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Building literacy skills of at-risk children in poverty

It is a well-known fact that children raised in poverty are at risk for a number of challenges. One of these challenges is literacy deficits that can create long-term academic failure accompanied by negative life outcomes. This presentation describes a project to collect books and distribute them to at-risk children in poverty. Entitled Love Talk Read, the project has collected and donated books to children in poverty in the greater Sacramento area of California as well as other countries including Honduras, Samoa, the Philippines, Ecuador, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Nepal, the United Kingdom, China, Ukraine, Australia and Micronesia. The program encourages caregivers to daily show love to, talk to and read with their children to enhance their literacy skills for a brighter future. The World Literacy Foundation states that access to books is the greatest factor in academic success; without access to books, it is impossible to build adequate literacy skills. Statistics indicate that in some areas, the average middle-class child has 13+ books in the home while in areas impacted by poverty; there is one book for every 300 children. For fourth graders who reach the end of the school year reading below grade level, approximately 2/3rd of them will end up in prison or on welfare. The average prisoner in the United States does not read above the fourth grade level. This session describes how to collect and donate books to at-risk children in poverty, with an emphasis on practical strategies for doing so. Audience members will leave with specific suggestions for how to start their own book drives and donate the books to at-risk children in their local communities.

Biography

Celeste Roseberry-McKibbin has received her Doctorate from Northwestern University. She is a Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders at California State University, Sacramento. She is also currently a part-time itinerant Speech Pathologist in San Juan Unified School District, where she provides direct services to students from preschool through high school. She has worked in educational and medical settings with a wide variety of clients ranging from preschoolers through geriatric patients. She serves homeless persons in her community through direct work on the streets. Her primary research interests are in the areas of assessment and treatment of culturally and linguistically diverse students with communication disorders as well as service delivery to students from low-income backgrounds. She has over 70 publications, including 15 books and has made over 300 presentations at the local, state, national and international levels. She is a Fellow of ASHA and winner of ASHA's Certificate of Recognition for Special Contributions in Multicultural Affairs. She has received the national presidential Daily Point of Light Award for her volunteer work in building literacy skills of children in poverty.

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