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Media contact:

Kathy Vining DeLone

Reach Out and Read Arkansas

501-226-9444

info@reachoutandread.org



**Reach Out and Read, CEO Earl Martin Phalen
to be Honored at BET Awards 2010**

(Los Angeles, CA) June 25, 2010 – On Sunday, June 27, the nationwide school readiness program Reach Out and Read and its CEO Earl Martin Phalen will be honored by the entertainment industry at the 2010 BET Awards. Phalen and Reach Out and Read will be presented with the “Shine a Light / Local Heroes Award” for preparing millions of children nationwide to succeed in school and helping to break the cycle of poverty.

Reach Out and Read is a team of 30,000 doctors, nurses, and volunteers who together serve 3.9 million children and families nationwide, including nearly one million African-American children and more than one-third of children living in poverty. In Arkansas, Reach Out and Read currently serves 54,788 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers at 24 program sites, including clinics, hospitals, and health centers.

Reach Out and Read targets children who are at greatest risk for school failure and illiteracy, and provides them with high quality children’s books and their parents with reading tips and guidance on the importance of reading aloud. Fourteen research studies confirm that Reach Out and Read works – families served by the program read together more often, and their children enter kindergarten better prepared to succeed, with larger vocabularies, stronger language skills, and a six-month developmental age over their peers.

“This award is a testament to leaders like Reach Out and Read Kathy Vining DeLone, Executive Director of the Arkansas Coalition and thousands more physicians and community volunteers who work tirelessly to ensure that every child arrives at school prepared to succeed,” said Earl Martin Phalen, Chief Executive Officer of Reach Out and Read. “When we come together to improve our communities, phenomenal things can happen. On behalf of the doctors, nurses, and volunteers who participate in Reach Out and Read in Arkansas and across the country, I want to also personally thank BET and CEO Debra Lee for their strong commitment to our children and families.”

Hosted by Oscar nominee Queen Latifah, The BET Awards will be held at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles and will air June 29, 2010 at 6pm CT. BET is owned by Viacom Inc. and distributed into 104 million households in the United States, Canada and the Caribbean. The BET Awards Show recognizes excellence in entertainment and professional sports. It is the #1 awards show on cable television. For more information about the 2010 BET Awards, visit: <http://betawards.bet.com/>. For more information about Reach Out and Read, visit: <http://www.reachoutandread.org/>.