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## **SOUTHWEST HUMAN DEVELOPMENT RECEIVES \$25,000 GRANT FROM US AIRWAYS TO HELP FIGHT ILLITERACY IN MARICOPA COUNTY**

*Funding Helps Organization Purchase Books for the Reach Out and Read Program*

**PHOENIX – (October XX, 2006)** – Southwest Human Development ([www.swhd.org](http://www.swhd.org)), Arizona's largest provider of services for young children and families, announced today it accepted a \$25,000 grant from US Airways. The \$25,000 grant from the Tempe-based airline was given to support Southwest Human Development's *Reach Out and Read* (ROR) program.

Southwest Human Development first introduced ROR to Arizona in 1997, and now operates the program in 46 pediatric clinics throughout Maricopa County distributing more than 70,000 books each year. Recognizing that low-income children are most at risk for having difficulty reading in school, ROR targets these children by providing them with a new book when they visit a pediatric clinic for a well-child check up. The program also works to educate parents with tips for producing successful readers, thus bringing literacy into their homes.

"Southwest Human Development's primary goal with Reach Out and Read is to help Arizona families understand the importance of literacy in the home," said Ginger Ward, executive director of Southwest Human Development. "With the support of US Airways and local clinics, we are opening up a whole world of discovery and imagination through new books."

According to Southwest Human Development, an estimated 35 percent of children enter kindergarten unprepared to learn because they lack fundamental literacy skills. Even worse, many of these children never manage to catch up with their peers. However, children can gain strong literacy skills at an early age if parents implement these simple tips from Southwest Human Development's literacy experts:

- Schedule regular reading time with your child every day – consider after dinner, or before bedtime.
- Encourage your child to read along with you during book sharing time – it will help them become a successful reader.
- Make book sharing time fun for your child – create excitement and be animated when reading aloud. It will help them develop a lifelong love of reading.

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*Southwest Human Development Receives Grant  
Add One*

*Reach Out and Read* (ROR) is part of a national effort created by pediatricians and educators in Boston, Mass., to help fight illiteracy. The key program components include:

- Volunteers read with children in pediatric clinic waiting rooms and model reading aloud techniques for parents.
- Pediatricians advise parents on the importance of reading with young children and give them “prescriptions” for reading with their children every day.
- Children, from six months to five years of age, receive a new and appropriate book to take home at every regularly scheduled check-up.

**About Southwest Human Development and Arizona Institute for Early Childhood Development**

Founded in 1981 as a non-profit organization, Southwest Human Development provides comprehensive services for young children and their families in four areas: child health and welfare, disabilities, Head Start and professional training. Now serving 50,000 children and families each year, Southwest Human Development is the state's largest community-based organization of its type and celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in February 2006.

As scientific research continued to confirm the importance of impacting children during their earliest years, Southwest Human Development founded the **Arizona Institute for Early Childhood Development**. In 2004, the Institute was created with the mission to expand best practices and research-based early development programs to help children reach their full potential, and today the Institute focuses on three core areas: early literacy, child abuse prevention and infant mental health.

For more information about Southwest Human Development please call (602) 266-5976 or visit [www.swhd.org](http://www.swhd.org).

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