

# Between the Lines

2005/Volume 10, Number 2

## A Significant Year

A new relationship with a funding partner. A new curriculum. A new slogan. Visits to affiliates. Motherhead® has been going places – literally and figuratively – in the last year. “This has been as significant a year as we’ve ever had,” said President Nancye Gaj, reflecting on 2004-05. Here are some highlights of the fiscal year just ended.

### ChildTrust

For nonprofit organizations, unsolicited funding is like manna from heaven – and almost as rare. Especially when the offer is for long-term financial support with very few strings attached. But in 2005, the newly created ChildTrust Foundation approached the Motherhead leadership team to ask if the foundation could provide funds to expand the award-winning literacy program.

“In the nonprofit world, for somebody to have decided to invest in you – in a true investment way, not as a grant – that’s just a phenomenal thing,” said Gaj. “Honestly, though, it’s something that I always wished would happen.”

ChildTrust has pledged grants totaling \$200,000 a year to help Motherhead grow. The first \$200,000 was to be used to revise the Motherhead Storysharing Handbook and to establish a process to analyze factors behind the program’s success and areas for potential growth.

Established by James Maynard, a founder of Golden Corral Restaurants, ChildTrust was in search of a way to help children learn to read when Maynard heard about Motherhead. By the time he and other foundation leaders approached the organization, Maynard had already done his homework and was already inclined to offer his support. “It was something very unexpected, and it has such a long-term impact,” said Gaj.

### My United States

In its first full year, the new *My United States* curriculum helped 77 North Carolina immigrants learn more about their new home – and even helped some prepare to take the U.S. citizenship exam. Offered as part of a partnership with Wake Technical Community College’s Basic Skill/ESL program, the weekly classes combine curriculum content from the *Teacher’s Guide* with instruction on United States history, government, civic participation, and customs. Each two-hour session uses a book from the Motherhead curriculum that relates to the week’s identified history and civics focus. Instructors use books

## Motherhead 2004 - 2005 Annual Report



Kelli Coburn reads a Motherhead® book to her children at their Wake County, N.C., day care center.

(*Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, for example) to teach basic concepts of civic life such as the importance of following rules or laws.

In the first class, all students were from Hispanic backgrounds, but in subsequent classes, participants came from nine countries. Copies of the curriculum have been distributed to every affiliate, and Motherhead has trained North Carolina community college instructors to teach the curriculum. “Since the original Motherhead concept, I think *My United States* is the biggest thing we’ve ever done,” said Gaj. “Our approach makes it easier for people to talk about their own experiences as newcomers.”

### National Conference on Family Literacy

The decision to attend the April 2004 National Conference on Family Literacy as a vendor, not just as a presenter, was one more example of the development of Motherhead as an organization. Instead of reaching a handful of people who might attend a single conference workshop, having a vendor booth gave Motherhead representatives the chance to reach 775 of the 2,000 attendees. To prepare for the conference, Motherhead adopted a concise slogan. Playing off the literacy conference slogan, Motherhead adopted the slogan “Literacy Changes Lives. Motherhead Changes Literacy.” Developing new materials for the

conference – including the only full-page color ad in the program – offered the chance to sharpen our focus.

### Travels to Affiliates

The 2004-05 fiscal year also brought the opportunity for Gaj to visit more affiliates, part of “a strategic change,” she said. “We’re being more proactive with affiliates. We’re trying to be more ‘present’ with them – literally.” In the last year, Gaj has visited affiliates in Hawaii, Connecticut, Colorado and Minnesota, but the visits have been about much more than just public relations. Gaj has worked with affiliate coordinators to identify characteristics of strongest Motherhead programs, in the hopes of developing best practices that might give new affiliates valuable keys to success.

### Literacy Round Tables

As part of the work with the North Carolina Community College System Office, Motherhead initiated a new strategy to strengthen family literacy across the state. Regional round table sessions were held in Rocky Mount, Fayetteville, Lenoir, and Winston-Salem. These sessions provided an opportunity for comprehensive family literacy program staff to inform and support each other as professionals in the field. A total of 85 people representing 22 different program sites participated.

