



# NEWS

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## **READING IS FUNDAMENTAL RECOGNIZES SOUTHWEST HUMAN DEVELOPMENT FOR ENCOURAGING A CULTURE OF LITERACY IN PHOENIX, ARIZONA**

*Southwest Human Development's RIF program will receive the RIF Program Excellence Honors 2007 in June ceremony.*

WASHINGTON, May 22, 2007 — Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) is proud to announce that Southwest Human Development of Phoenix, Arizona has been named a recipient of the second annual RIF Program Excellence Honors 2007, sponsored by the MetLife Foundation. Southwest Human Development's program is one of 25 RIF programs that will be honored for successfully encouraging a culture of literacy in their community at a three-day celebration in Washington, D.C. from June 18-20, 2007.

Southwest Human Development was selected from a pool of approximately 4,100 RIF programs. Selection criteria focused on their success in running a high-quality children's literacy program that effectively integrated reading into core activities, sustained literacy efforts throughout the program year, and engaged the broader community as reading motivators. Other selection criteria included: the percentage of children served who are at-risk for academic failure (based on free and reduced-price meal eligibility), program model, and program setting and location.

"Southwest Human Development exemplifies quality literacy programming," stated Carol H. Rasco, RIF president and CEO. "By effectively helping children in Phoenix, Ariz.. discover the joy of reading, this program is literally changing the lives of the children they serve. RIF is very proud of the work that they have done and we look forward to working with them for many years to come. We are also grateful to our longtime partner, MetLife Foundation, for its sponsorship of the Program Excellence Honors."

**Since its inception more than 25 years ago, Southwest Human Development has recognized and emphasized the importance of language and literacy development in the early years at each of its nearly 100 sites. The staff at each site is committed to helping the nearly 50,000 children served build the skills necessary to not only become successful readers, but to also become lifelong readers. This year, Southwest Human Development anticipates distributing almost 100,000 books.**

**"RIF is an essential component in Southwest Human Development's mission to encourage language and literacy development in the early years," stated Alan Taylor, Director of Training, and RIF program coordinator. "Whether providing home-based or center-based services, our staff use the resources provided by RIF every day. We are very thankful to RIF for enabling us to help the children of Phoenix, Ariz. discover the joy of reading."**

**For more information about RIF and the RIF Program Excellence Honors, visit RIF's Web site at [www.rif.org](http://www.rif.org).**

**RIF programs are required to provide a 25 percent match of their book budget. If you are interested in either donating funds or volunteering with the Southwest Human Development's RIF program, contact Alan Taylor at (602) 266-5976.**

**Reading Is Fundamental, Inc. (RIF)**, founded in 1966, motivates children to read by working with them, their parents, and community members to make reading a fun and beneficial part of everyday life. RIF's highest priority is reaching underserved children from birth to age 8. Through community volunteers in every state and U.S. territory, RIF provides 4.5 million children with 16 million new, free books and literacy resources each year. For more information and to access reading resources, visit RIF's website at [www.rif.org](http://www.rif.org).

Discover the Joy!