

## Pinkerton Supports Comprehensive Literacy Initiative in South Jamaica, Queens

The Pinkerton Foundation recently awarded nearly \$1.2 million in grants to support and coordinate a new Neighborhood Literacy Initiative in South Jamaica Queens. The Initiative is a comprehensive community-based pilot program designed to serve more than 3,000 children and their families and to help them build a platform of strong literacy skills.

Focused on two neighborhoods with records of deep reading challenges, the Initiative aims to provide a continuum of literacy services that builds on existing programs and creates additional services to fill gaps in current programming. Ten literacy organizations will work together to help low-income children make progress toward reading on grade level by third grade and to sustain literacy success through elementary school and beyond.

“We believe the Literacy Initiative has the potential to make a significant impact on two communities that are plagued with high poverty and extremely low literacy rates,” said Rick Smith, President of The Pinkerton Foundation. “Collaboration is the key to success. By expanding and coordinating a ladder of programs that employ health care providers, senior citizens, college students and parent mentors, librarians and other trained professionals, the Initiative hopes to inspire a culture of literacy in South Jamaica.”

In developing the Initiative, Pinkerton awarded grants to the following programs:

\***Reach Out and Read of Greater New York** to enlist medical providers to work with low income parents to emphasize the importance of reading for their young children.

\***The Parent Child Home Program** to work with low-income families to prepare their children, sixteen months to four years, to be “school-ready.”

\***Jumpstart for Young Children**, which employs college students to work one-on-one with pre-school children to prepare them for kindergarten and beyond.

\***BELL**, a specialist in out-of-school-time learning, to provide comprehensive academic programming during the summer in an effort to prevent summer learning loss.

\***Experience Corps** to pair retired adult volunteers with individual kindergarten, first and second graders to reinforce reading skills during the school day.

\***READ Alliance** to pair its teen tutors with struggling kindergarten and first grade readers in the after-school hours.

\***Reading Partners** to enlist and train adult volunteers to work with third, fourth and fifth-grade students in one-on-one tutoring.

\***Literacy Inc. (LINC)** to coordinate the Initiative and match elementary classes with older student mentors. LINC will also train parent volunteers to stage reading celebrations and read aloud in medical offices, apartment complexes, parks, and other public places.

\***Learning Leaders** to join with LINC to train parents to become effective in-school volunteers.

\***The Queens Library Public Library** (South Jamaica and Baisley Park Branches) to expand their reading programs and serve as anchor sites for the Initiative. As a result of the Pinkerton grant, the South Jamaica branch will also be able to open on Saturdays and during the summer with a full-time children's librarian.

In addition, all the programs will engage in community-wide and school-wide events and publicity campaigns to support a shared message about the importance of literacy.

#### **About the Pinkerton Foundation**

The Pinkerton Foundation is an independent grantmaking organization established in 1966 by Robert Allan Pinkerton, the Chairman and CEO of Pinkerton's, Inc., then the nation's oldest and largest security company. The foundation, which retains no ties to the firm, supports community-based programs for children, youth and families in economically disadvantaged areas in New York City.