

Vestra Wealth announces Volunteer Reading Help as their chosen Corporate Charity



Volunteer Reading Help
confident children, literate for life

London, 20 October 2011: Vestra Wealth is pleased to announce that they have selected Volunteer Reading Help (VRH) as their chosen Corporate Charity, becoming the charity's first national Corporate Patron.

VRH is a national charity that provides volunteer reading helpers who work in schools with children between the ages of 6 and 11 years who have fallen behind with their reading and require extra support and mentoring. There is currently an astounding literacy crisis within the UK with almost:

- 1 in 5 children leave primary school without the expected literacy level for their age
- 1 in 5 children leaves secondary school without being able to fully read or write
- 1 in 6 working adults cannot read with confidence
- 1 in 3 children do not own a book

VRH reading helpers support the same children week in, week out, giving each child an hour of quality, one-to-one time. With the support of VRH a child's approach to reading and learning is often transformed, standards improve and they grow in self esteem and confidence.

The Volunteer Reading Help model has been developed over nearly 40 years and in that time VRH have helped tens of thousands of children become confident readers and literate for life. Over the last year alone Volunteer Reading Help has assisted over 5,000 children improve their reading skills, giving them a brighter future.

David Scott, Managing Partner at Vestra Wealth comments:

"Vestra Wealth is delighted to be supporting Volunteer Reading Help as a Corporate Patron. Our four year commitment will allow us to focus on the long term goal of assisting more children both through volunteer support and financial assistance.

We were startled at the number of children between 6 and 11 years old who struggle to reach adequate reading levels, a vital skill in life which so many of us take for granted. At Vestra we believe in the importance of developing younger individuals and this is reflected in our commitment to VRH, helping children who need one-to-one assistance in learning to read, thereby giving them confidence and a chance to achieve success in the future. A number of our staff are currently receiving training so that they may provide reading support.

Our four year commitment will enable our whole team to become involved in some way, either as part of the volunteer scheme or as a member of the Corporate Challenge Team raising funds. By getting involved in either area Vestra will not only be providing support but individuals will have the opportunity to develop some of their own skills further."

Sue Porto, CEO Volunteer Reading Help, adds:

"We are delighted that Vestra Wealth has signed up as Volunteer Reading Help's first Corporate Patron and has made a four year commitment to help us achieve our goal of a nation of confident children who are literate for life. Their financial support will allow us to continue and expand our vital work providing one-to-one literacy support through our trained reading helpers to children in disadvantaged areas. Last year 1 in 5 children left Primary School without having reached the required literacy level and with illiteracy linked to unemployment, poor health and even involvement in the criminal justice system, the need for Vestra Wealth's commitment to us has never been greater.

Furthermore, I am thrilled to hear that Vestra Wealth employees themselves will be helping children who struggle with their reading to develop a love of reading and learning as ten employees from across the company will volunteer every week to provide literacy support to children in a local Primary School.

We look forward to a long and successful partnership with Vestra Wealth that will ultimately serve to enhance the lives of many children across England."



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As well as providing help within the community, Vestra Wealth has committed to enter a team of 6-8 employees to VRH's Corporate Challenge to raise funds for the charity over a 6 month period. The Vestra Wealth team will compete against other corporate teams pitching fund raising ideas to a 'Dragons Den' style panel before undertaking fund raising events.

Ends

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about Volunteer Reading Help (VRH)

Since 1973 Volunteer Reading Help recruits, trains and supports volunteers to work in primary schools with children who have fallen behind with their reading. VRH volunteer reading helpers visit schools providing one-to-one support to children transforming their lives by giving them the gift of reading. The results of this can be little short of life-changing often addressing early problems that could have a serious impact later in life. The VRH model has been developed over nearly 40 years and in that time has helped tens of thousands of children to become confident readers, literate for life.

Volunteer Reading Help VRH reading helpers work with children to:

- Increase overall confidence
- Improve reading levels
- Inspire a lifelong love of reading

There are many reasons why a child may fall behind with their reading. They may lack support at home, they may not have English as a first language, they may simply have poor eyesight. VRH reading helpers are trained to recognise what challenges these children face and work through them. With access to a library of books and games at their local branch they can tailor their sessions to best support the children they work with.

In the academic year 2009/10, Volunteer Reading Help had:

- Over 1,700 reading helpers in over 1,000 schools across England
- Supported more than 5,000 children

VRH is currently working with the London Evening Standard to raise awareness of the issues around literacy as its partner charity for its Get London Reading campaign.

Additional information on VRH can be found at <http://www.vrh.org.uk/>

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