



Times-Republican

CENTRAL IOWA'S DAILY NEWSPAPER



HOME | NEWS | SPORTS | COMMUNITIES | VIRTUAL NEWSROOM | CLASSIFIEDS | CONTACT US

Saturday, February 24, 2007— Time: 10:08:58 AM CST

Search our 7-day
archive of stories:



News

- Home page
- Local News
- Local Columns
- Central Iowa Today
- Community Calendar
- For the Record
- Obituaries
- National
- International
- WebExtras
- RSS Feeds
- Submit

Sports

- Local Sports
- Sports Column
- National
- Submit

Opinion

- Editorials
- Letters to the Editor
- Tell it like it is
- Submit

Classifieds

- Classifieds
- National

Features

- People in the News
- Crossword

Special Sections

- Baby Brag Book 2006
- Bridal Guide 2007
- Dining & Entertainment 2006
- Farm & Agriculture 2007
- Featured Advertising

Retired teacher's program helps children read

By GREG PIERQUET

A local retired teacher with a passion for reading has developed a book she hopes local parents can use to gain the confidence necessary to guide their children to be active readers.

Ann Berg of Marshalltown, a retired teacher of 35 years, has developed simple guides to accompany classic children's books — guides she believes can change the way parents and children read together.

Berg spent 28 of her 35 years teaching first and second graders at Fisher Elementary. After retiring four years ago, she felt compelled to somehow continue in what she knew best: teaching reading.

"Teaching kids to read was in my blood," she said. "I knew I had to get back into it somehow."

So Berg substitute taught and helped with testing at local schools, but felt there was a niche outside of schools to fill.

Then about a year ago, sparked by a sequence of events in her life she could not ignore, she set out to create a resource for parents to use supplementing what their young student was learning.

As she found out about what resources were out there, she quickly learned that starting her own business was going to be inevitable. Berg's son and daughter-in-law helped put together the web site, and before long, she was in over her head.

"I kept on looking for reasons not to do this," she said. "I'm getting older and the thought of learning new information like copyright law and that kind of thing was pretty intimidating."



Zach Kluver, a first grader at Fisher Elementary, reads from the "Frog and Toad" series with "I Can Really Read" founder Ann Berg. Since its inception in November, Berg's sales have come mostly from grandmothers looking to help their grandchildren become better readers.

Virtual
Newsroom
CLICK
To submit your news

- Financial Guide 2007
- Heart Month 2007
- Marshalltimes February 2007
- Marshalltown Works February
- Past Times February 2007
- T-R TV Times 2-18-2007
- Valentine Greetings 2007

Contact us

- Staff contacts
- How to subscribe
- About Us
- Area Businesses
- FAQs
- Terms of Service



Choose a language to translate this page!



Select to language



Print Article



Email this story to a friend



Respond to this story

After a fateful glance at a newspaper's business page — a page containing a column talking about how to deal with copyright law — Berg gave in.

During subsequent months she developed simple tools — each just a page in size — that parents can use along with existing children's books to guide them and their child in the reading process.

She launched her company "I Can Really Read" in November and is now busy meeting with Marshalltown Community School District principals about the availability of her product.

Berg stressed that she is not looking to make money and said she will not be knocking on doors with her product, but will rely on word-of-mouth advertising paired with the trust she gained in people who knew her as a teacher over the years.

"I'm just passionate about reading comprehension, and I think this tool is a subtle way parents can gain the confidence they need to help their children become confident readers," she said.

She even urged that parents do not need to purchase a guide for each book they read with their child, saying that once parents know what to look for, they can use those same principles for any reading they and their child do.

The guide puts something in parents' hands they can use to go through a book with their child," she said. "It gives them guided questions to share with their child while reading the book together, and takes some of the intimidation out of the process."

She said one illustration she gives parents is this: "I can read a book about how to perform an appendectomy and understand everything in it, but that doesn't mean you want me performing one on you."

She said that same theory applies to children exploring books and reading.

"I've found over the years that a vast majority of parents do care that their child reads, but there are many factors that keep them from teaching the child," she said. "Maybe they were never a good reader, or maybe they had bad experiences in school, so they don't want to pass those feelings along to their child. There are a lot of reasons, and hopefully this resource will make the process less intimidating."

Berg said parents of pre-school children can purchase and use the guides, but that they were developed to be used with children already learning to read in school.

Guides can be purchased by themselves for \$2.50 or with their corresponding book for \$6.50.

Go to www.icanreallyread.com to learn more about or order Berg's products and for some free general tips for reading with your child.

Contact Greg Pierquet at 641-753-6611 or gpierquet@timesrepublican.com

Subscribe to the Time-Republican today.



TIMES-REPUBLICAN
Central Iowa's Daily Newspaper

The Times-Republican
135 West Main Street
Marshalltown, IA 50158
641-753-6611

[HOME](#) | [NEWS](#) | [SPORTS](#) | [COMMUNITIES](#) | [CLASSIFIEDS](#) | [CONTACT US](#)

If you have any problems, questions, or comments regarding www.timesrepublican.com, please contact the Ken Larson. For all other comments, please see our [Contact](#) section to send feedback to The Times-Republican. Users of this site agree to our [Terms of Service](#).

Copyright 2007 — The Times-Republican