### The Year by the Numbers

Number of people trained across the country

902

Most frequent rating at trainings

6

(out of possible 6)

### In Wake County

Number of students served in community and correctional settings

505



Number of students served at their work sites

204

Number of students participating in special topic literacy classes

375

Percent of all students completing classes

78

Number of instructional hours

9,109



Number of children served through SmartStart-funded Literacy Invites and Nurtures Kids' Success (L.I.N.K.S.)

1,098

Number of MeredithREADS volunteer hours for Motherhead® projects

575

Value of those hours

\$9,217

Number of parents served through SmartStart-funded Teaching Involves Parents (T.I.P.) Project

316

## Around the Country

Fifty trainings were held around the globe during the fiscal year. For the Motherhead® training calendar or to contact our affiliates, visit us at [motherhead.org](http://motherhead.org).

### Alabama Humanities Foundation

Nineteen men from Alabama as well as Pippa Keene, the Utah affiliate coordinator, took part in the first F.a.t.h.e.r. training outside North Carolina. F.a.t.h.e.r. (Fathers Acting to Heal, Educate, and Reconnect) helps incarcerated fathers connect with their children through skill-building and discussion activities. "It was a great thing, and we were very excited to be the first state" to offer the training outside N.C., Tara Holman said. Holman conducted site visits to many of the state's 160 partner facilities. An Institute took place in June, and Holman was hoping to start a pilot program in women's jails in the Dothan area in July.

### Arizona Humanities Council

Arizona held its fourth annual Motherhead Reunion in January, where national trainer Judy Trefethen presented "Watching Leo Bloom: Techniques for Working with Low-Literacy Adults." Also, the Arizona Humanities Council raised money from funding sources for a four-day Institute in July and helped provide money for book purchases at several sites.

### Charleston County (SC) School District

South Carolina's Office of First Steps is providing funding for literacy initiatives, including Institutes, Storysharing training, Working with Infants and Toddlers, and B.A.B.Y. Carolyn Trammell is looking forward to 2005-06, when the Charleston County School District will provide Storysharing training to all Child Development-4 teachers through Head Start.

### Connecticut Humanities Council

Natalie Crotty remained on the go last year in Connecticut. "We've just been expanding so rapidly here," she said. Crotty is in discussions with a large regional foundation, hoping to secure funding to offer Motherhead in two parts of Connecticut where there is "huge need" but no community foundation. Waterford got its first Institute in February. Nancye Gaj visited Connecticut in the spring, meeting with program organizers, trainers, and current and prospective donors.

### Guam Humanities Council

Among its success stories for the year, the Guam affiliate helped 15 new immigrants from the neighboring island of Chuuk learn English and helped a group of men in a drug rehabilitation program improve their literacy skills. As Beth McClure explained, the immigrants "not only grew in their literacy and parenting skills, but also in the assimilation into their new culture, which is vital to their survival here." The men's class was part of a residential program affiliated with the Department of Corrections. Two dynamic facilitators made the three-hour sessions so lively that "the guys all looked forward to reading and using their ideas," McClure said. "They want the facilitators to present their Motherhead certificates as part of their graduation ceremony."

### Hawai'i Council for the Humanities

This year marked the beginning of a fundamental restructuring of the Hawai'i program, which is transitioning from

direct provision of literacy classes to partnering with other organizations to train instructors. The transformation, which Nancye Gaj helped facilitate in a visit last December, was already bearing fruit by summer. "It's not something we're hoping is going to happen; it's happening," Robert Buss explained. Trainers are working with three communities on Oahu, where elementary schools are being revamped as part of the federal "No Child Left Behind" initiative. Classes will be offered to parents and school providers, and K-3 teachers will take part in Storysharing training in the communities of Hauula, Waihole and Kahaluu. New programs are planned on Kauai and Lanai, a small island with a single school.

