



PRESS RELEASE

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LITERACY NONPROFIT MERGER BRINGS PROMISE OF MUTUAL GROWTH

San Francisco based nonprofit Mission Learning Center merges with national nonprofit Reading Partners to provide literacy programs to more students in the Mission district of San Francisco

Oakland, Calif. (August 15, 2011) – As its 40th anniversary approaches, Mission Learning Center will be merging with Reading Partners this year to expand services for K-5th students in San Francisco. This partnership of literacy nonprofits will result in a powerful program that strengthens Mission Learning Center’s well-established after-school curriculum with Reading Partner’s far-reaching distribution network and proven one-on-one literacy tutoring program.

Benefits of this merger will begin with the start of the school year, when Reading Partners adds its proven one-to-one literacy tutoring to the Mission Learning Center’s after-school program at L.R. Flynn Elementary School in San Francisco’s Mission District. Students who are reading significantly below grade level will be enrolled in Mission Learning Center’s after-school literacy enrichment program and will also receive one-to-one literacy instruction at the Reading Partners reading center. By fall 2012, these programs will be completely integrated.

Both nonprofits’ missions focus on childhood literacy by providing extra support and instruction to young students who are reading below grade level. Mission Learning Center champions childhood literacy as a vehicle to promote a life-long passion for learning, encourage family engagement and provide children with the means to attain a higher quality of life. The mission at Reading Partners is to help children become lifelong readers by empowering communities to provide individualized instruction with measurable results.

Mary Nelson, Mission Learning Center’s board president, says of the merger: “it provides the opportunity to expand our successful model of achieving quantifiable gains in children’s literacy to a much larger base of students given Reading Partner’s national footprint. At the same time, we will continue to serve the children and families in the Mission District of San Francisco as we have for nearly 40 years. This merger brings together two organizations with a shared mission to help improve the quality of life for children through literacy.” Reading Partners’ CEO, Michael Lombardo, also feels that “ultimately, this merger is going to allow us to serve more students, and that’s what matters.”

In recent years, mergers have become recognized as a relatively cost-effective way for nonprofits to strengthen effectiveness, spread best practices, and expand reach. The merger between Reading Partners and Mission Learning Center is intended to do just that, as these organizations strengthen each other with the shared goal of improving childhood literacy. The two organizations began integrating back office functions in August 2010, and have already established effective systems in accounting and development. “MLC teachers are really pleased to begin working with Reading Partners to expand and improve both of our programs. The community counts on us, and knowing that the administration transition is nearly seamless allows us to jump into program integration,” said MLC executive director, Alexis Filippini. This merger is made possible by grants from the Grove Foundation and the SeaChange-Lodestar Fund for Nonprofit Collaboration.

About Reading Partners

Reading Partners is a literacy intervention nonprofit, serving 60 schools throughout California, Washington DC, and New York City with over 3,000 volunteer tutors. According to pre- and post-program assessments, the organization has an 88% success rate in narrowing achievement gaps for children who have fallen behind in reading skills; on average, Reading Partners students gain an entire grade level for every 26 hours of one-on-one tutoring they receive. For more information, visit www.readingpartners.org.

About Mission Learning Center

Mission Learning Center champions childhood literacy as a vehicle to promote a life-long passion for learning, encourage family engagement, and provide children with the means to attain a higher quality of life. Since 1972, Mission Learning Center has been serving children and families in the Mission neighborhood of San Francisco through after-school and summer literacy programs. These programs show remarkable results: participating children advance, on average, two grade levels in reading ability in just seven months. For more information, visit www.mlcsf.org.

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CONTACT: **Rebecca Kim, Development Associate**
510.444.9800
rkim@readingpartners.org