PICK A READING PARTNER

2019 PARP TOOLKIT

New York State PTA PARP Award Winning Program from

Rensselaer Park Elementary PTA
Northeastern Region

The Great Subway Reading Race
PICK A READING PARTNER (PARP)
Region Award Winner 2019
COVER SHEET
(Please type or print information clearly)

Region: Northeastern  Region Code #: 12
Region Director: Geri Lehane
Telephone No.: (518)429-6558  Email: northeasternrd@nyspta.org
Region PARP Chair: Kari Mancine
Telephone No.: (518)727-5527  Email: septa.salempa@gmail.com

Region PARP Winner's Information
(Please complete only one section)

If PTA:
Unit Name: Rensselaer Park Elementary PTA PTA Unit Code #: 12-022
Program Name: The Great Subway reading Race
President’s Name: Julie Huggins
Telephone No.: (518)961-2589  Email: rpesPTA@lansingburgh.org

Is this a PTA in good standing? Yes X  No

If Non-PTA:
Group Name: ____________________________
Program Name: ____________________________
President’s Name: ____________________________
Telephone No.: ____________________________ Email: ____________________________

Please send this form with your Region’s one winning PARP Award application postmarked by July 15th so it can be considered for the NYS PTA PARP Award. Send to NYS PTA, c/o PARP Award, One Wembley Court, Albany, NY 12205.

REGION INFORMATION: (Please fill in the information below)
Total Number of Applications Received: 1
Total Number of Applications Disqualified: 0
APPLICATION COVER SHEET

Please complete and attach this sheet to your application.
(This is the first of two pages of your application.)

Please type or print information clearly (other than signatures)

Contact Person (one contact only) Kelly Juliand Title Reading Teacher

Address 36 118th St. Floor 2 Troy, NY 12182
Note: Winners will be notified during the summer months. Please use an appropriate summer address.

Email Address kjuliana@lansingburgh.org

County Rensselaer Signature Kelly Juliand

PTA Region (see website for region map) Northeastern

Daytime Phone (518) 578-9013 Evening Phone (if different) 

Submitting Group RPES PTA and PARP Committee

Theme/Title of PARP Program The Great Subway Reading Race

How many years has your school run a PARP program? 25 years

How many years have you chaired the committee? 3

PTA INFORMATION

If a PTA unit, please also complete the following:

PTA Name Rensselaer Park Elementary PTA Unit Code # 12 - 022

School Name Rensselaer Park Elementary School

Name of PTA President Julie Higgins

Phone Number (518) 961-2589 Email Address rpespta@lansingburgh.org

Signature of PTA President

Region your unit is located Northeastern

Please note: Entries become the property of NYS PTA and will not be returned. Other materials included, not part of the above listed materials, will not be considered.
DATA INFORMATION SHEET

Please complete and attach this sheet to your application. (This is the second page of your application.)

Theme/Title of PARP program: The Great Subway Reading Race

Name of School (or Library): Rensselaer Park Elementary School

Name of School District: Lansingburgh Central School District

Grade levels participating in PARP program: 3-5

Total number of students in participating grade levels: 530

Estimated number of students participating:

Length of program (weeks/months): 1 month

Budget Information:
A PARP program can be supported by PTA funds or other means. Below we are looking for what funds you used to run your program and how you used those funds. The funding of the PARP program breaks down as follows (please list all that apply and be as detailed as possible):

Income:
- PTA/Organization's Budget: $750.00
- School District Contribution: $ (blank)
- Local Organization/Business (Be specific and list below):
  - The Mary Fund: $680.00
  - Retired teacher: $125.00
  - Stewarts - donation: $0
- Total: $1,565.00

Expense:
- Author/Programs: $750.00
- General Expense (i.e. copying, postage): $ (blank)
- Other Expenses (Be specific and list below):
  - Books: $275.00
  - Literary Night: $405.00
  - Decorations - school wide: $125.00
- Total:

  Total Cost of Program: $1,565.00

Application Checklist
- [ ] Application Cover Sheet (Page 1)
- [ ] Data Information Sheet (Page 2)
- [ ] Responses to Category Areas 1-3 (Pages 3-6)
- [ ] Supportive Materials (Pages 7-21)
- [ ] Sent to your Region Director – must be postmarked by June 15, 2019

See NYS PTA website for address. Do not send to NYS PTA office.
NYS PTA 2019 Pick a Reading Partner (PARP) Award Application

GOALS:
The theme, *The Great Subway Reading Race*, was inspired by the history and the culture of New York City. Being in close proximity to NYC, many of our students have visited and have family there, but do not have knowledge of the history or the five boroughs.

