



A literacy program helping incarcerated parents stay connected with their children

IN THE NEWS

Fall 2024

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"Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope." —Kofi Annan

In Memory of Leah Dunn



It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to Leah Dunn, Vice President of our Remain in Touch Board of Directors. Leah passed away in early May of cancer. During her illness she fought valiantly while continuing to fulfill her role completely on our board. She was wise, dedicated, and totally invested in the Remain in Touch

program since its inception in 2016. She was warm, caring, and the dearest of friends to us all. Leah is greatly missed.

The Benefits of Reading Aloud

Research highlighting the benefits of reading to children aloud is nothing new. We came across an article dated August 1990 by Mary Jo Kochakian of the *Hartford Courant*. Kochakian cited author Jim Trelease, who wrote *The New Read-Aloud Handbook*. Here are some excerpts:

- Overwhelmingly the research has shown that the single best way to reach and motivate the reluctant reader is to read to the child.
- Every time you read to a child, you're advertising how pleasurable reading can be. That's where reading aloud comes in.
- **Don't stop!** The problem is, even parents who do read to their children often stop way too soon. It's really not until about fourth grade that reading skills come together.
- Reading is an accrued skill. "The more you do, the better you get at it. The better you get at it, the more you like it."



STRAIGHT FROM THE SOURCE

After reading books for his three children, an inmate father had tears in his eyes as he said,

"I have never been away from my children like this. It has been a wakeup call for me. I have to change my ways because my actions affect other people."

An inmate whose children have been receiving books from **Remain in Touch** for several months commented to the Facilitator,

"My wife and I plan on donating, as this has meant so much to our children."

An incarcerated parent commented after the recording session,

"Thank you so much. You don't know how much this means. I want to do something to give back."

And this, from yet another inmate:

"...These books are amazing...The book comes in the mail and my wife takes it to pick up our daughter from school and she is so excited to listen to it."

Now, from one of our Facilitators:

"It was inmate Bobby's last time recording and he wanted to tell 'you girls' [the Facilitators] how much this meant to his family. 'You are amazing' he said. He and his wife are going support the Remain in Touch program."



Postal worker to Remain in Touch Facilitator who was mailing books:

Oh! You are one of those women! What you do is really special!



- Children develop literacy skills long before they read.
- Young children who are read to regularly have a larger vocabulary, a stronger foundation of language awareness, and literacy skills at a younger age.
- Children who are read to regularly by family members experience social-emotional gains and an increased likelihood of overall school success.

Where would we be without our partners?

Many thanks to our partner Mad Mike's for donating two used computers to **Remain in Touch**, plus the services required to suit our program's needs.



Brilliant Books and **Bay Books** continue to support **Remain in Touch** by featuring us periodically and offering a 20% discount on every book purchased for our program. Complete age-appropriate booklists for our **0-12** and **13-18** programs are always available in-store or online at Brilliant Books in Traverse City and in-store at Bay Books in Suttons Bay.



Dear Remain in Touch,
 Me and my family wanted to let you know how much the Remain in Touch Program means to us. It has been very hard for my girls to be away from their daddy. With this program I get to see my girls faces light up when a book and recording of their daddy reading the book gets received in the mail. It has really kept my girls positive through this separation and they have something to look forward to twice a month. Also our girls do not know he is in jail and don't understand why he is gone so sending the books and recordings show my girls that daddy is thinking of them and loves them very much! We are so thankful to Remain in Touch. They really are helping my family stay connected in this hard time we are going through.

As of September 15, 2024



334

incarcerated parents have selected and recorded books for their children.



488

children have received new books and recordings from their incarcerated parents.



1597

brand new books, along with recordings, have been delivered to children of incarcerated parents.



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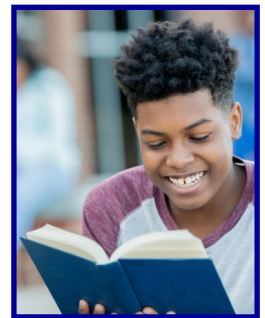
Remain in Touch is in grateful receipt of these recent gifts:

- **Cherryland Cares**—\$1,000 (pictured right)
- **Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Grant**—\$500
- **St. Andrews Presbyterian Church**—\$500
- **Suttons Bay Congregational Church**—\$1,500
- **St. Christopher's Episcopal Church**—\$700
- **All the individual donors** who generously contribute to the **Remain in Touch** literacy program



Visit our [website](#) for:

- a complete list of our partners & supporters
- the latest news about Remain in Touch
- a description of our program
- numerous ways that you can help
- secure online donation via PayPal
- a link to our complete booklists for ages 0-12 and 13-18 at Brilliant Books



Donate

Your generous support provides hope for incarcerated parents and their children! Please invest in a better future by donating online at :

www.remainintouch.org

or make your check payable to *Remain in Touch* and mail it to:

Remain in Touch
 P.O. Box 553
 Suttons Bay, MI 49682
 Ph: 231-499-0606

Email:

contactus@remainintouch.org

Thank you!

