

For Immediate Release

***READ 180* TURNS STRUGGLING READERS INTO ALL-STARS**

Scholastic Recognizes Nine READ 180® All-Stars Award Recipients for Turning Their Lives Around and Learning to Read

New York, NY, April 14, 2009 – As the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides unprecedented funding to school districts nationwide, American schools are able to make a powerful difference in the lives of those students who need the most help. Stimulus funding promises new opportunities for the more than two-thirds of American eighth-graders who read below grade level, struggle with their schoolwork and are at risk of dropping out.

There are districts across the country that are already leading the way, proving that it's never too late to learn to read and get on the path to success in school. This week, Scholastic celebrates nine students in grades 4 through 12 who – having once struggled to read and at risk of becoming high school dropouts – have beaten the odds with the help of their dedicated teachers, and become successful readers and students.

The nine winners of the sixth annual [READ 180® All-Star Awards](#) were announced today by [Scholastic](#) (NASDAQ: SCHL), the largest publisher and distributor of children's books and a leader in educational technology and children's media. The awards program was created to honor adolescents nationwide who have learned to read despite formidable odds.

While the recipients of the awards range in age, home state and background, they share similar stories with other struggling readers – poor reading skills resulting in low self-esteem, low achievement levels and the possibility of becoming high school dropouts. Some of the award winners faced additional hurdles: learning English as a second language, special education classification or physical and emotional challenges. Now, they have each accomplished something remarkable—raising their reading scores, feeling more confident in class, boosting their grades, and passing their excitement onto others—and they are now on a path to attend college.

“The stories of these students are an inspiration to all of us. Through dedication and hard work, and with the help of their amazing teachers, these All-Stars have turned their lives around and proven that there is no goal that they cannot reach,” said Margery Mayer, President, Scholastic Education. “We are proud to honor these students with the *READ 180* All-Star Award, and celebrate the bright futures they have ahead of them.”

The 2009 READ 180 All-Star Award winners are:

Elementary School

Logan Shaw

- Age: 12 – Grade: 6 – Bloomington, IN
- Logan overcame a learning disability and the tragic death of his father to turn himself into an All-Star.

Logan had always struggled with reading because of a learning disability and he admits that he “gave up on school” after his father died tragically last year. After a year and a half in *READ 180*, Logan has made remarkable progress—raising his reading scores by three grade levels. Logan is now proud to say that he reads for fun. **“I stuck with it and I didn’t quit,”** he said. **“I am so glad I had *READ 180* to make me a better reader and better student.”**

John Meneces

- Age 9 – Grade: 4 – Houston, TX
- Once a shy boy who spoke only Spanish at home and struggled with English, John is now an avid reader and learner.

John’s family speaks only Spanish at home, and his struggles to catch up to his peers in reading and writing contributed to his becoming shy and unsure of himself. He began READ 180 reading at a first grade level and now his teachers describe him as one of the most eager learners they have ever seen. Now, John reads on grade level, makes frequent trips to the public library, and his curiosity shines through in every subject. **“I used to think school was boring,”** John said, **“But now, after school when I get home, I start reading.”**

Gregmarie Almodovar

- Age: 10 – Grade: 4 – Bethlehem, PA
- In less than a year, Gregmarie has transformed from a nervous student with only basic reading skills to an All-Star at her school.

When Gregmarie started READ 180 at the beginning of the school year, she was truly a reluctant learner, and had only basic reading skills. She was nervous about volunteering ideas in class and her mother and teachers worried about her progress. After seven months in READ 180, she has transformed her work ethic and now offers help to others with their schoolwork. She’s now on a path toward success. **“When I started school last year, reading was hard and I was scared I wouldn’t be able to learn and catch up,”** she said, **“I got an A in reading on my last report card. I made honor roll! When I grow up, I want to be a teacher or a doctor.”**

Middle School

Jacob Colon

- Age: 14 – Grade: 8 – Holyoke, MA
- Jacob hated to read and was embarrassed to read in front of other students. Now this 8th grader is reading at an 11th grade level.

Coming from a native Spanish-speaking family, Jacob was in desperate need of help with his reading—he began the 7th grade reading at a 2nd grade level. Jacob says he thought “reading was a joke,” and his teachers feared he might fall through the cracks. After a year and a half of intervention with READ 180 Jacob is now reading on an 11th grade level, says he loves reading, especially non-fiction, and is much more confident. **“Now I take more pride in the work I do in class,”** says Jacob. **“Today I read to younger students. I even ran for Class President this year!”**

Justin Chaparro

- Age: 13 – Grade: 7 – Port St. Lucie, FL
- Justin started this school year reading at a 3rd grade level. Now he reads on grade level and is excited about school and his future.

After changing schools several times in the past few years, Justin began the 7th grade reading far below grade level. His poor reading skills led to frequent absences from school and behavior issues. After only 6 months in READ 180, Justin has a newfound confidence, is reading on grade level, and is now participating in class and rarely absent from school. **“I’m more responsible, I feel better and I actually get As because I focus more,”** he says.

David Boucher

- Age: 14 – Grade: 8 – Green Bay, WI
- David hardly ever completed his homework and shut down when he was offered help. Now he's a leader in his class and proud of his own turnaround.

David's poor grades and disinterest in reading led to a poor attitude toward school and high absence rates before he started READ 180. "I used to be the worst reader in my class. I felt like when I read a book I wanted to rip it up," he said. His transformation in the last year and a half has been nothing short of remarkable. He has raised his reading scores three grade levels and now, instead of refusing to do his work, he helps others complete theirs. **"In READ 180, I read over 20 books. I never thought I would be able to do that,"** says David.

High School

Alisa Paxton

- Age: 16 – Grade: 10 – Sparks, NV
- Alisa has had many obstacles to overcome, including her struggles with reading. Now she has lofty career goals.

Born with a disability which affects her memory, speech and mobility, Alisa entered her freshman year of high school struggling to keep up with her peers and nervous about speaking in class. After a year and a half of READ 180, Alisa's confidence is on the rise and she is excited about her future. She has plans to become a reflexology specialist. Says Alisa, **"Life is better because of my reading and I feel confident about in the future."**

Greg Gault

- Age: 15 – Grade: 10 – Lincolnshire, IL
- Once a Special Education student, Greg's struggles with reading left him frustrated and angry. Now he reads above grade level and is taking regular education classes.

Placed in special education in elementary school, Greg has struggled with reading since early on. As he grew older, that struggle led to frustration and anger. When he began READ 180 as a freshman, Greg was reading at a third grade level. Today, a year and a half later, Greg has made "astounding progress," according to his teachers. Now Greg is an avid reader—reading above grade level, and no longer fearing being called upon in class. **"READ 180 has changed not only my outlook on reading, but my outlook on life,"** he says.

Christina Chibuoke

- Age: 15 – Grade: 9 – Lanham, MD
- Christina was disappointed in herself when her reading scores showed she needed help. Now she's a role model of dedication and determination for other students.

Christina entered READ 180 reading far below grade level, and was determined make up ground fast. Through hard work and academic commitment, she has been able to improve her reading grades from Cs to As and Bs, and in just a few months, was able to raise her reading scores three grade levels. **"READ 180 has made a big difference in my life,"** she said, **"I have noticed that I am writing more like a high school student and not like a middle school student."**

The nine *READ 180* All-Stars will each receive a \$1,200 check from Scholastic to be used towards furthering their education, and the winning students' nominating teachers will each receive \$1,000 worth of Scholastic *READ 180* books and materials for their classrooms.

Click here to learn more about [READ 180](#).

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