1. The main goal of this program was to learn about New York City, our state and to also incorporate social studies so students can see the cross-curricular connection.
2. Inspire a lifelong love of reading.
3. To increase the number of participants by and the number of total minutes read as a building, by 25% percent from the previous school year.
4. Involve families in PARP without overwhelming them.
5. Communicate our program through a variety methods, including correspondence home, social media and displays throughout the school.
6. Work together with the teachers, administration, and PTA members to create a successful program.
7. Encourage students to visit our local library by holding PARP events after school.
8. Encourage teachers to track their reading during PARP, so students can see that teachers are also readers.

IMPLEMENTATION:
The students returned to school on February 25th to find the school transformed into *The Great Subway Reading Race*. We let the excitement build for a few days prior to our kickoff assembly on Thursday, February 28th. The students sang along to “Empire State of Mind” by Jay-Z and Alicia Keys. To replicate a subway race, we showed a subway race video from the 4th inning races at Yankee Stadium. Each grade level was assigned a subway car to cheer on as the race played. Once the number 4 train won, we went on to explain that their class subway cars would be moving throughout the building just like the race they viewed. A building goal for minutes read was revealed at the assembly. Students were also told that if they met or exceeded the minutes read, our Assistant Principal would participate in a special reward that they were able to pick.

Subway Cars
Prior to introducing the PARP theme at our kick off assembly, each classroom received a blank subway car to decorate. These cars were used throughout the month of March, to track how many minutes each class read. They moved along the “subway rails” (the building hallways) and throughout the different boroughs of New York City. Prior to decorating, each teacher discussed with their class how they wanted the subway car to represent their class. Many teachers, had the students do research on the history of the subway, the boroughs, and different tourist attractions before deciding how to decorate. Each subway car was a unique representation of the students in the room.
**Boroughs**
Each hallway in our building was assigned a different borough. The hallway represented this borough during the entire month of PARP. They researched and discussed different attractions and events within their borough. After researching, each classroom picked one attraction or event to decorate their section of the hallway. The hallways worked together to create and represent an entire borough. For example, classrooms in the Bronx had the Botanical Gardens, Yankee Stadium, Bronx Zoo, Woodlawn Cemetery and the Bronx Concrete Plant Park. All of the decorations were student designed and student made.

Our most traveled hallway, the area of the office and cafeteria, represented Manhattan. The main office was turned into Penn Station. It even had a departure board out front! The cafeteria was turned into Broadway and had taxis, lights and broadway show signs. The gym was transformed into Madison Square Garden where the kids were able to pretend that they were playing for the NY Knicks while playing basketball in gym.

**MetroCards**
Each student received a metrocard that they used to collect their minutes read. The minutes were converted to money (kind of like how you load a metrocard to travel the subway lines in NYC). Students were then able to turn that money in for prizes at Coney Island on Literacy Night.

**A Knight in the Big Apple (Literacy Night)**
On March 21st we hosted our annual Literacy Night. This year’s theme was “A Knight in the Big Apple.” We created the name from a play on our district mascot, the knight. Teachers and community members came out and created NYC themed events with a literacy component. Over 150 students and their families enjoyed the event. Upon entering the event, students were greeted by a sign welcoming them to Manhattan and a playbill with the events for the evening. The playbill also contained all the information about each event and a copy of the reading found at each station. Prior to participating in each event, students read about each sport and answered a question about what they read. Upon completion of the event each student was given a sticker in their Playbill. Stickers were turned in at the end of the night for a New York City Themed brag tag. Events for A Knight in the Big Apple included: US Open table tennis, NYC themed puzzles, subway seat cakewalk (musical chairs), NYC Marathon scooter races, NYC themed bookmark station, Statue of Liberty crown craft, make your own graffiti, ozobot and spherio subway races, and a photobooth. Students were also able to visit Coney Island for prizes. This event was a huge success and had a fifty percent growth over the previous year’s event.

**PARParazzi**
During our PARP program the PARParazzi went around the building and took pictures of both students and faculty reading. The pictures were featured on our PARParazzi bulletin board in the front of the school. Each week a different student was picked to be a member of the PARParazzi and take pictures.
Prize Giveaways
Each student earned “money” on their Metrocard for the number of minutes they read. The money was used to “buy” prizes at Coney Island on Literacy Night. The more students read, the bigger the prize they could get! Prizes included books, NYC themed pencils, NYC stickers, emoji keychains, mini notebooks and tattoos.

