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Charity Navigator Awards Highest Rating to Reach Out and Read ***Fifth consecutive 4-star rating places ROR in top 4% of charities nationwide***

(BOSTON, MA) October 2, 2009 – Charity Navigator, America’s premier charity evaluator, today awarded its highest rating of 4 stars to Reach Out and Read, the evidence-based national nonprofit that works with doctors and nurses to promote early literacy. This is the fifth consecutive year that Reach Out and Read has received Charity Navigator’s “exceptional” rating – a distinction shared by only 4% of charities nationwide.

Each year, Charity Navigator evaluates the fiscal management and responsibility of America’s nonprofit organizations. Its 4-star rating is only awarded to a charity that “consistently executes its mission in a fiscally responsible way, and outperforms most other charities in America.”

Ken Berger, President and CEO of Charity Navigator, said, “This ‘exceptional’ designation from Charity Navigator differentiates Reach Out and Read from its peers and demonstrates to the public it is worthy of their trust.”

Founded in 1989, Reach Out and Read (ROR) is one of the most successful early childhood interventions ever developed and currently serves 3.8 million infants, toddlers, and preschoolers at more than 4,500 locations nationwide. Reach Out and Read trains medical providers at hospitals, health centers, and clinics in the ROR model, which includes talking with parents about reading aloud at every checkup from 6 months to 5 years. The tips for parents are accompanied by a new, age-appropriate book for every child at every checkup, starting with board books for babies, and moving on to more complex picture books for preschoolers. Each child who participates in Reach Out and Read will start kindergarten with a home library of up to 10 books, and with parents who understand the importance of reading.

“This honor belongs to the thousands of doctors, nurses, staff, and volunteers who enable Reach Out and Read to serve millions of children and families in need at such a low cost,” said Earl Martin Phalen, CEO of Reach Out and Read. “Their work in service of Reach Out and Read’s mission—to ensure that all children arrive at school ready to learn and ready to read—is what makes it possible for every donation to ROR, no matter the size, to have a significant impact on the lives of the families and communities we serve.”

Research shows that Reach Out and Read parents are up to ten times more likely to read more to their young children. Children who participate in Reach Out and Read have an approximate six-month developmental advantage in language over their peers by the time they are 2 years old. Because Reach Out and Read’s doctors and nurses volunteer the time they spend on early literacy, the total cost of the full, five-year ROR program is only \$40.00 per child.

Since the first Reach Out and Read book was handed out in 1989, more than 52,000 pediatricians, family practitioners, and pediatric nurse practitioners have been trained in the ROR model. Today, Reach Out and Read partners with 4,535 hospitals, clinics, health centers, and practices in all 50 states to serve more than 3.8 million children ages 6 months to 5 years old, including more than a quarter of America’s most impoverished children. For further information, visit ROR’s website at www.reachoutandread.org.

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