With cell phones, email, Facebook, and Twitter people have never had so many ways to connect with one another. But no matter how “interactive” technology becomes, it can’t replace personal connections built face-to-face over shared experiences and aspirations.

At Motheread, Inc, we know that for students to be engaged and motivated, instruction must be relevant to their lives. From the start, we have taught students while respecting and adapting to what they teach us. Our curriculum development process also engages scholars, education experts, and researchers who help us make instruction relevant, meaningful, and effective. We train instructors to personalize lessons to address the needs of specific groups of students. We meet students where they are and help them get where they want to go.

Our students are diverse, each bringing unique strengths and challenges to our classes. Participants in our classes include parents and expectant parents, English language learners, aspiring citizens, Basic Skills students, those with developmental disabilities, families at risk for domestic violence, incarcerated women, and child-care teachers.

Since 1987, Motheread, a nationally acclaimed private, nonprofit organization, has connected the teaching of literacy skills with a variety of content. We develop original curricula based on quality multicultural children’s books and adult poems and narratives. Using these curricula, we build connections on the local, state, and national levels with thousands of instructors and students each year by teaching, or training others to teach, literacy development classes.

Our work has evolved from teaching and training using one curriculum at the local level to engaging partners and affiliates around many curricula at the local, state, and national levels. This annual report gives an overview of our accomplishments in each area.
The Birth and Beginning Years (B.A.B.Y.) curriculum uses multicultural children’s books to teach parenting and health information to expectant and new parents. Included are three instructional supplements relating to substance abuse, adolescent pregnancy, and emergent literacy; a mother's journal workbook; and an annotated booklist for use with infants and toddlers.

The Motheread/Fatheread curriculum uses children’s books and adult poems and narratives to teach literacy skills to adults, with an emphasis on developing skills in all four areas of literacy: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This nationally recognized instructional model and curriculum addresses a variety of teaching approaches and learning styles, combining individual assignments with small group work, lectures, and discussion.

Keeping It Real: Contextualized Instruction helps instructors become partners with their students, tying real world applications to Basic Skills content. It integrates contextual teaching with more traditional methods to enhance student motivation and skills gain.

My United States incorporates civics instruction into a literacy skills development course, improving literacy skills while teaching information required to pass the US citizenship test. This curriculum is designed for ESL, GED, or High School Diploma students.
The *Story Exploring* curriculum handbooks, designed for use with children from birth through age 11, use more than 100 multicultural children’s books to build reading and critical thinking skills. This curriculum uses targeted reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities to foster problem solving, increase comprehension, and nurture a love of books.

Our *Literacy Instruction for Everyone (Life)* curriculum teaches literacy, problem solving, and life applications to students with developmental disabilities. The curriculum is theme-based, allowing students to use story as a way to think about issues related to their lives as workers, students, and family members. Its multi-style approach reaches students with various abilities and learning styles.

*Fathers Acting to Heal, Educate, and Reconnect (F.a.t.h.e.r.)* is a parenting curriculum for use with incarcerated men. F.a.t.h.e.r. uses the power of books and story to help fathers in prison connect with their children, communicate from a distance, understand children’s reactions to incarceration, and learn about parent and child development.

The *Teacheread* curriculum integrates occupational skills into coursework for Basic Skills students working in child-care settings or taking courses in Early Childhood Education. Classes address the literacy needs of students and teach workplace skills that immediately enhance their work or support their further education.
Connecting through Local Partnerships

The Motheread philosophy involves meeting learners where they are; building on their hopes, interests, and experiences; and helping them to achieve their goals. Whether they seek improved literacy, English language skills, effective parenting strategies, citizenship education, the skills to be a more effective teacher, further education, employment leading to self-sufficiency, or a combination of these, we support and challenge students toward success. All of our classes are learner-centered, strengths-based, and use contextual teaching.

Our work in Wake County is conducted through contracts and partnerships with a variety of institutions and organizations. During the last year, 682 adults and 1,182 children were taught using our award-winning methodology and curricula.

