

For Immediate Release

***READ 180* TURNS STRUGGLING READERS INTO ALL-STARS**

Scholastic Recognizes Nine READ 180® All-Star Award Recipients for Learning to Read, Staying in School and Improving Academic Performance

New York, NY, April 7, 2008 – Less than a week after [another alarming study](#) was released highlighting America’s high school dropout crisis, nine incredible students in grades 4 through 12 from schools nationwide have proven that it’s never too late to learn to read and get on the path to success in school. From Massachusetts to California, these students – having once struggled to read and at risk of becoming high school dropouts – have beaten the odds with the help of their amazing teachers, and become successful readers and students.

The America’s Promise Alliance released a report on April 1 showing that dropout rates now approach – and often exceed – 50 percent in the nation’s biggest cities. Nationally, only about 70 percent of students graduate high school on time, averaging close to 7,000 dropouts per day.

But there’s good news out there too.

The nine winners of the fifth annual [READ 180® All-Star Awards](#) were announced today by Scholastic, the global children’s publishing, education and media company and a leader in educational technology. The awards program was created to honor adolescents nationwide who have learned to read despite formidable odds. Through dedication and hard work – and the help of their incredible teachers – they have turned their lives around and are an inspiration to their peers nationwide.

While the recipients of the awards range in age, home state and background, they share similar stories with other struggling readers – poor reading skills resulting in low self-esteem, low achievement levels and the possibility of becoming high school dropouts. Some of the award winners faced additional hurdles: learning English as a second language, special education classification or physical and emotional challenges. Now, they have each accomplished something remarkable—raising their reading scores, feeling more confident in class, boosting their grades, and passing their excitement onto others—and they all have plans to attend college.

“It’s never too late for students to discover that they can learn to read. These amazing *READ 180 All-Stars* are proof of that,” said Margery Mayer, President, Scholastic Education. “We are so proud of the achievements of these students. By learning to read, they have opened up a world of possibilities for themselves and have given themselves the chance for a bright future.

The 2008 READ 180 All-Star Award winners are:

High School

Sara Diaz Nava

- Age: 16 – Lake Havasu City, AZ
- Sara was a gifted student in Mexico, but when she moved to the U.S. the language barrier made school difficult. Now she’s “the smart girl” again.

When Sara moved to the U.S. and began 1st grade in American schools, the daunting language barrier made school difficult. And by eighth grade, she was still getting mostly Ds and Fs. But her reading intervention class has taught her she can still be the “smart kid” she remembers being in Mexico. “Now that I had a chance to be in READ 180, it helped me a lot. It helped me to understand what I was reading, instead of just guessing,” Sara said.

Timothy “Malik” Risher

- Age: 16 – Houston, TX
- Six months ago, Malik had never read a book. Now he’s on the honor roll.

Former teachers say Malik used to be disruptive in class and hated school. The first book he picked off the shelf at the beginning of the year in READ 180 was *Slam*, by Walter Dean Myers. When he finished it, he told his teacher, “This is the first book I have read without pictures.” Six months later, he’s on the honor roll.

Roy Steffen

- Age: 17 – Blue Springs, MO
- He grew up in a rough neighborhood and failed his first year and a half of high school English. Now his grades are up and his sights are set on college.

Roy was so far behind in his reading skills that he was getting mostly Fs and Ds in his classes. But after a year in [READ 180](#), he’s earning As, Bs and Cs. “Roy has just recently begun talking about college,” his teacher, Kristi Williams, wrote. “He confided in me admitting that he never thought it would be possible.”

Middle School**Michael Hale**

- Age: 14 – Clarksville, TN
- A student classified as special education who used to resist reading, Michael is now one of the best readers in his class.

As a student classified as special education, Michael used to act out in class instead of asking for help. He told his teachers there was nothing they could do to make him read. On a path toward giving up, and perhaps eventually dropping out, Michael has made a remarkable turnaround while learning to read. “He has changed his attitude, his sense of self worth, and his life,” his nominating teacher, Laura Lipinski, wrote.

Johanna Moreno

- Age: 12 – New Britain, CT
- Knowing very little English made school next-to-impossible for Johanna. Now she reads to her brother and translates for her father.

