

ISLAND LIFE

Number 37 in a monthly series

Read aloud to both tots and teens

by Jed Gaines

During recent presentations at Highlands Intermediate about RAP, the after-school reading program sponsored by Read Aloud America, some parents expressed surprise at the idea that reading aloud is a practice that can, and should, be continued with young people right through high school and beyond.

But once they had had the experience of being read to and had learned about the effect of reading aloud on seventh- and eighth-graders, their response was encouraging:

■ "You have reassured me that reading aloud to a teenager still has a big impact. I used to read to my daughter until seventh grade and had to stop because my friends thought she was too old," wrote one parent in a program assessment.

■ "I never thought about continuing to read aloud through high school. I always read to my children when they were younger. I will now continue to read aloud," said another.

■ "The No. 1 thing I have learned from your presentations is that no

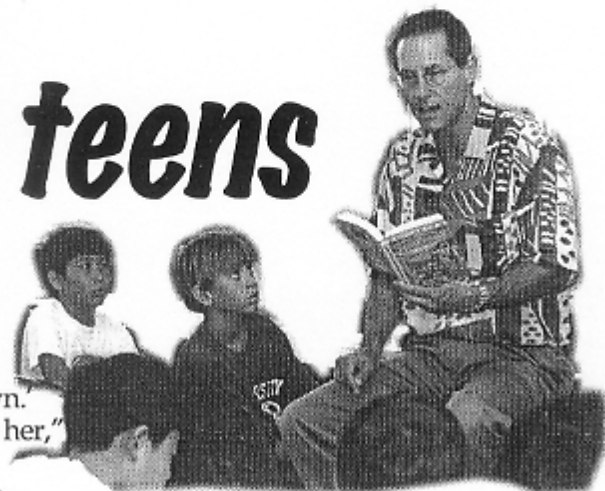
one is too old to read to. Often, my seventh-grader asks to be read to and I reply that 'you are old enough to read on your own.' 'Now I will stop to read to her,' wrote another.

■ A parent who is also a teacher at Highlands Intermediate stated: "I'm convinced that reading aloud to individuals is very important and the key to individual success and learning."

In the February 1999 issue of the International Reading Association's journal, *The Reading Teacher*, a seventh-grade language arts teacher asked for help in encouraging middle-school children to read.

She received an excellent answer from June Brown, a teacher and a professor of reading methods courses at Southwest Missouri State University:

"Because computer, TV and sports compete for the attention of older students, teachers need tips to encourage reading. In my years of teaching, I discovered that both



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reading aloud and reading along are effective strategies to entice children to read alone. Because students' listening level is greater than their reading level, reading aloud can build background knowledge, teach new words, and provide a positive role model. It also hooks children on quality literature, demonstrates the pleasure involved in the process, and motivates them to read alone. I knew my approach worked when parents asked me what I was doing differently to make their children want to read. They reported making more trips to the public library and to the bookstores."

My next monthly read-aloud at Barnes & Noble in Kahala Mall is at 7:00pm on Tuesday, November 23.

See you there!

"It's easy to read aloud to anyone. Simply pick up a book and start!"



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