



THIS WAY TO Reading Success

Three institutions committed to children’s literacy pave the way for teams of educators to promote the love and habit of reading in their students.

BY GRACE ALCID

Some of them had come a long way and arrived in the day before. Others started their day quite early to travel to Manila, while several came in from nearby Makati and Mandaluyong. They all went home with trophies, cash prizes, stories of their meeting Secretary Florencio Abad, and of course, photos of the memorable event.

All of them were teachers, the winners of the recently-concluded Citigroup Success Fund: Awards for Innovation in Reading Programs towards Nation Building. The competition called for proposals from teams of teachers on ways they could promote reading in their respective schools. A partnership between Sa Aklat Sisikat Foundation (one of the groups behind this magazine), Citigroup, and the DepEd, the Citigroup Success Fund envisioned motivated teachers who shared in their goal of creating a nation of readers, so that the intellectual, ethical and social development of Filipino children can be nurtured.



We are the champions! The winning teams pose with DepEd Secretary Florencio Abad, James Hunt and Hans Sicat of Citigroup, and Margarita Delgado and Lizzie Zobel of SAS Foundation at the Citigroup Success Fund awarding ceremony.

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Facts and figures

The awarding ceremony was held last February 2005 at the offices of the Department of Education. DepEd Secretary Florencio Abad, James Hunt and Hans Sicat of Citigroup and Margarita Delgado and Lizzie Zobel of the Sa Aklat Sisikat (SAS) Foundation presented the prizes to the winners.

The Citigroup Success Fund, which

was launched in September 2004, was open to all Sa Aklat Sisikat (SAS) Foundation partner schools. Since this was a pioneering project, it needed to keep the number of participants to a manageable number. Additionally, the SAS schools had all gone through the SAS Reading Program and would therefore all start out with the same level of experience and knowledge. The participating schools were asked to put together a team of teachers who would come up with an innovative reading program for children in Grades 1-6.

Of a total of 298 SAS schools invited to participate, 118 or almost 40% submitted proposals for consideration. All 118 proposals were reviewed by a panel of screeners. Each proposal was seen by three screeners and given an average score based on these criteria: innovation, promotion of community spirit, re-

sourcefulness/creativity, transferability, and sustainability.

A different competition

One unique aspect of the Citigroup Success Fund is the importance of teamwork in the preparation of proposals.

Teachers had to form a team of three to six, formulate a concept for an innovative reading program, and put together the proposal for implementing it in their schools. This compelled teachers to work together for the common good of their school. For those smaller schools whose total teacher population was the maximum number of teachers allowed for the group, they enlisted the help of all their faculty members.

Shining examples

One example was the San Miguel Elementary School of La Carlota in Negros

Occidental, a school whose total student population is approximately 173 students. According then-principal Anthony Liobet, all six teachers of the school took part in developing the proposal for the “Read and Save!” program, which aims to improve the reading and Math ability of its students while creating a sense of responsibility and thriftiness as well. The screeners and judges gave this entry one of the top prizes, feeling that the program was comprehensive and promoted important values. School year 2005 will be exciting for San Miguel Elementary School; Mr. Liobet says that the school will implement the “Read and Save!” pro-

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gram for the first time with the funds they received from the competition.

Nine schools from various regions of the Philippines were declared winners by the panel of judges. The winning proposals incorporated various unique components to encourage reading, such as teaching kids to save money, computers, and art.

To honor these teams, spread the word about reading programs, and generate even more great ideas from other teachers, all winning proposals will be incorporated in the SAS Teachers Manual, which the Foundation uses in training partner school on the SAS Reading Program. Hats off to all program participants, who took time to think out of the box and work towards building a nation of readers!★

ABOUT THE WRITER:

Grace Allas-Alcid was the project manager of the Citigroup Success Fund: Awards for Innovation in Reading Programs towards Nation Building. She is a freelance market research reporter and an English assessor for a placement agency. Grace has three children and she volunteers in her children's school during her free time.



■ LEAP (Love for Extensive Academic Progress) through Reading

Naga Central I, Naga City

The LEAP Reading Program helps children become more independent and autonomous in their choice of reading material. LEAP also aims to enhance oral language development, word recognition, comprehension, critical thinking and study skills. The program encourages teamwork among teachers and parents by achieving a common goal of building a nation of readers.

■ BOOK RELAY

San Fernando Elementary School, Pampanga

San Fernando Elementary School believes that reading in a group is even more enjoyable than reading alone. This program fosters camaraderie, an open exchange of ideas and discussion. Children will be encouraged to read as many books as they can in the given time with a set goal in mind. Each time the goals are met, they will be given a “Success Leaf” and Book Relay Certificates that they can exchange for discount cards at participating commercial establishments.

■ READ AND SAVE!

San Miguel Elementary School, La Carlota City, Negros Occidental

Aside from improving the reading and Math skills, the program also desires to create a sense of responsibility and thriftiness in the students. The primary concept of this program is “the more books they read, the more they can save.” While reading, the children will not only learn to save money but, more importantly, they will learn to invest in knowledge for their future.

■ PROJECT: CREATES (Create Reading Entertainment Through Arts and Theatre Environment and Stimulation)

Buli Elementary School, Muntinlupa City

Self-discovery through reading and storytelling will be the main benefit of this reading program, which instills the love and habit of reading in the most enjoyable and creative way among students. It makes use of the students' various talents and also counts on parental support. The various components of the program include a book marathon, take home books, big books and choral reading groups.

■ BOP (BOOK OF POWER) READING PROGRAM, READING PASSION FOR EXCELLENCE

Hen. Pio del Pilar Elementary School, Makati City

The program's approach to independent reading hopes to teach children to appreciate the value of books in their daily lives. BOP is similar to the SAS Read-a-thon but uses the concept of banking, along with paper money, to encourage students to read. The teachers hope to not only to improve the reading skills of the students but also their Math skills as well.

■ PANDORA'S BOX CHALLENGE

Bibiclat Elementary School, Nueva Ecija

This program capitalizes on a child's curiosity, which the teachers hope will serve as the motivating tool to read. Children need to complete certain tasks to find out what is inside Pandora's Box. The activities are in the form of games, to keep learning and development enjoyable.

■ PICK-READ FOR ART

Hambabauran Elementary School, Ubay, Bohol

This reading program also aims to develop the children's artistic side and also promote group reading. Students are free to read any material they choose, after which they have to conceptualize what they have read in an artistic way and present this to the school.

■ READING ENHANCEMENT SYSTEM

Bagong Buhay E Central School, San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan

This program combines the innovative elements of various reading programs such as Read-a-thon, Pupils Reading Assessment Program and Pupil/Parent Reading sessions. The aim is to provide students, especially those with reading difficulties, with an alternative means to improve their reading skills.

■ PROGRAM CARE

Makati Elementary School, Poblacion, Makati City

This program uses computers and technology to enhance the reading activity. With computers already provided by the City of Makati, the team designed a program using their existing computer resources to improve English proficiency and individual reading comprehension among the students.