Prisons and Wake Technical Community College

Since our beginning, Motheread, Inc. has helped incarcerated mothers improve their literacy skills and use books to connect with their children. Last year we taught classes based on our Motheread/Fatheread curriculum in two prisons in Wake County (North Carolina Correctional Institution for Women and Raleigh Correctional Center for Women) and two in central North Carolina (Fountain Correctional Center for Women and Southern Correctional Institution). We used our Birth and Beginning Years (B.A.B.Y.) curriculum with expectant and new mothers to prepare and support them as individuals and caregivers. Our Literacy Instruction for Everyone (Life) program served students with developmental disabilities.

In cooperation with Wake Technical Community College (WTCC), the Motheread/Fatheread curriculum was also used to teach literacy skills to Basic Skills and ESL students. We taught classes at the WTCC Adult Education Center, Lutheran Family Services, and White Plains United Methodist Church. We also taught civics education and literacy skills to ESL students using our My United States curriculum.

Creative approaches and good intentions are commendable, but the true value of a program is measured by its results. Did the program achieve its goals? Did it make a positive difference in the lives of its participants? Motheread maintains strict accountability to our funders and partners. To track the effectiveness of our efforts, we pre- and post-test students. During the last fiscal year we provided a total of 13,949 hours of instruction in these local classes. Within this population, comprised almost entirely of school dropouts, a total of 57 percent completed the course in which they were enrolled. Regardless of the type of literacy class, 57.04 percent of our adult learners who were post-tested advanced an educational functioning level (two to three grade levels) according to the National Reporting System required by the U.S. Department of Education. This figure far surpasses the state goal of 34 percent.

Wake County Human Services

We continued our collaboration with SAFEchild, Inc. to provide Parents Listening, Understanding, Sharing (PLUS) classes. Participation in these county-funded classes can be voluntary, but most parents come through referrals by the court system or Wake County Human Services after incidents of domestic violence or child abuse or neglect. Students learn parenting skills and strategies for improved communication with their children. Of the 76 parents completing the course last year, 97 percent learned how to improve communication with their children in order to reduce abuse and neglect and support school success.
Wake County SmartStart funded two projects promoting children’s literacy. One supported parents and one served child-care professionals.

Using the Motheread/Fatheread curriculum, we taught parents of children under age five at the Healing Place for Women, Cary United Methodist Church, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Knightdale HeadStart, and Saint Matthew AME Church. These parents built their own literacy skills and learned the importance of reading aloud and other strategies to help their children be prepared for success in school. According to the parent survey from the North Carolina Partnership for Children, 88 percent of participating parents increased the frequency of literacy activities with their children, an essential practice in developing children’s literacy skills.

In the Literacy Invites and Nurtures Kids’ Success (LINKS) initiative, child-care teachers learned literacy skills and effective teaching strategies to use in their classrooms as well as how to involve parents in literacy activities at home. Improving classroom literacy practice enhances child-care quality and develops children’s emergent literacy skills. Using a multi-faceted approach, we trained and mentored 142 child-care teachers in ten child-care centers. A total of 99 percent of these teachers improved their read-aloud practice and classroom literacy activities according to the Teacher Literacy Observation Checklist and the Emergent Literacy Classroom Assessment.

Research Studies

Recent studies have demonstrated the success of the LINKS initiative. Dr. Bertha M. Gorham, then director of the Early Childhood and Family Support program at RTI International, conducted a follow-up study of the LINKS process. She found that teachers who received Motheread training improved their literacy practices in reading storybooks to preschoolers, regardless of the teacher’s race, previous education, or years of experience. In surveys after the LINKS training ended, 97 percent of caregivers said they knew more about emergent literacy for the ages of children they served. The same percentage reported that they were using their new knowledge and skills.

Not only have early childhood educators benefited from this initiative, so have the children in their classrooms. A second study was conducted by Dr. Jody L. Cleven of North Carolina State University. This research examined the effects of Story Exploring training and mentoring on the receptive and expressive vocabulary and story retelling of 121 four-year-old children. Analysis showed that on expressive vocabulary, children taught by teachers who received Motheread training and mentoring significantly outperformed children whose teachers did not receive training and mentoring. Data also showed a highly significant difference among scores for children in the two groups on the retelling rubric.

“After the LINKS training, I changed my daily practice and saw a big change in the children’s behavior. I had new strategies for connecting with my students and using books, language, and communication throughout the day. The children became more responsive to me and to each other.”

