

## The Point O'View Reading Prize Patrol

*Point O'View Elementary School  
Virginia Beach, Virginia*

**P**ublishers Clearing House move over! The Point O'View Reading Prize Patrol is on its way! Bringing books, balloons and excitement, the Prize Patrol rewards families who read together.

Point O'View Elementary wanted to stress the importance of setting aside time everyday to read with its version of the Publishers Clearing House give-away. Families who pledged to read together every weeknight in February were entered in a drawing. During the last week of the month, six names were drawn for visits from the Reading Prize Patrol.

"We felt like celebrities when the reading patrol arrived at our door," said one lucky parent. "Neighbors came out and applauded when they heard the commotion. The gift basket was full of books for everyone in the family. We really enjoyed the time we spent reading together. Thank you very much."

Nearly 160 families, with about 200 elementary students, joined the fun. The Reading Prize Patrol gathered in front of each house and blew horns as the principal knocked on the front door. The patrol then presented families with a basket of books, a heart-shaped balloon bouquet and a giant award certificate. Surprised winners greeted the patrol with cries of disbelief and tears of appreciation.

In addition to the principal, the enthusiastic patrol included the assistant principal, teachers of winning students, language arts committee members and the school mascot. "This was a fun experience. It was a pleasure to be part of the Reading Prize Patrol," said one teacher. "The look on the face of my student as he came to the door was priceless! What a good time we had going from house to house together to surprise the families. Count me in next year!"

One of the school's community partners helped videotape the prize presentations,

which were aired on the school's television station. The partner also gave copies to the winning families.

"Reading is at the heart of learning, and reading fluently is one of the most important accomplishments of early school years," said one of the organizers. "This practice addressed the need . . . to establish a regular time at home to practice the important skill of reading."

The emphasis on reading led students to read more and may have helped improve their scores on statewide tests. Students also benefited emotionally and behaviorally from having parents spend quality time reading with them.

About \$100 in school funds paid for preschool board books, baskets, balloons and party horns. The school library used proceeds from its book fair to provide the other new books that were awarded.

The Reading Prize Patrol will be in Point O'View neighborhoods next year. The school hopes to involve more families, just as this year's participation topped last year's. The planners may arrange to have a drawing every month or expand the activity to include other subjects. The school will solicit donations from community members and invite them to be part of the patrol.

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