Personal Goal Sheets
This year teachers were asked to complete personal goal sheets in a Google form. The form was pushed out to all students in the building in computer lab. Students were asked to set goals for minutes read each week of PARP. Students that met their personal goal were entered into a raffle at the end of PARP for a signed book from our author Eric Luper.

Author Visit
Eric Luper visited on Tuesday, March 26th to share his books. Prior to visiting, teachers used the Key Hunters series to get students excited and introduce them to his books. During his visit, he talked about how he became a writer and his writing process. Students were also able to ask questions.

Book Fest
We kicked off the first week of PARP in our school library with a book fest. Five different tables, one for each borough, were decorated and labeled with different genres of books. All of these books were brand new to our library and students were able to preview them and create a “someday reads” list. All students left the library with a list of books to read during PARP.

Spirit Days
Throughout PARP and the month of March, we had spirit days to encourage student participation. Each spirit day was NYC themed. Spirit days included Big Apple day - wear red, 80s day, Statue of Liberty day - wear green, NYC day - wear anything that represents NYC, and NYC Marathon day - dress like an athlete.

Subway Car Tracking
This year we changed our tracking system and made it both interactive and building wide. Each class decorated a subway car to represent them as a class. Magnets were put on the back and the cars were ready to race. Each week subway cars moved throughout the building based on how many minutes a class read. Students loved traveling the building and looking for their subway car to see who was in the lead.

Ice Cream Social
An ice cream social was held for those students who read all four weeks of PARP. Over 175 students, a 25% increase over last year, enjoyed ice cream served by their teachers. The top three readers in each grade level received an autographed copy of an Eric Luper book. One student, who read the most in the entire school, received a gift card to Barnes and Noble. All students received a special bookmark declaring that they had finished The Great Subway
Reading Race, a free book and as a special surprise - a gift certificate for 2 free slices of pizza. Ice cream and toppings were donated by Stewarts.

Outreach
In order to reach as many members of the community as possible, PARP news was sent home and posted on a variety of Facebook and Twitter pages and updated on a regular basis.

PARP Night at the Library
In order to create community involvement and promote reading outside school, we held a PARP night at the library. Families were encouraged to come, borrow a book, and read with their family. Students without library cards were encouraged to sign up for one in order to have greater access to books outside of our school building.

Jimmy’s Pizza
Jimmy’s Pizza is a local business in our area. We approached him about creating a partnership during PARP to broaden our program and involve our community. He was extremely generous in donating slices of pizza to all students that read for all four weeks of PARP. Each student received a coupon at the ice cream social and can use it at their leisure.

Broadway Book Brags
This year we included a writing component into our PARP program. After reading a book, students were encouraged to fill out a book recommendation called a “Broadway Book Brag.” They were able to tell other students why they should read the book. Their recommendations were displayed in lights on Broadway in our cafeteria.

Graffiti Names
We wanted to expand our PARP program across content areas, so we spoke with our Art teacher about having students learn graffiti. During the month of February, students learned how to write their names in graffiti. The graffiti names were hung throughout the building under our subway train tracks.

Morning Show
Our building has a morning show that is streamed each day throughout our building. Every Friday we have a Principal’s Challenge where our principal competes in an activity against a teacher in our building. During the month of PARP, the challenges were NYC themed. One week we had a NYC trivia challenge and the students loved guessing the answers to see if they were correct.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION:
We were very pleased with the results of our month long program. We set both a minutes goal and a participant goal for this year’s PARP program. We took the total minutes read during last year’s PARP program and increased it by 25%. The goal for this year’s minutes read was 135,627 minutes. We exceeded our goal and read for 172,843 minutes. Our
participant goal for the entire four-week program was 150 kids, a 25% increase for the previous year. We also met this goal and had 160 students at our celebratory event.

During the program, we had detailed tracking on Google Sheets that let us know which students were participating each week. It also allowed us to keep track of how many minutes students were reading each week, how many minutes teachers were reading each week, and the total minutes each class had read. The spreadsheet was essential in keeping our data organized and moving the subway cars throughout the program.

Looking back on this year’s PARP program, we can attribute its success to our all inclusive theme. The building was decorated with NYC themed bulletin boards, banners, different boroughs and attractions from each one and subway cars and tracks also lined the halls. Each spirit day was NYC themed. During Literacy Night children were greeted and welcomed to Manhattan. The entire area was decked out in NYC themed decorations, banners and signs. Students were extremely excited about this program because they felt a sense of ownership with their subway car and borough. They decorated their subway car to represent their class and they made the hallway decorations to represent their borough.

