



## Mary Hynes, Arlington County Board member, Celebrates Read Across America with Arlington Children

### For More Information:

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Arlington, VA (March 5, 2008) – Unfortunately, Walter J. Tejada will not be able to celebrate Read Across America tomorrow night due to last-minute schedule conflicts.



Instead, Arlington County Board member, Mary Hynes, joined elementary school children, The Reading Connection, and AHC Inc. last night at Virginia Gardens, one of AHC's affordable apartment communities in Arlington. Read Across America, created by the National Education Association in 1997, is held on Dr. Seuss's birthday to celebrate the importance of reading to children.

The celebration was facilitated by volunteers from The Reading Connection, an Arlington-based nonprofit serving at-risk families and their children by creating environments that

encourage reading. In addition to listening to Ms. Hynes read a Dr. Seuss book, children enjoyed birthday cake and various Cat in the Hat activities.

Trained volunteers from The Reading Connection have been working with children living at Virginia Gardens, an affordable housing community owned and operated by AHC Inc., for more than 10 years. Once a week, volunteers read to youngsters, create craft projects together, and provide free books to take home. "We are delighted that Ms. Hynes, who has a long history of supporting Arlington's schools and children, joined us to celebrate the importance of reading to children in community centers and shelters," said Courtney Kissell, Executive Director of The Reading Connection.

The reading program is one of many education-oriented opportunities for children and families offered at AHC's affordable apartment communities. "Encouraging literacy is one of AHC's key missions," said Walter D. Webdale, AHC President and CEO. "Through our six community centers, we provide after-school programs, teen tutoring and ESL opportunities for hundreds of Arlington residents from all walks of life."



### **About the Reading Connection** ([www.thereadingconnection.org](http://www.thereadingconnection.org))

The Reading Connection serves at-risk families and their children by creating environments that encourage reading. This mission is accomplished through:

- Volunteers who read aloud to children at shelters and community centers.
- Donations that provide children with free, new books to keep
- Parent workshops that teach effective reading techniques
- Trainings for family support workers who promote the importance of reading

### **About AHC Inc** ([www.ahcinc.org](http://www.ahcinc.org))

AHC Inc. has been providing low- and moderate-income housing throughout Arlington and the Mid-Atlantic region since 1975. The organization provides:

- 28 properties with 2,700 affordable units
- A wide variety of support opportunities for renters, including after-school programs, tutoring, adult workshops, ESL classes and more.
- Affordable loan programs and help for first-time buyers.
- Programs to help low- and moderate-income homeowners renovate and repair their homes

### **About Read Across America** ([www.nea.org/readacross](http://www.nea.org/readacross))

Developed in 1997 by the National Education Association and Random House Children's Books, Read Across America is celebrated at schools, libraries, and other places children gather on or about March 2, the birthday of the famed children's book author, Dr. Seuss (Theodore Geisel). Seuss revolutionized learning to read with the publication of *The Cat in the Hat* in 1957.

**PHOTOS:** Arlington County Board member Mary Hynes joined elementary school children, The Reading Connection, and AHC Inc. to celebrate Read Across America Day, an annual event held on Dr. Seuss's birthday to highlight the importance of reading to children. Volunteers from The Reading Connection, a nonprofit that encourages reading opportunities for at-risk families and their children, have been reading to children at Virginia Gardens, an affordable apartment complex in Arlington owned by AHC Inc., for more than 10 years.