest quality opportunities for personal, professional, and community development. Our motto is “Learn, Socialize, Serve.”

We are sponsored by the 550 member Downtown Rotary Club of Birmingham and Rotary International, a network of over 1.2 million civic leaders across 40,000 clubs in 200 countries.

The Rotaract Club of Birmingham Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public foundation which raises funds to support the Rotaract Club’s service works. 100% of the Rotaract Club’s membership contributes financially to the Foundation. Further, over 800 individuals, 27 corporations, and 12 foundations have given funds to support the service projects of the Rotaract Club of Birmingham, such as its first signature service project, the international award-winning Ready 2 Read.

The Rotaract Club of Birmingham Foundation is currently raising funds to endow maintenance of Ready 2 Read and to seed its second signature service project, currently in development.

**SIGNATURE SERVICE PROJECT OVERVIEW**

A “signature service project” develops leadership skills for our young professional members by allowing them to research, design, and execute innovative, long-term solutions that have a measurable impact on the critical needs in our community. We are currently researching our club’s second signature service project, as well as maintaining our first signature service project, Ready 2 Read.

Ready 2 Read is currently inspiring reading readiness for 4,000 children a year in our city center, benefitting every 2<sup>nd</sup> grader in the Birmingham City Schools. The project was honored with Rotary International’s Outstanding Rotaract Service Project Award in 2009, the highest service award given to Rotaract clubs in the world.

**The Need: Elementary Literacy**

"For children to be successful in school and beyond, they need a firm footing in basic reading skills"- *Community Counts*, p. 79. The measure:

<b>SAT, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading Percentile Scores</b>		
<b>School System</b>	<b>02-03 Year</b>	<b>08-09 Year</b>
Mountain Brook City Schools	83	84
United States Average	50	50
Alabama Average	44	53
<i>Birmingham City Schools</i>	26	36

*Source: Alabama Department of Education, Accountability Reporting System*



**Basic reading skills in Birmingham’s elementary schools are dangerously low.** Without a firm footing, children often fall behind for life. In some states, second grade reading levels are used to predict future workforce readiness, higher education capacity, and prison capacity.

## ROTARACT CLUB OF BIRMINGHAM FOUNDATION

### The Solution: Classroom Libraries + Reading Buddies

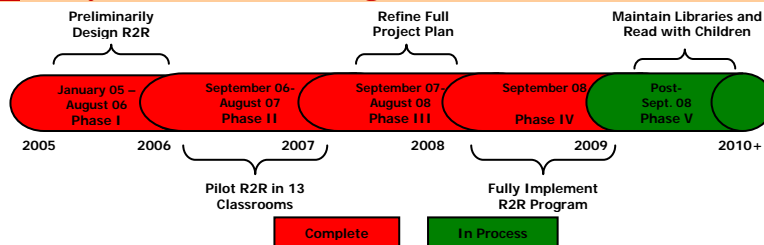
Ready 2 Read is *inspiring 4,000 students every year to read* by endowing every 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom in our Birmingham City Schools with an excellent library and Reading Buddy.

Studies show that when books are placed in close proximity to classroom activity, time spent reading increases by as much as **60%**. Ready 2 Read places relevant and challenging books into all 127 local 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms.

Ready 2 Read is also bringing a community volunteer into each classroom every month to *read with the children*. This creates over 1,000 volunteer reading hours per year!



### The Timeline: Every Classroom + Reading Role Models + Annual Maintenance



### The Cost: \$242,000

The total program cost is \$242,000. This includes \$13,000 to pilot the program, \$114,000 to purchase the library materials for the remaining classrooms, \$100,000 to endow ongoing maintenance, and \$15,000 for Literacy Celebration.

Thanks to discounts we have negotiated with our book sponsor, funding per classroom will be *leveraged 1.67x* to provide leveled, curriculum-based non-fiction and fiction books for individual reading, designed to be fun and relevant



### The Partnerships: Educators, Vendors, Literacy Community, and Sponsors

Rotaract began by involving local teachers, reading coaches, principals, and central administrators in the project planning process to ensure that the solution created would meet the needs and goals of their schools.

Then the club negotiated significant discounts from our book vendor, The Booksource, allowing us to leverage our sponsors' dollars 1.67x.

We have a partnership with Better Basics, a United Way agency, to provide training and administration of our "Reading Role Models," as well as to warehouse and refurbish the libraries each summer.

All of this has been made possible by the generous financial support of many community-leading financial sponsors. We have raised over \$200,000 to date from 800 individuals, 27 corporations, and 12 foundations. With your support we can ensure that the future generations enjoy the benefits of Ready 2 Read! Thank you!

