

For Immediate Release

**STUDENTS READING BELOW GRADE LEVEL TWICE AS LIKELY TO
DROP OUT OF SCHOOL**

**READING INTERVENTION FOR STRUGGLING STUDENTS IN GRADES 4-12
ESSENTIAL TO ADDRESSING NATIONAL CRISIS**

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

New York, NY, April 24, 2006 – More than half of the nation’s elementary, middle and high school students are reading below the proficient level. The inability to read and write proficiently correlates to behavior problems, truancy and, all too often, dropping out of school. In fact, every school day in America 3,000 students drop out, the majority of whom are poor readers.

Today, Scholastic, the global children’s publishing, education and media company, announced the winners of the third annual **READ 180® All-Star Awards** created to honor students who have overcome the myriad of obstacles that have prevented them from reading and achieving academic success. As a result, these students are staying in school and turning their lives around. The recipients of the awards have experienced and tackled the same challenges that older struggling readers confront daily – poor reading skills resulting in low achievement, frustration, and low self-esteem. Some of the award winners faced additional hurdles: learning English as a second language, special education classification, or physical and emotional challenges.

“It’s never too late for students to learn to read and break the failure cycle so that they can stay in school, graduate and contribute in the workplace and in the world. The achievements of the READ 180 All-Stars are hard fought and deserving of recognition. Their success in school and their renewed commitment to learning can offer hope to millions of struggling readers, their families and teachers,” said Margery Mayer, President, Scholastic Education. “We salute all of the students nominated as READ 180 All-Stars because the true reward is already theirs – they have learned to read and opened up a world of possibilities for a bright future. They also serve as an example to struggling students everywhere: You *can* turn your life around. It *can* be done.”

The 2006 READ 180 All-Star Award winners are:

High School

Chelsea Bramble

Age: 15 – Sarasota, FL

Life in her neighborhood and lack of achievement in the early grades left Chelsea at an increased risk of dropping out of school. She entered high school reading at a low elementary school level, and Chelsea, herself, believed that, “there was nothing and no one who could tell me that I was going to make it in life.”

Chelsea has blossomed since she began receiving intensive reading intervention and has made several years of growth—today she is reading on grade level. Her principal shares, “I have never seen a transformation of such magnitude in a student, once they discovered that they could read and read well, as I have with Chelsea Bramble.” The ninth-grader agrees, “**I realize that I can really do anything that I put my mind to. I now have confidence in myself and in school, and I believe that I can go to college and pursue my dream.**”

Denzel Ngo

Age: 15 – Las Vegas, NV

Talking about his struggles in school, Denzel says, “It all started when I was a freshman in high school. I was getting into a lot of trouble. I was under a bad influence. I never looked forward to school.”

After only six months of reading intervention, however, Denzel has improved his reading by three grade levels. He has refocused his energies on succeeding in school and now actually enjoys school. According to Denzel’s teacher, Diane Carpenter, “Denzel now has a job after school and he has As and Bs in other classes—in which he had much lower grades.” Denzel recognizes the difference, **“READ 180 has made a big improvement in my life, such as: keeping me away from trouble, enjoying school, and not giving up. Giving up never crosses my mind.”**

Rodney Tutterow

Age: 16 – Little River, SC

In Rodney’s young life, he has faced numerous personal challenges, not the least of which was learning to read. Rodney had difficulty with reading from the earliest grades and, like many struggling readers, was placed in a Special Education program. Rodney reveals that, “At the beginning of the year, I was not doing well in school. I was failing classes and not paying attention.”

Rodney is finally receiving reading intervention. According to his teacher, Julie Martin, Rodney’s success manifests itself in “pondering questions, active participation and concern and care. Rodney is a student that wants to succeed.” Rodney is seeing firsthand how his strides in reading are changing his attitude in school. **“Everything is different now. I am not scared to read out loud anymore. I am learning to do better work.”**

Middle School

Jasmine Lewis

Age: 14 – Tyrone, GA

Teacher Kimberly Carter writes that, “Life challenges are commonplace in the days of Jasmine Lewis.” When Jasmine entered the 8th Grade, she was reading far below grade level and exhibited little confidence in her ability to succeed. Jasmine states, “For many years, I was shy and had a huge fear of reading out loud in class.”