Wake County Child-Care Teacher

Meredith College

Motheread, Inc. also built connections with 95 children during the tenth year of our partnership with the MeredithREADS (Meredith Reaching, Educating, and Developing Students) tutoring program. We trained 100 students and staff to provide positive literacy experiences, guidance, and support for elementary-aged children struggling with reading.
Building a Community of Readers through STORYTIME

On February 21, 2010, Motheread, Inc. connected with more than 100 friends and supporters old and new through our first STORYTIME event. We partnered with Quail Ridge Books and Music to present an afternoon of stories, treats, and conversation. This entertaining event featured four North Carolina authors of fiction for adults: Angela Davis-Gardner, Richard Krawiec, Michael Malone, and Celia Rivenbark. Our special guests spoke about their connections to books and literacy, treated the audience to excerpts from their work, and sold and signed books, with a portion of the proceeds designated as a fundraiser for Motheread.

STORYTIME was created to celebrate the work of Motheread and to encourage and build a community of readers. This inaugural STORYTIME event gave us a chance to make and strengthen connections with supporters, to encourage opportunities for embracing the power of story, and to share more about our work. We look forward to many more successful STORYTIME events.

STORYTIME Sponsors

- Barbara Boney Catering
- Green Planet Catering
- Joseph C. Woodard Printing Company
- Posh Nosh Catering
- Quail Ridge Books and Music
- Starbucks at Wakefield Commons
At the state level, Motheread nurtures connections to literacy through training and technical assistance. As with all of our efforts, we build on what we learn through trainings and site visits to improve our existing curricula and meet new needs.

We conduct trainings statewide with community colleges, community-based organizations, and other nonprofits that use Motheread curricula in their own literacy programs. Our trainers instruct new teachers in how to use the Motheread curriculum most appropriate to their needs. Last fiscal year, Motheread trained 173 participants in the following curricula: Motheread/Fatheread, Story Exploring, Keeping It Real, B.A.B.Y., and Life. Each instructor certified through this process goes on to influence hundreds of students in North Carolina.

We also offer technical assistance and consulting across the state. Last year, we made twenty-one site visits to family literacy programs. Such visits help programs identify their strengths and needs. Based on these assessments, we can offer targeted technical assistance and training to help organizations build capacity and strengthen partnerships that move students towards literacy, employment, and self-sufficiency.
READING CONNECTIONS

When Greensboro, North Carolina’s, Reading Connections expanded from an adult literacy program to a family literacy program, the Motheread curriculum was chosen to support the group’s work. Reading Connections holds classes for adults and children simultaneously, and the results have been impressive. On average over the last five years, 36 percent of adults have gone up one educational functioning level (two to three grade levels) after the fourteen-week session. Results such as these are rarely achieved with one year of working with a private tutor. Reading Connections instructors have been especially impressed with how far the Motheread curriculum extends beyond the classroom. The take-home activities and strategies foster a love of reading and a comfort with books that persists long after the end of each session. Participants are also forming relationships with their classmates that create a valuable new support network. By the power of word-of-mouth alone several classes now have waiting lists, and new partners are eager to join the program.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE SPECIAL GRANTS

Through a competitive application process, Motheread was awarded two grants by the North Carolina Community College System to support our focus on making instruction relevant to students. We were the only community-based organization to receive both grants for which we applied.

Our Transition grant focused on the promise shown by combining occupational content with literacy skills. The teaching materials developed under this grant support Basic Skills students preparing to transition into work in child-care settings or pursuing further instruction in Early Childhood Education. These materials, available to be downloaded or used online, address the literacy needs of these students and teach workplace skills that immediately enhance their work in child-care settings.

Our Mini-Research grant focused on contextual teaching and learning and how this approach enhances student achievement. Under this grant, Motheread instructors taught an experimental class using the contextual approach that incorporated content about US history and civics into a Basic Skills class. The literacy gains of students taught using this approach were compared to those of students taught in a traditional class using traditional methods. A total of 65 percent of the students in the experimental class gained at least one educational functioning level (two to three grade levels) as compared to 50 percent of the students in the control group.

