



## Achieving In School With RFB&D's Help Proves "Priceless" For New Brunswick Students



Students, teachers and administrators from New Brunswick's Roosevelt School presented the New Jersey Unit and RFB&D's national headquarters with a personalized planter and quilt in appreciation for RFB&D's accommodation that helps the students achieve in the classroom. According to Supervisor of Special Education for the New Brunswick School District **Debra Daly Massado**, "You see it in their report cards. They get As and Bs when they were used to failure." The quilt thanking RFB&D, concludes that achieving in school is "Priceless."

### Potterpalooza!



**Edith Borden** got into the Hogwarts spirit during the July 16 Potterpalooza marathon when New Jersey Unit volunteers and national headquarters' staff finished *Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince* less than 24 hours after the blockbuster's release. Telex, the manufacturer of the Scholar digital player, offered members a discount on the player when they ordered the best seller. The event received wide coverage from local media and the wire services.

### Volunteers Help Outreach Navigate NJ's Curriculum Maze

Meeting the curriculum needs of New Jersey schools is a unique task. States like Texas and Florida have a single mandated curriculum. On the other hand, each of New Jersey's 649 school boards have individual curriculums. That makes the New Jersey Unit Educational Outreach Center's response to the schools it serves daunting.

Peer into the educational outreach center on any given day and you're likely to see at least one volunteer involved in a behind the scene project. Each volunteer performs a myriad of tasks for the center staff headed by director **Christine Ranaghan**.

Educational outreach volunteers **Susan Kaplan**, **Shelley Sachs**, **Betsey Butler**, **Debbie Faigen**, **Diane Bucher**, **Charles Brunswick**, **Michele Crawford**, and summer intern **Anja Durvasula** check the availability of books needed for schools covered by Curriculum Specialist **Sherry Deutsch** and Professional Service Provider **Benjamin Rivera**; help Membership Service Coordinator **Debbie Passafiume** process incoming book

orders from member school districts; assist in school curriculum reviews and other special projects like Susan Kaplan's large map of New Jersey indicating districts with RFB&D's Learning Through Listening® (LTL) Institutional Memberships.

Chris, Ben, and Debbie agree with Sherry's observation that along with their talents and dedication, the outreach volunteers' "enthusiasm enhances the outreach center."



Outreach volunteer Susan Kaplan with her map of New Jersey school districts with RFB&D's LTL Institutional Memberships.

# Record-A-Thon Reaches Lofty Goals



The New Jersey Unit's 2005 Record-A-Thon reached its goals of raising \$65,000 and recording 383 hours during the week of April 25-30. Among the highlights were, top from left: **Former Governor Christine Todd Whitman**, the event's honorary chair, signs her best seller *It's My Party Too* for **Sandi Wilson**; NJN Morning Edition host **Robin Shannon** (l.) with volunteer **Anne Young**; Board Chair **Cynthia Hillas** and Executive Director **Stephanie Campbell** present the Crystal Book Award to **Richard Bilotti**, publisher of *The Times of Trenton* during the corporate open house; RFB&D President **John Kelly**, directed by his son, **Sam**. Bottom from left: **Lois Laverty** and **Felicia Powell** enjoy **Steve Montefusco's** annual omelet breakfast bash; Institute for Advanced Study Professor Emeritus **Freeman Dyson**, directed by **Jen Weber**; and **Nat Hartshorne** closely inspects silent auction items while **Susanne McNatt** looks on.

## Volunteer Spotlight: For the Ragavans, Volunteering At RFB&D Makes For Family Fun

Eight years ago, **Savi Ragavan** was, "looking for a worthy cause to do some volunteering," and came across an appeal from RFB&D. Over the next few years, her husband, **Chet**, and twin daughters **Kavita** and **Preeta**, became mainstays at the studio.

Savi and Chet read computer and philosophy texts and lend their backgrounds from their birthplace of India to record books about southern Asian cultures and religions. Kavita and Preeta have served many roles on Monday evenings and Saturday mornings: reading books for middle school members, checking, directing, training new volunteers, and bookmarking.

This fall, Preeta is off to Cornell University and Kavita is studying at the University of Chicago where she is also hoping to find time to volunteer at the Chicago studio.

Kavita says, "It's great to volunteer as a family because it's been a way of helping people through which we all have fun. RFB&D has been

one of the most meaningful things I do, because I've always placed a high value on education and am glad to give opportunities to people who are blind and dyslexic."



Savi, Kavita, Preeta and Chet Ragavan have shared their love of learning and reading with countless RFB&D members. Kavita and Preeta are starting their college careers this fall.

Preeta adds, "I've had a certain love for books and the printed word from a young age, so the mission of RFB&D has always resonated with me." She expects to continue volunteering when she is home during winter and summer breaks.

After eight years, Savi sees RFB&D as "a regular part" of her life and believes the experience has helped her "develop as a person in various ways." She is also impressed by "the sheer volume of work involved in recording books and how the dedicated staff and volunteers are able to accomplish the mammoth task of giving people with visual disabilities access to the printed word."

Savi observes, "Some of the volunteers really amaze me with the amount of time they give to the cause."