“Over the course of the year,” writes Ms. Carter, “the light bulb has come on. Fear no longer prevents Jasmine from making an effort to learn, and her grades across core classes have risen throughout the year—she has fought to be the best student she possibly can.” When given the chance to talk about her recent academic success, Jasmine says, “I’ve been given a new start and a new confidence in school. **I am a new student!**”

Jimmy Li

Age: 14 – New York, NY

The child of Chinese immigrants on New York City’s Lower East Side, Jimmy has little contact with English speakers outside of school, and has little exposure to the world beyond his neighborhood. A student classified as Special Education, Jimmy has always struggled in school, but perseveres because he “wants a better future for himself and his family.”

Jimmy's teacher, Holly Obernauer, notices a number of changes in Jimmy since his reading improved, **"the most significant change I see in Jimmy is that he is beginning to value himself as a learner and a young man with valid opinions. It is evident that Jimmy's enthusiasm for reading has done a true 180."**

McKenzie Morales

Age: 13 – Raytown, MO

At the beginning of the 7th Grade, McKenzie's struggle with reading affected all her core classes. Says McKenzie, **"I hated school and reading, but that changed about a year and a half ago."**

McKenzie was reading on a low elementary school level when she entered 7th grade. Today, she reads on grade level and now includes her English class among her favorite things about school. One of her teachers, Charlise Prosser, states that, as McKenzie's reading improved, "her self-confidence grew—and she is now a positive, happy, avid reader." McKenzie speaks proudly of her recent transformation, **"My experience learning to read was amazing...I wish I could find a way to thank READ 180 and my two amazing teachers for what they have done. My future is brighter and clearer, and I couldn't be more thankful."**

Elementary School

Lennon Gomez

Age: 10 – Huntington Beach, CA

Despite the support of his concerned family, Lennon struggled to learn to read and entered 5th Grade as a beginning reader. Since he began reading intervention, says his teacher, Katherine Smith, **"Lennon has made tremendous growth in reading. His infectious excitement inspires his classmates to try harder and to make the most of their school day. He gives 110% everyday."**

"All teachers have experienced the 'Ah-ha!' moment when a child suddenly announces to the room, 'I get it!' With Lennon Gomez, these epiphanies are a daily occurrence," writes Ms. Smith. Lennon is proud of the progress he has made in his reading, and recognizes that he is improving every day. **"I am really happy I am learning to read, and my parents are proud of me, too!"** Lennon's new mantra is, **"I can read!"**

Adam Kozeal

Age 11 – Anchorage, AK

A naturally shy child, Adam transferred into his school's Special Education program this year as a fifth grader. In the minority as a Yupik, Alaskan Native and with little knowledge of life outside of Alaska, Adam struggled to open up to other students and his teachers. Through reading intervention, Adam began to blossom and learned to read.

"Adam seems hungry for knowledge," writes his teacher, Mary Jean McCall, **"his confidence in himself has increased tremendously."** Adam agrees, **"I used to have a hard time in school, but now, I like to read! My grades in other classes have gone up as well."**

Raul Martinez

Age: 10 – McAllen, TX

Raul, an English Language Learner, has had to struggle to understand English on his own and set an example for his younger siblings. At the beginning of the year, he was performing at a low elementary school level, but today reads at a fifth grade level. Raul says, **“I used to be shy getting up in front of the class, but now it is a piece of cake!”**

“Raul cannot wait for the next reading moment!” writes one of his teachers, Veronica Gonzales, **“The minute he finishes a book, he wants to go straight to the library to find another.”** When asked about his reading, Raul is excited to say, “READ 180 has definitely turned me around! **I have read 13 books and I am not stopping!”**

The nine READ 180 All-Stars will each receive a \$1,000 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 intensive and individualized reading instruction for 90 minutes through data-driven technology, teacher-directed instruction, 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 7000 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, and Des Moines, IA are unequivocal in their findings – implementation of READ 180 has resulted in solid gains in student reading scores.

More information is available at www.scholastic.com/read180.

About Scholastic Education

Scholastic Education is a leader in the education marketplace, providing learning solutions for students through research-based technology products and multimedia supplemental instructional materials that support student achievement in grades pre-K through high school. Grounded in the most current scientific research, Scholastic Education develops technology products and services that include instruction, intervention, assessment, instruction, data management and professional development.

About Scholastic

Scholastic Corporation (NASDAQ: SCHL) is the world's largest publisher and distributor of children's books and a leader in educational technology. 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, school-based book fairs, and school-based and direct-to-home continuity programs; retail stores, schools, libraries and television networks; and the Company's Internet site, www.scholastic.com.

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