When Johanna started in her *READ 180* class she had a history of poor behavior and struggled with reading and writing. Her transformation this year has been so dramatic that she was one of a select few students from her school to be accepted into a summer program that prepares middle school students for college. “I am happy because I have had the opportunity to learn a new language and also translate for my father when he needs help reading or understanding English,” Johanna said.

Burina Vann

- Age: 13 – Lawrence, MA
- A middle school girl who cared only about fitting in with the crowd is now a leader academically at her school – and proud of who she is.

Dealing with the pressures of middle school was difficult for Burina in the 6th grade. “I didn’t care much about school, just how I was going to fit in with the crowd,” she said. She failed some of her courses, and behaved poorly in class. But with intensive work on her reading, she has transformed. “I like to help others and my teacher even says I am a leader,” Burina said.

Elementary School

Britteney Bucellato-Olsen

- Age: 11 – Moreno Valley, CA
- From a first grade reading level to a sixth grade reading level in only a year and a half

Britteney had always struggled with reading and writing and, without successful intervention, might never have had a chance of succeeding. At the beginning of the fourth grade, Britteney’s reading scores showed she read below the first grade level, and after a year and a half of reading intervention, she is now reading with her fifth grade peers. And she’s spreading her new-found love of books by reading to her little brother.

Kevin Hofmann

- Age 10 – Manitowoc, WI
- He developed a stutter because he couldn’t read. Now he’s in his school’s gifted program, and his stutter is gone.

Kevin fell behind in school from the start, and struggled so much with reading that in as early as third grade he said he wanted to quit. Decoding basic words was so difficult for him that he developed a reading stutter, which eventually began to impact his speech. After a year and a half of hard work on his reading, Kevin is in his school’s gifted program – and his stutter is gone. “*READ 180* has helped me to gain confidence in myself and to know I can succeed,” Kevin said.

Adilene Zamora

- Age: 11 – Mableton, GA
- In just one year, Adilene has caught up to her peers – even though she only speaks English at school.

Like many non-English speakers who move to the U.S. as children, Adilene struggled to succeed in school and had trouble focusing and believing in her abilities. But today, after a year of *READ 180*, Adilene has caught up to her classmates, and her enthusiasm for reading is contagious.

The nine *READ 180* All-Stars will each receive a \$1,200 check from Scholastic to be used towards furthering their education, and the winning students’ nominating teachers will receive \$1,000 worth of Scholastic *READ 180* books and materials for their classrooms.

About Scholastic *READ 180*

Scholastic *READ 180*®, a reading intervention program for older struggling readers, is based on scientifically proven principles, offering intensive intervention for students in grades 4 through 12 who are reading at least two years below proficient level. *READ 180* offers rigorous and individualized reading instruction for 90 minutes through data-driven technology, teacher-directed instruction in whole and small groups, and leveled reading materials that reflect students’ interests and age.

READ 180 is one of the most thoroughly researched and documented reading intervention programs available today. Currently in use in over 11,000 classrooms nationwide, *READ 180* is the result of a collaborative effort between Vanderbilt University and the Orange County Public Schools in Florida. Response from numerous large-scale validation studies in Phoenix, AZ, Santa Rosa, FL, Los Angeles,

CA, Des Moines, IA and elsewhere are unequivocal in their findings – implementation of *READ 180* has resulted in solid gains in student reading scores.

About Scholastic

Scholastic Corporation (NASDAQ: SCHL) is the world's largest publisher and distributor of children's books and a leader in educational technology and children's media. Scholastic creates quality educational and entertaining materials and products for use in school and at home, including children's books, magazines, technology-based products, teacher materials, television programming, film, videos and toys. The Company distributes its products and services through a variety of channels, including proprietary school-based book clubs and school-based book fairs, retail stores, schools, libraries, television networks and the Company's Internet Site, www.scholastic.com.

Click here to learn more about [READ 180](#).

###

Contact:

Sarah Trabucchi, Scholastic, 212.343.6424 / strabucchi@scholastic.com

Tyler Reed, Scholastic, 212.343.6427 / treed@scholastic.com