

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Reading Tutorial Program A Tremendous Success

Students in program show marked improvement compared to their peers.

SAN ANTONIO, TX – August 15, 2004 - San Antonio Youth Literacy (SAYL) announces the results of a one-year study measuring the reading progress of students participating in its “Let’s Read!” program.

The study compared 21 second graders attending various public schools on the west side who were tutored by “Let’s Read!” volunteer reading tutors with 19 second graders at other San Antonio public schools who received no SAYL tutoring. The children not tutored by SAYL volunteers increased their reading grade level from the beginning to the end of the 2003-2004 school year by an average of 0.61 of a grade level. The tutored children, who received “Let’s Read!” tutoring from Our Lady of the Lake University (OLLU) *Serves* students, increased their reading grade levels over the same time period by an average of 1.78. **In other words, SAYL-tutored children improved over an entire grade level more than those children who did not participate in the program.**

“SAYL strives to promote a genuine and passionate love for reading by taking the fear out of reading – the fear of not knowing, the fear of not understanding, the fear of embarrassment.”

Said Sandra Allen, SAYL Executive Director. “With the release of fear comes confidence. We want to make sure that every child in the San Antonio area has the confidence and skills to read at his or her grade level.”

The children were second graders who were reading below grade level at the beginning of the year. All of the children, both tutored and non-tutored, were tested at the beginning and again at the end of the school year using the Slosson Oral Reading Test, an instrument endorsed by the Texas Education Agency.

The college tutors, who were students in Our Lady of the Lake University’s *Serves* work-study program, saw their assigned students one to three times a week. The college students received comprehensive training in the “Let’s Read!” tutoring method by SAYL staff at the beginning of the year, and attended monthly sessions of continuing education where they were taught additional strategies to use with the children. The college tutors were closely supervised both by SAYL staff and the staff of the university’s Center for Service-Learning and Volunteerism. SAYL will continue this partnership with the OLLU *Serves* program during the 2004-2005 school year. Future results will be released in June 2005.

San Antonio Youth Literacy, whose mission is to promote the literacy skills of San Antonio’s at-risk youth, was founded in 1984 by Harriet Marmon Helmle. Today its “Let’s Read!” program, which offers children one-on-one tutoring with volunteers, is available in over 20 sites across the city. For more information about San Antonio Youth Literacy, including volunteer or donation opportunities, call (210) 299-1533.