

10 YEARS OF STORIES



WOODLAND HILLS ELEMENTARY STUDENTS ENJOY READING INSTEAD OF TELEVISION

The colorful and exuberant rhymes of Dr. Seuss. The time-traveling adventures of Jack and Annie in their Magic Tree House. The unfortunate series of events faced by Lemony Snicket. Children's literature is filled with joy and excitement!

But it takes adults – teachers and parents working together– to get kids hooked on reading so it becomes a lifelong habit.

In 2001, Woodland Hills Elementary School teachers Cindy Babich and Betsy Duplechain wrote a grant to the Humble ISD Education Foundation to fund R.I.O.T., Reading Instead of Television. The program provided monthly calendars for parents to record students' at-home reading minutes. Students received recognition and incentives, such as bookmarks and stickers, if they met the monthly goal of 240 at-home minutes. The starter grant was just \$740 but it has made a lasting difference.

Seven years later, R.I.O.T. is still going strong at WHE. The program is now funded by the PTA. Parent volunteers collect calendars. Trophies are presented at the end-of year awards assembly to students who met the goal every month. All students strive to be included in R.I.O.T. Recess – 15 to 20 minutes on the playground, once a month, for students who met the monthly goal. At that time, students in grade K-2 receive a sticker or bookmark. Students in grades 3-5 receive a homework pass. Since 2002, over 4.9 million minutes have been logged in by students reading at home.

It's all about training kids in an academic habit that will serve them well in school, and in life. "We want them to enjoy reading in all kinds of settings," Mrs. Duplechain said "We want them to know reading is fun even outside of school."

The biggest determining factor if a child will be a lifelong reader is if they are reading at home or being read to at home. "Therefore, as educators, we must find ways to support parents reading with their children. And for us at Woodland Hills, R.I.O.T. is our homerun winner," Mrs. Babich said.

In the Foundation's ten years of existence, over \$3.1 million dollars have been awarded to Humble ISD educators to support innovative enrichment projects in our classrooms. For more information, please visit www.humbleisd.foundation.org.



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