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MetLife Foundation Funds Reach Out and Read's Military Initiative

Award of \$200,000 Will Provide 10,000 Military Families with New Books and Literacy Guidance

(Boston) – November 15, 2011 – Reach Out and Read has been awarded a one-year, \$200,000 grant by [MetLife Foundation](#) to support the organization's Military Initiative. The award was announced in November to coincide with [National Military Family Month](#).

The grant will provide more than 10,000 military families with brand-new books and developmental literacy guidance through the most critical stage of a child's development; improve the training of [Reach Out and Read's](#) volunteer medical providers; and conduct quality assurance evaluation of the military program in order to ensure a high-quality early education for military families.

"On behalf of the children and families we serve throughout all branches of the military, we are grateful for the incredible support of MetLife Foundation," said Reach Out and Read CEO Earl Martin Phalen. "Research shows that if you intervene in the first five years of life and partner with parents, you can dramatically improve the early literacy skills of a child, putting them on the track for success in school and in life. Through its tremendous generosity, MetLife Foundation is making success possible for thousands of children whose families sacrifice so much for our nation."

Currently, Reach Out and Read serves more than 109,000 children of military families annually at 55 U.S. bases around the world. Reach Out and Read is available to more than 30 percent of all children 5 and under who get their care at a military treatment facility.

"MetLife Foundation is proud to help Reach Out and Read expand their vital work with military families at U.S. bases around the world," said Dennis White, president and CEO of MetLife Foundation. "Reading together helps families stay connected and teaches young children critical reading skills that will last a lifetime."

Reading aloud to children is a proven technique to help them cope with stress and anxiety, whether it is because of natural disaster, separation from a parent, or another difficult situation. Because of the unique pressures on military families, including separation, deployment, injury, or even the death of a parent, Reach Out and Read established its first military site in 1999 at Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

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With early support from the Department of Defense, Reach Out and Read began implementing its literacy program at targeted U.S. military healthcare facilities, laying the foundation to one day serve all military families with young children. The Military Initiative was formally launched in 2006.

In April 2011, Reach Out and Read's Military Initiative teamed with the White House's [Joining Forces](#) initiative to honor and support America's service members and their families. Last month, NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams highlighted Reach Out and Read's Military Initiative as part of its "[Making a Difference on the Homefront](#)" series.

About Reach Out and Read

Reach Out and Read is an evidence-based nonprofit organization that promotes early literacy and school readiness in pediatric exam rooms nationwide by giving new books to children and advice to parents about the importance of reading aloud.

Reach Out and Read builds on the unique relationship between parents and medical providers to develop critical early reading skills in children, beginning at 6 months of age. The more than 3.9 million children served annually by Reach Out and Read read together more often, and their children enter kindergarten better prepared to succeed, with larger vocabularies, stronger language skills, and a six-month developmental edge over their peers.

Reading aloud, according to childhood development experts, is the single most effective thing parents can do to help prepare their children to succeed in school.

Reach Out and Read doctors and nurses distribute more than 6.4 million books to children at 4,779 pediatric practices, hospitals, clinics, and health centers in all 50 states, with a special emphasis on children growing up in low-income communities.

About the MetLife Foundation

MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 to carry on MetLife's longstanding tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement.

The Foundation is committed to building a secure future for individuals and communities worldwide. Through programs focusing on empowering older adults, preparing young people and building livable communities, MetLife Foundation increases access and opportunities for people of all ages.

Since it was established, MetLife Foundation has made more than \$500 million in grants and \$75 million in program related investments. For more information visit www.metlife.org

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