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November 9, 2011

DURHAM, N.H. – Seacoast Reads, a nationally recognized volunteer tutoring program that sends University of New Hampshire undergraduates into local elementary schools to tutor students in reading, has partnered with Barnes & Noble and UNH's Alpha Delta Phi Society for a fundraising book fair as the program struggles to survive financially.

Co-founded in 1998 by the late professors Grant Cioffi and John Carney, Seacoast Reads was funded anonymously by Cioffi until his death in March 2010. Since Cioffi's death, the program has struggled to find a consistent funding source. The program relies solely on donations and grants for funds, which are used to purchase books and materials, and pay for travel expenses of the tutors and other operational costs. Seacoast Reads needs approximately $25,000 a year to fully serve the needs of Seacoast elementary school students.

"Since Grant's passing, the program has struggled to find a consistent benefactor to sustain funds necessary to keep it going. At this point, if we do not find a source of funding, Seacoast Reads is in danger of shutting down," says Marni Trompetter, program coordinator of Seacoast Reads.

More than 1,000 UNH students have participated in Seacoast Reads since its inception. The program currently has 70 volunteers who support reading programs in 11 Seacoast area schools. Tutors volunteer twice a week and spend up to an hour per session working one-on-one with an elementary student "buddy," helping him or her develop important literary skills, build self confidence, and foster a love of reading.

Volunteer Emmie Katz, '12 and a program assistant with Seacoast Reads, has been involved with Seacoast Reads since she enrolled at UNH. An English major, Katz says every time she tutors a student and sees the difference she makes in the student's life she is reminded of why she wants to be an elementary school teacher. She also is reminded of the inspirational life of the program's co-founder.

"Grant was an inspiration to everyone who wants to work to become a teacher; he was much more than that -- someone who would listen, give advice, and truly care about every individual person who came to talk with him. He spent his life's work promoting literacy throughout the New Hampshire Seacoast," says Katz, who is from Manchester, Mass.

"Imagine how many children in the Seacoast area have been affected by this wonderful program. Imagine how many New Hampshire college students today were fortunate enough to have had a UNH Seacoast Reads tutor encourage them to love reading when they were younger," she says.

Alpha Delta Phi Society member Nicole Annis, '13, of Cornish, said volunteering with Seacoast Reads not only benefits the elementary school students but the UNH students as well. "Because of this program, I have become a stronger leader, educator, and more compassionate person. I would strongly recommend volunteering for Seacoast Reads to any member of the UNH student body," Annis says.

To participate in the fundraiser, buy a book from Barnes & Noble, in person or online at bn.com/bookfairs, using the unique Seacoast Reads code (10587251) between Nov. 11-16, 2011, and Seacoast Reads will receive 5 or 10 percent of your purchase. Purchases from the Barnes & Noble café as well as NOOK products also qualify.

For more information, and to download a voucher for easy in-store shopping, go to http://seacoastreadsbookfair.blogspot.com/. To learn more about Seacoast Reads, contact seacoastreads@yahoo.com.

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PHOTO
Seacoast Reads volunteer Emmie Katz, '12, tutors her buddy, second-grader Jay Merrill, from Barrington Elementary School.
http://www.unh.edu/news/img/seacoastreads.JPG

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