PARTNERSHIP WITH HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

What began as a simple partnership blossomed into much more for Motheread and Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Raleigh. The women of Holy Trinity were searching for ways to support women at the North Carolina Correctional Institution for Women (NCCIW). At the statewide Conference of Lutheran Women, Holy Trinity made a presentation about Motheread and conducted a successful drive to collect books and materials for NCCIW students in Motheread classes. More than 225 books and boxes of much-needed literacy supplies were provided to inmate mothers through this partnership.
Our affiliates and state partners coordinate programming, provide support, and develop local initiatives around Motheread curricula. Last year we continued ongoing affiliate partnerships with humanities councils in six states and territories to train Motheread instructors and support the teaching of our curricula. We also helped guide the work of partners in California, Oregon, and South Carolina. Each of them has incorporated Motheread instruction into their programming in a unique way.

Affiliates

Colorado

In Colorado, classes using our curricula are coordinated through the Colorado Humanities Council’s Center for the Book and implemented through ten partner agencies. Motheread/Fatheread Colorado focuses on reaching parents and children for whom Spanish is the primary language. Each year they engage more than 1,000 students. Colorado Humanities supports Motheread training for educators who work with adults and/or children in a variety of settings including family resource centers, literacy centers, migrant services centers, public schools, and libraries. Motheread/Fatheread Colorado is also beginning to work with representatives of African American communities in Denver to bring the program to urban families by training volunteers, library staff, and members of faith-based organizations.

Connecticut

The Connecticut Humanities Council (CHC) supports 35 partner organizations across the state by providing training, books, and technical assistance. Last year 33 sites in Connecticut ran Family Read classes, reaching more than 2,000 adults and nearly 4,000 children. CHC has found that giving books to participants provides a tremendous incentive for them to come to and engage in classes. Word-of-mouth has also been important—participants tell their friends and neighbors and soon they want to participate as well. CHC has been maximizing a three-year grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to focus on three urban areas of the state. Through this Urban Reading Initiative (URI) the Council is developing relationships with 12 new partners in New Haven, New London, and Hartford. Through the URI, Motheread instruction is pulled under the same umbrella as other programs to provide a more comprehensive approach to building a culture of literacy.

Guam

Now in its ninth year on Guam, Motheread is the longest-running program of the Guam Humanities Council (GHC). Like other Motheread affiliates, the Guam program targets underserved members of the community. A strength of their program is the rich relationships they have built with their community. Motheread classes are taught through a wide network of community partners, allowing the program to be truly island-wide. Transportation is an issue for many students, but staff and volunteers work diligently to make sure students can get to class. To further encourage participation, students are credited with $6 for each class they attend. At the end of the class cycle, they are given a gas card reflecting their attendance. The program also partnered with the Salvation Army, which often provides snacks and drinks from its food bank to participants during classes. As with other affiliates, GHC has found that providing books to participants is a very powerful incentive and a treasured result of attending Motheread classes.
HAWAII
Motheread/Fatheread Hawaii recently celebrated the tenth anniversary of teaching classes in two correctional facilities on the island of Oahu. The instructor of these classes consistently sees a dramatic difference from the first class to the last: “Students are more communicative, more open to others, and more willing to explore beyond their own experience.” Rather than working with multiple community partners and instructors as many affiliates do, most of the instruction in the Oahu prisons and other Hawaii locations has been done by the Motheread program coordinator. Efforts by the Hawaii Council for the Humanities to expand Motheread/Fatheread Hawaii are now underway. A new partnership is in place with a transitional housing facility on Oahu that may become a model for more work statewide. A recent Motheread training on the island of Kauai promises more opportunities there as well.

NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
The Motheread program of the Northern Mariana Islands Council for the Humanities prides itself on reaching every population Motheread can serve. They have coordinated classes on each of the commonwealth’s three major islands. Motheread instructors have presented read-alouds at a public library and established a Motheread library there so that books are more accessible. The program coordinator works closely with students at Northern Marianas Community College, and last year a grant from the Bank of Hawaii’s Charitable Foundation supported a Motheread Institute that trained nineteen new instructors. The Northern Marianas program has been especially successful and creative with its recruitment efforts. A Motheread contingent marches in the annual Liberation Day parade, chanting to the crowd about the joys of reading and passing out bookmarks promoting Motheread classes. Many students have shared that they found out about the program from the parade.