### United Way of Greater Los Angeles

In 2004, partner agencies provided Motherhead/Fatheread to an additional 143 service sites in the Los Angeles area, a 67 percent increase from 2003. These sites included schools, Head Start/Early Head Start programs, programs for teen parents and parents in substance abuse recovery, alternative prison sentencing programs, and public housing developments. The program served 5,150 families, an 11 percent increase from 2003. Forty communities received services, and 56 new facilitators were trained in three separate Institutes.

### Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Council for the Humanities

Eighteen people completed a Storysharing training in August 2004. "Many volunteer to read for Head Start classes, at the library, or during Motherhead parent sessions with the children of attendees," Mary Binauea explained. Another highlight of the year was the success of a Fatheread Storysharing course, which nine men completed.

### Minnesota Humanities Commission

A visit in May from Nancye Gaj was "certainly the biggest" event of the year for the Minnesota program, according to Tom Fitzpatrick. Gaj attended a reunion that brought together about 25 past and current facilitators and a luncheon for about 35 prospective instructors and funders. "We wanted to get a new energy going in Minnesota," Fitzpatrick explained. Trainings scheduled for August will be the first indicator of success. The program is seeking organizations to fund child care, books, and other expenses for class participants.

### Utah Humanities Council

A May training in Kaysville, 25 minutes from Salt Lake City, drew 18 adults – non-native English speakers from 10 countries – who were learning English via Motherhead and Fatheread. "It was an incredibly powerful experience for me to witness," Pippa Keene said. Also in 2004-05, the Utah program served 525 families, partnered with each of the 14 Head Start and seven Even Start agencies in the state, and trained 49 staff members. Additionally, the affiliate extended its reach into the Native American community, offering literacy instruction to the Shivwits, a previously unserved tribe.



Participants in Virginia's first-ever Fatheread Institute, April 2005.

### Virginia Foundation for the Humanities

Susan Coleman reported that VFH held its first-ever Fatheread Institute in collaboration with the Hanover County Head Start Program. In March, the fifth Motherhead and Fatheread StoryFest for children and families was offered during the annual Virginia Festival of the Book, sponsored by the VFH.

### Humanities Washington

Washington offered three trainings during the fiscal year, according to Lydia Bassett, including the first of six trainings funded by PacifiCorp Foundation, which covers full tuition for facilitators' training and the cost of books for families who participate in classes. The affiliate also hosted its annual conference "Capturing Stories" June 17 and 18, including a barbecue at the home of national trainer Judy Trefethen. The affiliate raised \$2,500 in September 2004 during its annual Bedtime Stories gala, a fundraiser in which authors from the state read original stories written on a theme – this year, Dreamland.

### Wisconsin Humanities Council

Training continues at a "slow but steady pace" in Wisconsin, with one Institute during 2004-05, according to Dena Wortzel. "I continue to get more and more inquiries as the word of mouth on Motherhead is so fantastic. Each Institute fills up and usually has a waiting list."

### Around the Country by the Numbers

| Affiliate              | Number of facilitators teaching classes | Number of sites |
|------------------------|---|-----------------|
| Alabama                | 239                                     | 125             |
| Arizona                | 80                                      | 40              |
| Los Angeles            | 105                                     | 143             |
| Connecticut            | 60                                      | 28              |
| Guam                   | No data                                 |                 |
| Hawai'i                | 2                                       | 21              |
| Mariana Islands (CNMI) | 4                                       | 16              |
| Minnesota              | 197                                     | 94              |
| Utah                   | 183                                     | 74              |
| Virginia               | 120                                     | 50              |
| Washington             | 150                                     | 108             |
| Wisconsin              | No data                                 |                 |
| TOTALS                 | 1140                                    | 699             |

July 2005

Between the Lines is the newsletter of Motherhead, Inc., a private non-profit organization supported with funding from ChildTrust, Wake County SmartStart, the North Carolina Department of Correction, Wake County Human Services, as well as other grants, contractual partnerships, and individual and corporate gifts.  
 Editor: Anne Bullard  
 Designer: Stephen Gaj Design  
 Phone 919.781.2088 FAX 919.571.8579  
 motherhead@earthlink.net

Motherhead, Inc.  
 Suite 7  
 3924 Browning Place  
 Raleigh, NC 27609