

THE LIONS CRANE READING PROGRAM

Introduction

While the Cranes were working as elementary school counselors in Farmington, NM, first grade teacher Mrs. Winters would meet Allen Crane at the door every day demanding to know why Sheila could not learn to read. Allen kept telling her the child had failed the Bender Gestalt Perception test. Mrs. Winters would ask, "What do we do about it?"

"I don't know," was his reply. While reading everything he could get his hands on concerning the subject, Allen Crane learned that Dr. Howard Walton, an optometrist in Culver City, California, could correct vision perception problems. After flying to Culver City and talking with Dr. Walton one weekend, Allen Crane had an answer for Mrs. Winters the next Monday. Dr. Walton had told him about the importance of proper desk height and the perception and gross motor program developed by the Winter Haven Lions Club Foundation in Winter Haven, FL. Sheila's problems were corrected in six weeks, and she did learn to read. For 25 years, the Cranes continued to seek ways to help students become more efficient readers.

In 1997 Allen Crane and his wife, Virginia, wrote *Buzzards To Bluebirds* because they thought they could help at least 70% of students in any classroom learn to read more proficiently. Since 1997, Allen and Virginia have fine-tuned the system and they now believe up to 100 percent of children can be helped to read, write, and think more proficiently, usually in one semester. They have given their program to the Lions Clubs of New Mexico, in the hope it will live forever under the Lions' motto "We Serve."

Lions Clubs in New Mexico have adopted the Lions Crane Reading Program (LCRP), incorporated it (i.e., the NM Lions Crane Reading Foundation), and it has now received a 501c3 status. In 2004, New Mexico Governor, Bill Richardson, issued an executive proclamation that designated September 5-11 as LIONS VISION AWARENESS WEEK in the state of New Mexico with emphasis on LCRP. In July 2005, the Cranes were nominated for an award at the Lions International Convention in Hong Kong for the Lions Crane Reading Program being chosen as one of the top three Lions' service projects in the world. The Cranes, together with the Lions Clubs of New Mexico, envision the Lions Crane Reading Program to be a signature project that Lions Clubs all over the world can adopt in an effort to significantly reduce, if not eliminate, global illiteracy.



VIRGINIA AND ALLEN CRANE WITH LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT CLEM KUSIAK (CENTER)

LCRP Overview

The Lions Crane Reading Program (LCRP) is an integrated program that combines both highly successful programs and the latest computer technology to improve reading and writing proficiency. LCRP addresses the alarming trend that so many students in the United States, and especially in New Mexico, cannot read proficiently.

LCRP starts where the child or adult is with respect to current reading skills and proceeds from there. While labeling is not necessary, LCRP has proven to work equally well with dyslexics, learning disabled, and other students with learning and reading problems. LCRP is 95% to 98% successful at any grade level when fully implemented.

If an individual child is having reading problems, the first step is to provide a detailed and comprehensive eye examination using LCRP standards. Once it has been determined that the individual's eyes are functioning optimally, either with or without glasses, the individual's reading proficiency is enhanced through the use of drawing templates, gross motor training, computer assisted phonics, and computer reading fluency enhancement programs. The Program also addresses other more subtle factors contributing to poor reading proficiency, such as the height of the individual's school desk. The success of the LCRP is based on thirty (30) years of effort and documented research by Lions Allen and Virginia Crane.

In summary, there are basically six steps to the LCRP and schools can integrate each as time and money allow: 1) Eye examinations at the school; 2) Desk height as low as possible. 3) Lions Templates used to get the child's eyes ready to read and write; 4) Gross-motor training (body movement) to program the brain; 5) Computer programs to teach reading skills; and 6) Programs to teach writing skills (we learn to talk first, read next, and then write).

LCRP Implementation

The Lions Crane Reading Program Foundation (LCRPF) is owned by the Lions Clubs of New Mexico. It is intended that every Lions Club in New Mexico will adopt the Lions Crane Reading Program as one of their signature Club community service projects. As the Program becomes extensively integrated into New Mexico schools and the state begins to improve its national reading proficiency rating, it is envisioned that Lions in other states will wish to adopt it. There is no reason why other service organizations should not become involved. There are six levels of involvement currently used by NM Lions Clubs.

Level I

Lions who wish to support the program are trained by the LCRP Foundation. Once trained, Lions initially interface with the school district administrative staff, principals, and PTA's and present an overview of the Program and its benefits. Copies of the Crane's book, *Reading Problems Resolved*, Program brochures, and the Lions Crane Reading Program Introductory Video should be provided.

Level II

Lions show schools the introductory video plus the training CD on desk height, templates, and gross motor activities. Lions should volunteer to help integrate any of the training activities. Gross motor activities may take place in the regular classroom or in a physical education class, or they may be as simple

as an after school jump rope program. As an example, Lions could organize and support a citywide or statewide jump rope contest, giving awards to the top teams in the state. Remember body movement programs the brain.

Level III

Lions help the school arrange for an optometrist to do eye exams at the school. A phoropter stand should be furnished by the LCRP Foundation for the optometrist's use. Lions should arrange for an optician to come to the school to provide and fit glasses. Lions Clubs can sponsor children whose parents cannot afford the glasses. Lions can purchase glasses in quantity for approximately \$20 a pair (2005 price) from Sunland Optical, 1156 Barranca Dr., El Paso, TX 79924 (915-591-9483). Local opticians should be hired to fit and measure the glasses. They should also be contracted to come into the school regularly to straighten and fix broken glasses. Remember, every Medicaid student is entitled to a free eye exam every year or every two years depending on the state.

