

Red 'Hooked' On Reading

"Red Hook Reads," a literacy program that focuses on early literacy in children living in Red Hook, held its second annual Character Derby Parade.

The parade kicked off at the Pal Miccio Day Care Center, 595 Clinton Street, and ended at Coffey Park, where participants in the parade were able to enjoy face painting, book making and storytelling activities.

The establishment of "Red Hook Reads" was made possible by a two-year \$75,000 grant from the Independence Community Foundation. Literacy, Inc. (LINC), a non-profit organization with the mission of building community networks around early literacy, ensuring that children read well by the third grade, funds the program.

"Independence Community Foundation is proud to support such an important initiative as children's literacy," Marilyn Gelber, executive director of the Independence Community Foundation, said. "Over the past year, the foundation has been delighted with the enthusiasm of the children and the involvement of the entire Red Hook community. I am delighted that the Foundation's grant has been matched by the New York City Board of Education to enable this program to continue to receive support within the local community school districts."

The foundation grant exclusively supports LINC's work in Red Hook, including staffing and the production of Red Hook Reads project materials.

"Red Hook Reads is an example of how a community has creatively come together and united their resources to help children to love reading. Parents, school teachers, businesses and government officials understand that educating children on the importance of reading early on is a collaborate effort," Mimi Leiber, president and founder of LINC, said.

The Character Derby theme encouraged all participants to dress up as storybook characters with the intent to be a wonderland of imagination for the day. Characters came to life.

The Character Derby Parade is the sequel to the Stroller Derby Parade that kicked off the

program in 2001.

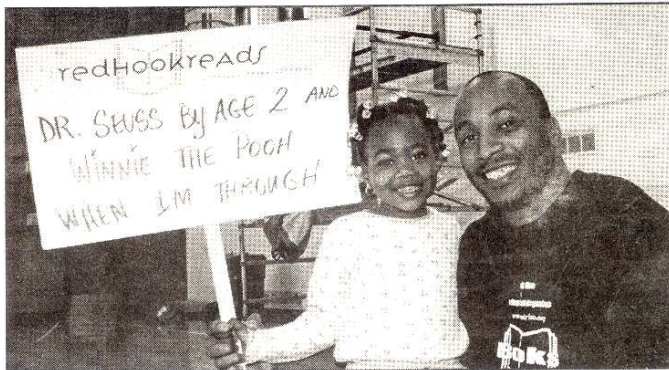
Other organizations supporting the parade include the Red Hook Branch of Independence Community Bank, Red Hook Rise, the Red Hook West Tenants Association, the Red Hook Branch of Brooklyn Public Library, the Red Hook Senior Center, and the Pal Miccio Day Care Center.

Independence Community Foundation was created in 1998 by Independence Community Bank at the time of its conversion to a public corporation. The foundation continues in the bank's tradition of support for local charitable activities, but also emphasizes a broader program of comprehensive, targeted community development.

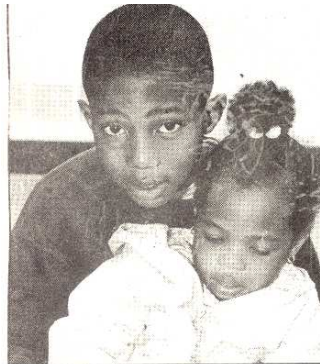
In LINC's vision, every child will read well by age eight, and the strengths and resources of every community are coordinated to provide encouraging voices and a language-rich atmosphere that supports early readers. LINC's purpose is to develop a proven system of outreach and coordination of community resources that enables neighborhoods to support all young children as readers. Over time, LINC seeks to adapt the system so as to assist any community that aims to bring together its resources on behalf of early literacy.



Welcoming participants to the Character Derby Parade at the Police Athletic League (PAL) Miccio Center are Atiya Ross, Care PLUS, co-sponsor of Red Hook Reads parade; Lori Bethea, Literacy Inc.; Angela Nieves, PAL Miccio Center office manager; and Natasha Cambell, PAL Miccio Center director.



Earl Hall, co-founder of Red Hook Rise, with his daughter Nina, who proclaims a love for Dr. Seuss & Winnie the Pooh.



Big brother Kenneth Brown reads a story to cutie-patuty sis' Nia.



Red Hook kiddies take to the streets and march to the tune of reading a good book.



Children are riveted as Ariel Nieves, 10, a 5th grader from PS 131, reads them a gripping tale.