WASHINGTON
Humanities Washington has made Motheread classes part of their work for the last fourteen years. They maintain partnerships with a variety of agencies to train Motheread instructors and provide Motheread classes to parents and children. During the last year, Motheread Washington began to emphasize work with statewide organizations such as Washington State Child Care Resource and Referral to maximize the impact of Motheread training and curricula. They also focused on serving migrant workers and their children. In partnership with the Washington State Migrant Council, they set the goal of training every Migrant Council Head Start teacher—more than 120 teachers—in Motheread’s Story Exploring curriculum. With one more training, they expect to reach this goal. They also established lending libraries and classroom libraries in Migrant Council Head Start programs. Through this initiative they seek to provide consistency for migrant children whose families often move around the state.
PARTNERS

CALIFORNIA
In California, Motheread trainings are coordinated through Families in Schools. This statewide organization invites parents and communities to be engaged in the education of their children and helps them build their capacity to support school-parent engagement. In Los Angeles County, Motheread is one of several programs being used under the First 5 LA School Readiness Initiative to ensure that children start kindergarten ready to learn. Families in Schools recognized that many professionals are doing work without important tools or access to training. During the last year they coordinated multiple B.A.B.Y. and Story Exploring trainings, empowering nearly 100 community partners and educators to teach these curricula. They also made training more accessible to classroom teachers by creating a substitute teacher stipend that allowed teachers to take advantage of Motheread training and resources.

OREGON
In Portland, Oregon, the Multnomah County Public Library (MPL) has used Motheread instruction to reach a diverse population, most of whom are not regular library patrons. With the benefit of a two-year grant from the Oregon State Library, MPL trained several employees in the Motheread/Fatheread, My United States, and B.A.B.Y. curricula. The grant enabled staff to hold classes off-site and to spend extended time with consistent groups of parents. While the themes and content of the curriculum dovetailed with much of the library’s own programming, it was a luxury for them to build relationships over such an extended period. Library staff appreciated the flexibility inherent in the Motheread curricula that allowed them to adapt instruction to their particular audiences. Through this extended outreach, the library was able to build connections with people and organizations that will far outlast the term of their grant.

SOUTH CAROLINA
In South Carolina, Motheread is administered through First Steps to School Readiness, a program that helps children age birth to five arrive at kindergarten ready to learn. First Steps to School Readiness emphasizes parent education, recognizing that any gains made for children cannot be sustained without a positive learning environment at home. In March, the Darlington County program included Motheread trainers as presenters during a Family Empowerment Day that brought parents together with community partners and service providers. The event was such a success that another has already been scheduled. Partnerships are also being built with local schools and libraries to bring Motheread instruction to more families. Staff have been especially impressed by the bonds that form among classmates and the way they support and encourage each other both during class and after their session has ended. They have found that many new participants are coming to the program after hearing about it from Motheread graduates.

“I am truly excited and motivated about this program. I look forward to sharing family success stories in the future!”

Participant in First 5 LA School Readiness Initiative B.A.B.Y. training.
Your gift helps support the work of Motheread, Inc. By becoming a financial contributor, you are helping provide adult literacy classes in Wake County. These classes, located in a variety of settings, teach parents and other caregivers how to improve their own literacy skills, help children become better readers and thinkers, and improve family communication.

**Gift Levels**

- Story Listener  Up to $100
- Story Reader    $101-$250
- Story Teller    $251-$500
- Story Writer    Over $500

Send your gift to

Motheread, Inc.
3008 Anderson Drive, Suite 103
Raleigh, NC 27609

Or, make a gift online by going to our website: motheread.org

*Your gift is tax deductible.*

To find out more about ways to give to Motheread, please contact Megg Rader, Development Coordinator, at 919.781.2088

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<th>Position</th>
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**NATIONAL AND STATE HONORS**

- Barbara Bush Foundation Selection As National Model Program
- International Reading Association Promotion of Literacy Award
- Laubach Literacy Selection As Exemplary Literacy Program
- National Humanities Medal
- North Carolina Human Relations Council Service Award
- North Carolina Reading Association’s James B. Hunt Literacy Award
  
  *Parenting* Magazine Leadership Award
  
  *People and Book* Magazine Features
  
  *The Read-Aloud Handbook* Feature