

Photographs by  
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## Creating a Culture of Literacy

DESIGNED TO FOSTER a new culture of reading in an impoverished, academically struggling community in Queens, South Jamaica Reads knits together and expands a continuum of literacy services for children from birth to fifth grade. With the help of local businesses, health providers and the library system, ten Pinkerton-funded organizations working together have produced very promising results. Reading levels at the two target schools are up. According to Algorhythm, an independent evaluator, “the partnership has afforded a depth and breadth of impact that is extraordinary.” In just under two years, the Initiative hosted 75 literacy-related events, involved more than 1,000 parents and 2,000 children and distributed 12,000 free books. In addition, more than 30 local businesses supporting the project have extended discounts to both the Jamaica Reads “passport” holders and children and adults who present library cards. In 2015, Pinkerton’s board voted to expand the program to a similarly distressed neighborhood in East New York, Brooklyn. ♦



**Parent-Child Home Program:** Sian Ruiz and her daughter Jesse Joy Ruiz (left) share a joyful moment reading. The program, an initiative of South Jamaica Reads, encourages reading at an early age. Trained home visitors provide books and toys that develop pre-literacy skills and engender a love of learning, while equipping parents to serve as an educational resource.



**Reading on the Rails:** The program (above) brought parents and children together to read on a retro subway car at LINC’s 2016 Literacy Olympics’ opening ceremony at the MTA Transit Museum.

**Queens Library Event:** Kids gather at Boulevard Pizza (left) with their books to take a break from reading. The pizzeria gives a ten percent discount to those who participate in South Jamaica Reads.



**Father's Day:** PS 40 student Kamarr Collins (above) hugs his father, Kareem Collins, during the South Jamaica Reads Father's Day breakfast.



**Literacy Fair:** Excited Frog Day celebrants reach out to touch Freddie the Frog, who is both a story book character and a multimedia star.

**Luau Party:** Madison Blackshear (above left) makes a literary point to Alexis Boucher at the Family Academy Luau Party at PS 48 in Jamaica, Queens.

**Literacy Fair:** Celebrating LINC's monthly animal theme, Jessica Rogel (right) community manager for Queens, reads a story to kids attending July's Frog Day celebration.

