



“It’s Time To Read With Me!” first aired on WGTM 590 AM radio in Wilson, North Carolina, on Monday, June 23, 2008, is a reading enrichment program designed to address the declining reading and comprehension levels of children primarily in fifth through twelfth grades with the goals of elevate reading skills, curtail the alarming dropout rate reported at 1.2 million children per year, and affectively reducing the high incarceration and recidivism of adolescents and young adults. By utilizing the radio airwaves, “It’s Time To Read With Me” will reach children in the privacy of their homes making this innovative, timely, and educational learning tool accessible to all children regardless of his/her socioeconomic status.

Program Format: An author/program host will read from a pre-selected, pre-approved books, short stories, or poems in an engaging manner that will encourage children participants to embrace the joy of reading while improving comprehension levels, learning positive ways of tackling life’s challenges, and developing coping skills. To stimulate interest and constructive competition, at agreed upon points in the story, children participants (individual or groups formed through schools, community organizations, and churches) will be given questions at the beginning of each reading session. At the conclusion of each hour-long reading session, the participant and/or group that is the first to answer the required or the highest number correctly will receive a pre-announced award. Following the conclusion of the “It’s Time To Read With Me! segment (i.e., summer, Black History Month, etc.), a lively on-air discussion will take place with the author/program host. At the conclusion of the on-air discussion with the author/program host, children participants will be invited to write an essay of one hundred words or less about a valuable lesson learned. A pre-determined award be given to the finalist(s) who writes and submits the most compelling and well-written essay. The finalist will receive broad based publicity: radio, TV spots, and print from cooperating media outlets.

Why Sponsors Are Needed? The Urgency Of Now – With 1.2 million children reportedly dropping out of school every year, with the increasing number of children reading below grade level, with the alarming rate of incarcerations and recidivism linked to low levels of education, “It’s Time To Read With Me!” is a necessity. According to

the West Virginia Department of Education Read Aloud Project, there are many purposes for read aloud: (1) to provide motivation and enjoyment; (2) to build students' background knowledge and develop vocabulary. Many studies, especially Hart and Risley's *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children* (1996), testify that: "One of the best ways to enrich children's knowledge of language and teach them new content is by reading not only narrative, but informational text as well. Studies indicate that children can learn about the world around them from listening to informational books (Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003). And, "another purpose for engaging students in read aloud is to teach specific strategies and skills for comprehension." Research also states that, "The single most important activity for building the knowledge required to eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children." [National Reading Panel Report – 2000] Everyone benefits when our children succeed. Children learn by listening to their peers of varying ages, races, backgrounds, and genders. Children who are less likely to ask questions in group-settings will hear a wide range of differing views, opinions, and ideas from their peers that are sure to encourage individuality and build self-confidence. Having the learning momentum continue during summer vacation, Black History Month, Christmas, and spring breaks will benefit all children as well adults. "It's Time To Read With Me!" is committed to providing as many children participants as possible, whose parents or guardians cannot afford the added expense, access to at least one copy of the pre-selected reading material. (Proof of financial assistance is required.) By underwriting the costs of "It's Time To Read With Me!" each Official Sponsor can ensure that this desperately needed program is one steeped in excellence, and will be accessible via radio stations that serve the most underserved locales and diverse communities thus positively impacting the futures of countless young lives.

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