Upon evaluation of this year’s program, there are a few areas we’d like to improve for next year. This year we wanted to encourage reading not only with our students, but also our teachers. We did create a teacher subway car and reading log, but we didn’t get many teachers that handed in their reading logs. Next year, we’d like more teachers to participate in setting goals and reading during PARP as it is a great example for our students to see their teachers reading. We’d like more community involvement during our PARP program. This year we did hold PARP night at the library, but next year we’d like more families and teachers to attend. We can achieve this goal by prompting PARP night more and using social media to remind families of the event. We truly believe the library is a valuable place for families to get books when school is not in session and would love to make that school-library connection. Last, but not least, we’d like to create more opportunity for students without as much support at home. This is something we wanted to add to our program this year, but were unable to due to scheduling conflicts. Offering after school times as well as volunteers would give students an opportunity to read with an adult during our PARP program. This would allow more students to participate in PARP without having to worry about having an adult at home to read with them.
Dear Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to Rensselaer Park's Pick A Reading Partner (PARP) 2019!

This year's theme, "The Great Subway Reading Race," provides all the excitement of a subway race through the boroughs of New York City. This year's PARP program is designed to enhance your child's knowledge and the Subway System while making reading at home fun and engaging. With every minute that you read together, you are helping your child's classroom travel along our school-wide subway system.

Here's how PARP works:
- We ask that your child picks someone to be their reading partner for at least 15 minutes a day, 5 days per week for 4 weeks. The more minutes you read, the further your train will travel.
- Attached is a contract for you and your child to sign commiting you to read together. The contract MUST be submitted by Friday, March 1st.
- Reading logs are due these dates: March 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th.
- Each week, the class that travels the farthest in each grade level will receive the RPES Golden Apple to be displayed in their classroom.
- A grand prize drawing will be held at the end of PARP for those students who either meet or exceed their personal reading goal. These students will have the chance to win an autographed copy of a book written by Eric Luper.

Be sure to join us for a Knight in the Big Apple on Thursday, March 21st from 6:00 - 8:00. There will be games, a photo booth, crafts, a book fair, and food for a small fee.

PARP would not be complete without our traditional Ice Cream Social! All students who turn in completed reading logs each of the four weeks will be invited to celebrate reading together on Friday, April 12th from 3:00 - 3:45. An invitation will be sent home prior to the party.

We hope you and your children will enjoy some family time while reading each night during PARP and beyond!

Parent letter that was sent home at the beginning of PARP.

Example of a weekly mileage report (reading log).
Calendar of events sent home at the beginning of PARP.

Each student had their own personalized MetroCard outside of their classroom to keep track of the miles they traveled each week.
Save the Dates went home every other week leading up to the A Knight in the Big Apple (Literacy Night).

A Knight in the Big Apple Playbill. It included a copy of the literacy at each station as well as the night’s activities and their locations.
I took a **BITE** out of the **BIG APPLE**

**A Knight in the Big Apple 2019**

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**The Great Subway Reading Race**

**Congratulations!**

You've read all 4 weeks of PARP!

For all your hard work you've earned an invitation to the Ice Cream Social on Friday, April 12, 2019 from 3:00-3:45 pm!

Please complete the bottom half of this slip and return it to your teacher by Thursday, April 11, 2019

My child ______________________'s homeroom, will be attending the Ice Cream Social on April 12, 2019 from 3:00-3:45. He/She will: (please check one)

- Ride the late bus home
- Be picked up by a parent/guardian
- Be picked up by ______________________ (insert name if someone other than a parent/guardian is picking your child up)

Parent/Guardian Signature ____________________________

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**PARP 2019 Spirit Days**

- **February 28th** - PARP Kickoff - wear your borough's color
- **March 1st** - Big Apple Day - wear red
- **March 8th** - 80s Day - wear neon
- **March 15th** - Statue of Liberty Day - wear green and a crown
- **March 21st** - NYC Day - wear anything that represents NYC
- **March 29th** - NYC Marathon Day - dress like an athlete

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Throughout the month of March we had New York City themed spirit days to bring more fun and excitement to PARP.
The Great Subway Reading Race Kickoff
Book Fest
Author Visit
Eric Luper
Hallway Decorating

Welcome to Manhattan
Mayor Bill de Blasio

QUEENS NYC

Rockaway Beach

Reading Rocks

Thank You. Anywhere
A Knight in the Big Apple
Ice Cream Social
PARP Night at the Library
Tracking Systems and Rewards

The streets will make you feel brand new, these **BOOKS** will **INSPIRE** you, let’s hear it for New York, New York

- **Goals**
  - Read 1,356,637 minutes
  - 57,620 minutes read

Free 2 Slices of Pizza for 1 Completed 100 Great Subway Reading Race
Student Engagement and Writing Component