

**The Rock 'n' Read Project**

**Retired Metro Bus Now a Mobile Computer Lab  
Delivering Reading Intervention, Results to Kids**



*Educator Ann Kay and her partner, Bill Jones welcomed more than 200 children every day this summer to their Rock 'n' Read Project bus in locations throughout Minneapolis to address what Kay calls "a crisis" in reading achievement scores.*

**By Ann Kay**

**Co-Founder, Rock 'n' Read Project**

“Ms. Ann! Ms. Ann! I’ve got five gold stars!” Jamal shouts, motioning me over. His wide eyes gleam and his mouth is open in a big O. He points at his computer. I bend over to see the edge of his screen. There are a few silver and bronze stars and then five gold stars in a row.

“You’re amazing! What a singer! What a reader!” I grab his shoulders and give him a little hug. Straightening up, I let the cacophony of 32 singers and 32 different songs wash over me. Looking down the center aisle, I see red counters under the windows and totally engaged children on little red stools. We are in the Minneapolis area on a retired city bus that Bill Jones and I purchased in April and retrofitted as a mobile computer lab, wiring used PCs to a server and loading in TUNEin to READING software. The bus is covered in colorful graphics of guitars, music symbols, singing monsters and our name, the “Rock ‘n’ Read Project.” Bill learned how to drive the bus, and we worked with 200 children every day for eight weeks at a Minneapolis Public Schools summer school and a YMCA. Why did we do this? Because there is a crisis.

In Minneapolis and St. Paul public schools, 60 percent of our students are not reading at grade level by the end of third grade—and few will ever catch up. So Bill and I decided to create the Rock ‘n’ Read Project to help get children reading at grade level...through *singing*. And the kids loved TUNEin to READING!

***Singing activates more areas of the brain than any other activity.***

*Dr. Nina Kraus [read more](#)*

At the start and end of the summer, our children took a 15-minute online pre- and post-test called FAST. Results showed many made substantial gains in reading, and we also witnessed transformations in students’ motivation and self-confidence. A University of Minnesota professor is using the Rock ‘n’ Read Project for her qualitative research project, and her graduate students will investigate students’ perceptions about singing and reading. Now that our Rock ‘n’ Read kids are back in school, our bus will be used to generate excitement when new reading programs are launched. We are optimistic that TUNEin to READING can help more children wherever they are, learn to read at grade level and close that achievement gap...through singing!

Ann Kay founded the Center for Lifelong Music Making [www.lifelongmusicmaking.org](http://www.lifelongmusicmaking.org) where she launches projects to get people making music. Ann teaches music for five-year-olds and classroom teachers, and formerly taught elementary and junior high music and was associate director of graduate music education at the University of St. Thomas. Bill Jones' background as a lawyer, builder and salesperson enabled the Rock 'n' Read project—from filing legal paperwork to installing counters and wiring computers. Bill is executive director of the Rock 'n' Read Project, now a 501(c)(3) organization with an Operational Board. Bill and Ann live in Minnetonka, Minnesota. For more information: [www.rocknreadproject.org](http://www.rocknreadproject.org)



## Team Bahama Earns TiR Certification

Educators representing 11 primary schools in the Bahamas earned certification, in the TUNEin to READING melodic reading intervention program, after attending two training sessions held in Nassau in early October. The 28 educators who completed the training – including understanding adaptive learning and differentiated instruction, school and student set-up processes and technology and software implementation -- now will oversee TUNEin to READING implementation at their respective schools. Congratulations to these leaders, whose students will be singing their way to improved literacy at: Albury Sayles, C.W. Sawyer, Gerald Cash, Carlton Francis, Ridgeland, Sandilands, Palmdale, Claridge, Sadie Curtis, Cleveland Eneas, Centreville and Columbus schools.

### Quotable Quotes

*"My personal belief..."*



~ Joey Miazga  
Reading Coach, Teacher of the Year  
Seminole, FL

"My personal belief is that if a child doesn't succeed after years in traditional reading classes, he won't succeed if put into yet another traditional reading classroom. They need to be put in an out of the box, fun, loose manner and that's my classroom with Tune in to Reading."

## Studies Underscore Music as a Powerful Stimulus of Cognitive Development



The latest studies in neuroscience and music research underscore previous findings that engaging music in a child's education is linked to improved cognitive function, increased language development and positive social interactions. Music stimulates both sides of the brain and positively affects a child's general cognitive development. Multiple studies have established that music, more than any other activity, has the potential to stimulate and increase a child's overall intellectual capacity. Just like working on any other part of the body, any activity that stimulates the brain helps increase its overall functionality.

Engaging music with learning has long-term benefits for memory, language development, increased self-expression, processing new information and concentration. Music is a powerful partner in reinforcing and supporting learning and reading achievement.

Through catchy songs, fun animation and positive feedback, it becomes routine to recognize written lyrics. Even if children don't quite realize what they are doing at first, the fundamental skills being learned eventually kick in as they start connecting words with tunes, repeating them and ultimately, reading.

### THE SINGING NEANDERTHALS



### Suggested Reading: The Singing Neanderthals

This is one of many books that visit the history of how humans have always used music as a way to learn.