Level IV

For those Lions wishing to become closely involved with integrating the Lions Crane Reading Program into their local schools, the LCRP Foundation will provide training in the application of the Lions Templates, gross motor program activities, checking and adjusting the height of student's desks, and computer programs. Lions, acting as liaisons, will make weekly visits or calls to the schools to check on how the program is working and to determine if there are any problems. This program evaluation should take less than an hour a week per school.

A Weekly/Monthly Report will be filled out and filed (can be made via the LCRP Foundation Chat Room or email), which provides a checklist that solicits information to determine if everything is being done properly. If there are problems with templates, gross motor, software, earphones, etc., the Lion contacts the LCRP Foundation to address the problems. After a month or so, the Lion checks to see if all children are improving. If some children are not improving, the LCRP Foundation uses various methods to find the cause(s) of why the student is not improving. First, an eye exam is performed at school to determine if there are vision problems.

Level V

After-school and evening programs are a good place for Lions to get involved. No Child Left Behind requires schools not making adequate yearly progress to use some of their federal money to pay for tutoring fees for students not reading proficiently. In addition, there are several sources for grants for after-school programs. Lions helping schools run a computer lab after school will save schools money, let many parents get jobs (they will not have to pay baby sitters), and help more students read proficiently. Lions can conduct fundraisers to help pay for a teacher or aide to run the lab or to pay for glasses not covered by Medicaid. In the computer lab, very little computer knowledge is necessary. Rather, the Lion's job is to be a cheerleader for the students. "Great job!" needs to be a frequently used phrase in the Lion's vocabulary.

Northern New Mexico Community College at Espanola had a very successful evening program where parents brought their children to the lab. Both parents and children worked on their own computer programs. This program was designed to get people off welfare. Most grant proposals written now include a parent involvement section.

Level VI

The Lions Club can sponsor a Health Fair that is geared towards children. Visagraphs can be used to test eye teaming, and Tympanograms and blood tests can be used to detect allergies.

The American Academy of Environmental Medicine states that about 70 percent of students have some allergies. There are a lot of children Lions could be helping. ImmunoCap might be a good lab to contact for allergen testing.

LCRP Expansion Strategies

Lions who are involved with expanding the LCRP can organize an area workshop to be conducted by LCRP Board members or certified Lions for educators from local schools and other interested individuals. The LCRP Introductory Video and the Training CD on desk height, Lions Templates, gross motor activities, vision screening, computer programs, and writing can be presented. Educators who appear to be seriously interested can be provided a copy of the Crane's book, *Reading Problems Resolved*.

How do Lions choose whom to invite to a workshop? Lions are a diversified lot and odds are they know a lot of folks. The school district superintendent and/or administrators, school principals, teachers, parents, or other individuals involved with education are important attendees for obvious reasons. The city mayor, city council members, newspaper reporters, local business people, etc., can be useful attendees if the word about LCRP is to get out in the community and financial support obtained.

Individual schools should decide which LCRP activities to start with depending on their current situation, needs, and budget. Every activity raises the school's potential for higher academic status. Schools add activities as they can.

LCRP Testimonials

Reading Problems Resolved by Allen and Virginia Crane is a treasure for truly turning around the lives of many children. Page after page tells how to detect and eliminate various common and some less frequently recognized visual problems that can interfere with the ability of a youngster to learn. It will enable parents and teachers to detect a variety of problems that interfere with reading speed and comprehension-which in turn can affect the rest of a child's life. It provides clues to help detect other common causes of reading problems such as those due to allergies, desk position, etc. It not only provides sensible answers regarding the most common causes of visual difficulties, it provides answers that are practical, affordable, and possible. Every teacher and parent needs this book. This book is needed at an international level to help children all over the world. The Lion's Organization is to be commended for truly helping to create and promote this book so children who have visual and learning problems can be helped to reach their full intellectual potential. What a monumental contribution they have made to our future generations!

Dr. Doris Rapp, M.D. Clinical Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at SUNY AB and Author of *Is this Your Child's World* and *Our Toxic World*.

I have been the principal of Central Elementary School in Santa Clara, NM, for two years. When I arrived, the school, which has a 93% Hispanic population and where 100% of the students qualify as economically disadvantaged, was on academic probation with only 28% of its fourth grade students reading proficiently. The school made some adjustments in the delivery of reading

instruction and integrated the Lions Crane Reading Program. Last year, the fourth grade students improved to 46% proficient readers. This year, that score increased and the fourth grade students improved to 84% proficient readers. This year the third and fifth grade students were also assessed using the NMSBA and the school as a whole in grades three through fifth is at 76% reading proficient. Central Elementary is ranking 37th out of approximately 447 elementary schools in NM in reading proficiency.

José E. Carrillo

We have two second grade special education students who are now reading at the fifth grade level after completing the Lions Crane Reading Program. I believe in the program. Anything we can do as a school district to get all of our kids on the program we're going to do.

George Peru, Director of Special Education, Cobre School District, NM