

**For Immediate Release**

**FIVE ADOLESCENT STRUGGLING READERS RECEIVE NATIONAL AWARD  
FOR OVERCOMING CHALLENGES, RAISING TEST SCORES, AND  
IMPROVING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE**

***Scholastic READ 180® All-Star Awards Recognize Outstanding Achievements of Students with  
Reading Challenges Including Special Education and English as a Second Language***

New York, NY, May 10, 2004 – More than half of the nation’s elementary, middle and high school students are reading below the proficient level. For these students, the classroom can be a place where struggles undermine confidence, critical skills remain undeveloped, and each year they fall further and further behind their peers. In some cases, the inability to read and write proficiently can result in problems such as defiance, truancy and dropping out of school.

Today, Scholastic, the global children’s publishing and media company, announced the winners of the first **READ 180 All-Star Awards** created to honor students who have done a “180” in school – overcoming the myriad of challenges that have prevented them from achieving reading and learning success. The five students receiving All-Star awards have experienced the same challenges that all older struggling readers confront daily – poor reading skills resulting in low achievement, frustration, and low self-esteem. Some of award winners faced additional challenges: learning English as a second language, special education classification, or physical and emotional challenges. All of the READ 180 All-Stars confronted these obstacles head on, worked hard to improve their skills and are now on a path to reading success.

Teachers in READ 180 classrooms from coast-to-coast nominated students who had gained at least two years growth in reading, showed significant improvements in all subject areas and had a positive attitude shift toward school and learning. In their nominating statements, the teachers expressed their excitement at having an opportunity to honor students who have worked hard to catch up to their peers.

“Although the READ 180 All-Stars are not the students who typically receive accolades for academic success, their achievements are hard fought and deserving of recognition, and their success 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.”

**For names of schools and interviews with award winners and nominating teachers, please contact:**

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The 2004 READ 180 All-Star Award winners are:

**Jose Garcia**

Age: 19 – New Iberia, Louisiana

When Jose enrolled in school in the United States at age 10, he’d had little to no formal education. He faced the challenges of being legally blind, attempting to read and write for the first time, and learning English. When Jose enrolled in READ 180 two years ago, he was still reading significantly below grade level. But over the last two years, he has made remarkable improvements in reading and his academic progress is evident in all of his courses – Jose is now an honor roll student at his school.

In order to participate in class, Jose must sit with his face up close to the computer screen just to read the text. His teacher remarks that he's never used his disability as an excuse for not succeeding and is extremely positive about his progress. This spring, he will graduate with a Skills Option Diploma and will become the first member of his family to complete school without dropping out. As Jose says, "In the last two years with the READ 180 program I have learned ten times more than I had the six years before... **This program has changed my life forever.**"

### **Andrew Porterfield**

Age: 16 - Fort Campbell, KY

Andrew, like many older struggling readers, had difficulty in reading and therefore comprehending what he read. Since enrolling in READ 180, Andrew has achieved tremendous reading gains, moving from "basic" to the "proficient" level. Andrew has made these gains despite the additional stress of having his father stationed in Iraq for most of the year.

Andrew recognizes the difference READ 180 has made in his life. "Before I started the READ 180 program I had a difficult time with school. I would have to reread my schoolwork like a hundred times just to understand the first sentence. School was terrible... Now that I have joined the READ 180 program, I have gone up in all of my core subjects at least one letter grade... **this class is my motivation to learn.**"

According to Ms. Greene, Andrew has always had a strong work ethic, but now he has added enjoyment to his school day. "He willingly does his class work and will ask to rework assignments to make corrections or improvements. He is much more extroverted than last year. He is excited that he can now read a passage and can understand it better after only one reading... **his drive to achieve is exciting.**"

### **Joshua Nicholas Wing**

Age: 14 - Kansas City, Kansas

Joshua had difficulty with reading from the very start of school. Like many struggling readers, he was placed in a Special Education program. After years without successfully improving his reading skills, facing low self-esteem, embarrassment and lack of motivation, he was placed in a READ 180 class at the beginning of 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Through the program, his confidence in his reading skills improved and he began to show progress in all of his other classes. By the end of sixth grade, he was on the honor roll. Perhaps the biggest sign of his "180 degree turn-around" occurred a few weeks ago when he took the Kansas State Reading Assessment on-line, scoring in the Exemplary Range.