And the RFB&D family is thankful for the Ragavan family's time, talent and dedication to its mission.

# “Without Our Volunteers We Are Nothing”



The Volunteer Recognition Luncheon held at the **Queenship of Mary Church** in Plainsboro celebrated the contributions made by volunteers over the past year. Certificates were given recognizing longevity of service, hours given over the past year and other achievements. As Director of Educational Outreach Christine Ranaghan said, “Without the volunteers, we are nothing.” Top from left: **Kate Terrell**, **Jerry Freedman**, **Irwin Gordon**, **Robert Fluss** and **Patty Cooper** take time out from the wonderful lunch to smile for the camera; Production Director **Jessie Falcone** presents **Clif Giddings** with an RFB&D apron in appreciation of the scrumptious delights he provides the studio; 32 year volunteer **Phyllis Branin** was celebrated for her more than 400 hours of service over the past year and **Dot Messineo** was feted for her more than 300 hours of service. Bottom from left: **Sandie Rabinowitz** thanks Assistant Production Director **Tony Gruenewald** for his tribute to her late husband and 40 year volunteer **Irv Rabinowitz**; **Virginia Finley**, **Debbye Castoldi**, **Chris Buchner**, **Jerry Monastersky**, **Rose Marie Proietti**, **Grace Anderson**, **Barbara Greene** and **Ruth Friedlander** enjoy the festivities; **Albert** and **Marilyn Medwin** celebrate 20 years of service to RFB&D.

## Sherry Deutsch: RFB&D’s Master of NJ’s Diverse Curriculums

If you live in New Jersey you know this seemingly small state is bursting with mountains, beaches, urban centers, farms, wetlands and much more than most people realize. Its schools are equally diverse with each of the 649 districts employing its own unique curriculum.

Making sure these districts have access to the books they need is a daunting task; with Curriculum Specialist Sherry Deutsch at the

helm, New Jersey’s schools with RFB&D’s Learning Through Listening® Institutional Memberships know their needs will be met.

Sherry joined Chris Ranaghan at the Educational Outreach Center in 2000 as a volunteer. She says she “took a jump off the diving board,” to become the unit’s part-time outreach coordinator for the Trenton schools. One of her first projects was helping to get the outreach

center designated as a professional development provider by the New Jersey Department of Education. She has also worked with national headquarters to create overlays for the Victor Reader Pro and Victor Classic+. These visual guides assist our members with learning disabilities to effectively use

the digital desktop players. Sherry also works with webmaster Sandy Shapiro to add educationally related topics to the unit’s website.

Formerly a Montessori directress and supervisor in schools in Richmond, Virginia and Belmont, California, Sherry’s background includes experience as a VISTA volunteer with Head Start centers in Richmond after graduating with a degree in K-8 education from Virginia Commonwealth University. She also holds an International Montessori Certificate and a Certificate in Health and Human Services Administration from Rider University. She is a board member of the Rock Brook School Foundation in Skillman and volunteers at the kosher food pantry of Jewish Family Services of Mercer County.

Sherry has two daughters, Lori, a junior at Hopewell Valley Central High School and Rachel who is in eighth grade at Y.A.L.E. in Cherry Hill. Lori’s art work can be seen on the unit’s stationery. Sherry’s husband, **Len Epstein**, has volunteered with the unit on a number of special computer-oriented projects.

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# Holiday Shopping With The New Jersey Unit

**BARNES & NOBLE** *Wrapping For Dollars*  
BOOKSELLERS

During the holiday season, Barnes & Noble at Princeton MarketFair offers a gift wrapping table to be used by local nonprofits. All donations received from gift-wrapping go directly to the New Jersey nonprofit.

The New Jersey Unit is scheduled **Friday, December 2 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.** **Volunteers are needed to man the table in pairs for two hour shifts. EXPERIENCE IS NOT NECESSARY.** Bring a friend, have coffee, catch up on holiday happenings, wrap for the customers and rap with them about RFB&D. This is a terrific way to let people know about the great work RFB&D does for students who depend on us for their audio textbooks.

To be an RFB&D wrapper,  
call Alison Hankinson at (609) 921-8733.

## Learn More About RFB&D at a Learning Through Listening Hour

Have you ever wondered what goes into recording RFB&D's AudioPlus™ or Classic Cassettes™ books that help students throughout the nation? Have you wondered what you can do to help the unit achieve its mission?

Each month, the first Wednesday from 9 to 10 a.m. and the third Wednesday from 6 to 7 p.m., the unit holds a Learning Through Listening Hour explaining the whats, whys and hows of RFB&D.

If you or someone you know would like to attend a Learning Through Listening Hour at the New Jersey Unit's home in St. Joseph's Seminary in Plainsboro, please contact Sandi Wilson at 609-750-9579.

Clip this coupon and bring it to **Ten Thousand Villages on Sunday, November 27 between 1 and 5 p.m.** Tell them you are shopping to benefit RFB&D and they will donate **15%** of your purchase to our programs for students with print disabilities.



TEN THOUSAND  
VILLAGES

Princeton Shopping Center  
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