

Schools get Rockin' Reader grant materials

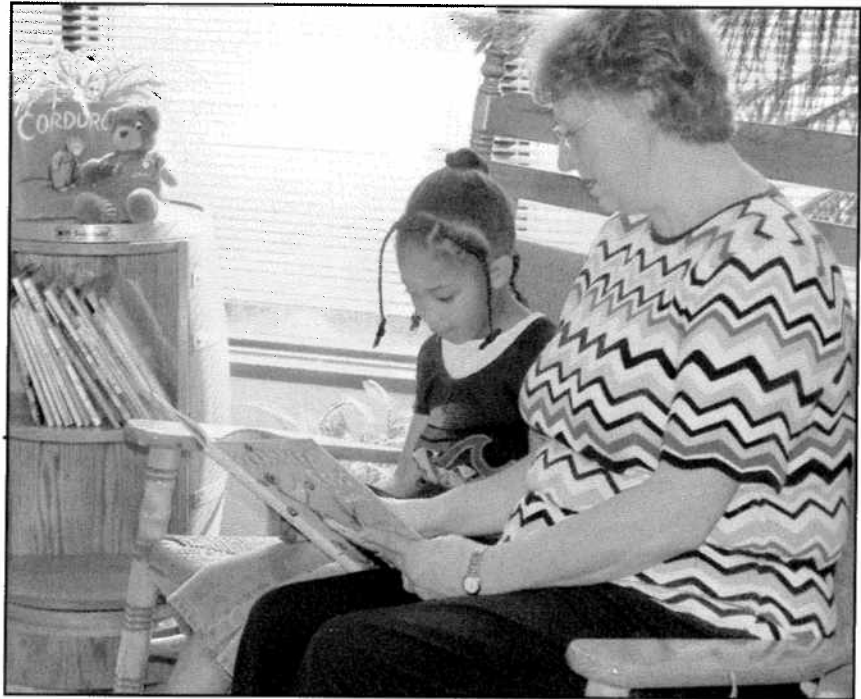
The four local elementary schools which are part of the national Reading First Program have received a special grant from the Rockin' Reader program through Cracker Barrel restaurants.

The schools include Aycock, Clark Street, New Hope and Pinkston Street elementary schools. They each have received two double rockers from Cracker Barrel, along with a barrel shaped bookshelf and approximately 25 new books for students to read. Each of the local schools has placed the new rockers, bookshelves and books in their media centers. The rockers will be used by teachers, school staff members and school volunteers to read books to and with children. The books donated by Cracker Barrel through the program include famous children's literary works, such as the Dr. Seuss' books and Corduroy the Bear books.

Arnetra Terry, coordinator of the Reading First Program for the school system, applied for the grant funding for the four schools.

The Reading First Program is a successful program designed to have teachers, teacher assistants and trained volunteers work with students in kindergarten through third grade daily in 90-minute blocks of uninterrupted time to improve their reading skills. Reading First focuses on the five components of reading, which include phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary awareness and development and comprehension.

The Rockin' Reader program administered through Cracker Barrel features an emphasis in assisting public schools to promote reading. Rockin' Reader strives to provide a comfortable atmosphere for students to read, especially with the help of volunteers. The program actually began because of the vision of a N.C. woman who is a guidance counselor and enjoys reading with students in her school while sitting in a Cracker Barrel double rocker. Linda Minor eventually partnered with the restaurant chain to create the Rockin' Reader program. During the 2008-2009 school year, it is the goal of the Rockin' Reader program to establish programs in 100 elementary schools. Cracker Barrel is working to have programs operating as soon as possible during the school year with plans for the 100 schools to be selected and notified by the end of this school year. Through the program, Cracker Barrel plans to donate a new collection of books each year to each school.



VCS Photo

Velma Robertson, the coach for the Reading First Program at Aycock Elementary School, sits in one of the new double rockers at her school as she listens to Amaya Robinson, a second grader, read the Dr. Seuss book, *Scrambled Eggs Super!*