Joshua is now reading above grade level and is ready to exit READ 180. He is currently in the school's challenger program that provides academic enrichment to students who excel in regular classrooms. In Joshua's own words: "When I came to middle school I knew I was reading on the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade level. I felt embarrassed and defeated. All of my grades suffered because I couldn't read the textbooks... I wanted to do well, I just couldn't... **I will soon be exiting READ 180 and I feel like I can read anything.** I understand what I read, and I don't have to try and hide anymore. I am getting A's and B's in all my classes because now I can read and understand what we are doing... I feel good about myself, and I know that when I finish high school I now have a chance at going on to college."

### **Tiffany Westmoreland**

Age: 13 - Salem, Oregon

Tiffany started 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading well below grade level, and like many struggling readers, she experienced significant frustration and was at-risk for dropping out of school. In READ 180, Tiffany gained 3.5 grade levels in just one semester and this turnaround has carried over into other academic

subjects and has been demonstrated in her positive behavior. Her math teacher says, “Tiffany is now able to read and understand directions, as well as story problems. She’s gone from a low F in math to a 79% and still climbing. **Reading has made the difference.**” With new reading skills and a supportive new foster family, Tiffany is moving into regular classes and has blossomed into a positive middle school student who enjoys interacting with others.

When given the chance to talk about the program and her progress within it, Tiffany bursts with enthusiasm and says her goals now include going to college. Ms. Haukaas notes, “Thanks to READ 180, Tiffany’s future is an open book. Now Tiffany Westmoreland is, indeed, unstoppable.”

### **Dylan Morin**

Age: 11 – Palm Bay, Florida

Like so many students who are caught in the “4<sup>th</sup> grade slump,” Dylan was retained in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade based on low reading scores and low academic performance. After just four months in READ 180, he went from “beginning reader” classification to performing on grade level. Due to his significant gains on reading assessment tests and overall improvements in other subject areas, Dylan was promoted mid-year to a fifth grade class where he is currently performing on grade level.

In addition to the extraordinary improvements in Dylan’s reading skills, the single most significant change his teacher observed was the boost in his self-esteem once his reading ability began to improve. Through the immediate, positive feedback of READ 180, Dylan’s confidence and self-esteem soared, and he now fits in better with his classmates because he has more confidence in himself. In her nomination of Dylan, Mrs. DiSomma stated, “Dylan stands out among all of my students because his gains not only included outstanding academic achievements, but also included a positive change in his desire to be an active participant in his ongoing education...Dylan began to volunteer more in class and **he wanted to be in school.**”

The five All-Stars will each receive a \$1,000 check from Scholastic to be used towards furthering their education, a framed certificate, and books to encourage them to continue reading. The winning students’ nominating teachers will receive \$2,000 worth of Scholastic READ 180 books and materials for their classrooms to help all their students continue to improve their reading skills.

### **About Scholastic Read 180**

Scholastic’s *READ 180* program is a research-based, intensive reading intervention program for students in transitional grade 3 through high school and young adult. The program directly addresses students’ individual needs through adaptive and instructional software, high-interest, age appropriate literature, and direct instruction in reading skills. It also features additional support for English Language learners and Special Needs students. The program provides robust support for educators through a complete curriculum of instructional materials, continuous assessment that helps inform instruction, reporting on student performance and professional development. Currently in more than 4,000 school districts nationwide, the program has consistently proven to be effective in helping to raise reading achievement while motivating and engaging students. More information is available at [www.scholastic.com/read180](http://www.scholastic.com/read180).

### **About Scholastic**

Scholastic Corporation (NASDAQ: SCHL) is the world's largest publisher and distributor of children's books. 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, 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, school-based and direct-to-home continuity programs; retail stores, schools, libraries, and television networks; and the Company's Internet Site, [www.scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com).