

# **Leveraging National Partnerships to Increase School Readiness in Your Community**

**Community Leader's Conference**

**Baltimore, MD**

**May 15, 2008**



## **Chandler Arnold**

**Senior Vice President/Executive Director**

**First Book Marketplace**

Chandler Arnold is a Senior Vice President at First Book, an international nonprofit organization that has distributed more than 55 million new books to children from low-income families. Chandler is also the Executive Director of the First Book Marketplace, an online initiative that provides books to community-based literacy programs at deeply discounted prices. After a very successful pilot phase, the Marketplace recently won the grand prize in a national business plan competition sponsored by the Goldman Sachs Foundation and the Yale School of Management and was named the most innovative social enterprise of the year by the Social Enterprise Alliance.

Prior to joining First Book, Mr. Arnold worked for The Coca-Cola Company, where he focused on customer segmentation and marketing, and The Boston Consulting Group, where he advised corporations on profit maximization, public-private partnerships, and organizational design. Chandler graduated from Harvard University and holds an MBA from the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University.

## **Nilofer Ashan**

**Senior Associate**

**Center for the Study of Social Policy**

Nilofer Ahsan has been involved with policy and practice in children and family issues for over 15 years. As the co-director of the FRIENDS National Resource Center she supported states' implementation of child abuse and neglect prevention legislation and worked with family support initiatives in over 20 states to improve program practice and develop evaluation/assessment strategies. Ms. Ashan has authored many handbooks and tools for family support practitioners. Currently a Senior Associate at the Center for the Study of Social Policy, she is working to develop innovative practice models in: early care and education, child abuse and neglect prevention, parent/resident leadership and social networks. She has a Masters in Public Policy from the University of Chicago.

## **David Dotson**

**Executive Director**

**Dollywood Foundation**

David Dotson is the Executive Director of The Dollywood Foundation, where he oversees the international replication of Dolly's Imagination Library. His responsibilities include planning, administration, public relations, and providing general support to Dolly Parton Productions.

The Imagination Library now works with local communities in the United States and Canada to provide books to 375,000 children per month – almost 10 million books have

now been mailed to children. Prior to his work with the Dollywood Foundation, Mr. Dotson served for 13 years as Executive Director of Associated Catholic Charities of East Tennessee, which provides emergency and respite shelter to children and adults, housing, a thrift store, counseling services, adoption services and refugee resettlement services. Additionally, Mr. Dotson served for 7 years as the Southern Field Representative for The Youth Project, a national foundation to encourage grassroots community action throughout the United States. He has a Master's in Social Work from the University of Georgia.

**Kathleen Deerr**

**Assistant Director**

**Middle Country Public Library**

Kathleen Deerr has been working with children and families in libraries for three decades. For the past six years she has served as the National Family Place Libraries™ Coordinator. Recognizing early on that children's most important role models are parents and caregivers, she has developed many innovative, interdisciplinary programs which focus on parent/child interactions and has administered programs such as the Partners for Inclusion Project, Reach Out and Read, the Parent Child Home Program and the National Family Place Libraries initiative. She has served as a guest lecturer at the Palmer School of Library and Information Science and is the co-author of three Neal-Schuman books, *Running a Parent/Child Workshop: a How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians; Including Families of Children with Special Needs* and the recently published, *The Family Centered Library Handbook*. Other publications include numerous journal articles as well as contributions to the Bowker publication *Play Learn and Grow*, the ALA publication, *Youth Services Librarians As Managers: a How-to-Guide from Budgeting to Personnel*, and *Partners for Inclusion: Welcoming Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and Their Families into Community Activities: A Replication Guide*. A life long advocate for children, Ms. Deerr has presented workshops and lectures at the state and national level on the role of the public library in serving and supporting children and families as well as lectures on the administration and management of Children's and Parents' Services in public libraries. She strongly believes libraries are a binding thread in the fabric of their communities and play a crucial role in the development of healthy children, families and communities.

**JANET RICE ELMAN**

**Executive Director**

**Association of Children's Museums**

Janet Rice Elman is the executive director of the Association of Children's Museums (ACM) located in Washington DC. ACM is the professional association representing children's museums around the world. In her role as Executive Director, Ms. Elman has led the organization in a successful transition from an entirely volunteer driven organization in 1994 to one of the leading museum professional associations in Washington, DC today. She leads the development of ACM's annual InterActivity conference, which has grown from 200 participants in 1994 to 1,000 participants in 2007. Ms. Elman was also responsible for negotiating the largest single gift to the children's museum field – the \$7 million Freeman Foundation Asian Exhibit Initiative. This

initiative, developed and administered by ACM, has created seven traveling exhibits on Asian culture created by leading children's museums. The exhibits will be hosted by 70 ACM member children's museums through 2008. As with all ACM's initiatives, the priority is to re-grant funds to member museums. Each year, ACM re-grants between 25 and 33% of its budget to member museums through grant-funded leadership initiatives. Currently, she is leading the organization in the launch of a major health and wellness initiative for children and families entitled "Good to Grow." Since her appointment to the position in 1994, she has led major initiatives in early and lifelong learning, cultural competency, and leadership skills for museum professionals.

Prior to joining ACM, Ms. Elman was Director of National Programs for Very Special Arts (now VSA arts), where she developed national arts programs for individuals with and without disabilities. Ms. Elman has also held positions in art consulting and management consulting firms. She holds a B.A. in Art History and Communications from The George Washington University and an M.A. in Humanities from Marymount University.

### **Sue Stepleton**

#### **President and CEO**

#### **Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc.**

Susan Stepleton has a diverse background in human service, non-profit management and public policy. As President and CEO of Parents as Teachers National Center, Stepleton heads the resource base and backbone of Parents as Teachers, one of the nation's largest parent education and early childhood development programs, serving parents throughout pregnancy until their child enters kindergarten, usually age 5. She holds a variety of highly visible offices at regional, state and national levels. She is currently co-chair of the National Advisory Committee for Family Support and Family Preservation for the Child Welfare League of America, where she serves on the National Advisory Council of Executives and the Advisory Committee on Public Policy. Stepleton holds three master's degrees (German Studies, Business Administration and Social Work) and a Ph.D. in Public Policy Analysis focusing on nonprofit management and governance from St. Louis University. She is a licensed clinical social worker and a member of the Academy of Certified Social Workers, and holds a lifetime Missouri Teaching Certificate in social studies.