



For Immediate Release
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Community Groups Hit a Home Run for RFB&D's Annual Record-A-Thon

12th Annual event brings nearly 300 readers from 17 sources

(April 30, 2007) Santa Barbara - Coinciding with National Volunteer Week, the Santa Barbara Unit of Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic had a record 300 guest readers for its 12th annual Record-A-Thon that ran from April 16-21, 2007. Record-A-Thon's purpose is to recruit more volunteers for the organization, raise visibility and awareness in the community, increase audio book production and generate much needed operating revenue and scholarship money. This year, the Unit raised \$53,000 in contributions from individuals, foundations, businesses and community organizations – well exceeding its goal of \$45,000.

RFB&D records audio textbooks and provides them to students who are blind, dyslexic or with other physical and learning disabilities that makes reading and comprehending the printed word difficult or impossible. In the tri-counties the Santa Barbara Unit serves 500 students individually and through area schools. Nearly 200,000 are served nationally.

“We exist to change lives for the better, one individual at a time,” says the Santa Barbara Unit's Executive Director, Tim Owens. “But there are so many more students who could benefit from our reading tools – and estimated two million nationwide and 7,500 locally. That's why creating a greater awareness of RFB&B through Record-A-Thon is so critical.”

Scholarship winners were announced on the opening day of Record-A-Thon in a reception attended by Santa Barbara Mayor Marty Blum, other city council members and UCSB dignitaries. Ten students will be awarded with four-year memberships to RFB&D,

including special playback devices to access RFB&D's audio textbook library with more than 35,000 digitally recorded books. Scholarships are valued at \$1,000 each. The RORD Foundation contributed funds for the ten awards.

Throughout the week RFB&D's Record-A-Thon featured filmmakers, authors, community groups, actors, business people, educators, special interest groups and many more – all helping to record books for RFB&D's library and to increase awareness of the organizations vitally important work. The 17 sources drawn from for this Record-A-Thon included: *Hollywood Filmmakers* Andy Davis, Lowell Blank & Jason Reitman; *SB Chamber of Commerce* with Steve Cushman and Marcia Reed hosting their “Leadership Council” in reading Steve Crandell's biography of his father, bon vivant Larry Crandell; Beauty Queens Ms. Patricia Starr (*Ms. Senior California*), and Caitlin Barrett, (*Ms. Teen California*); prominent and published authors Dan Alef, Len Lamensdorf, Susan Gulbransen, Jane Heller, Laird Koenig, Lacy David, Sally Franz, Harriet Ackert and Frances Halpern, who also hosts KCLU's “Beyond Words.”

Local acting company *Speaking of Stories* brought in actors Bob Lesser, Emma Jane Huerta, Henry Brown, Jr., Charles de L'Arbe, Jon Koons, Allison Coutts-Johnson and Nancy Kawalek. RFB&D Board member Eileen Yardi and Yardi Systems' Chief Operating Officer, Gordon Morrell, rounded up 30 plus company employees to read. Reporters from local press outlets lent their voices to the week-long event as well, including longtime supporter Barney Brantingham (*Santa Barbara Independent*), Peter Sklar & Sue Foley (*Ed Hat.com*), Martha Lannan (*Goleta Valley Voice*), John Palminteri (*KEYT*), Alex Henteloff (*CASA Magazine*) and Leslie Westbrook (*Santa Barbara Daily Sound*).

Laguna Blanca 10th grader Esther Tran-Le, who was last year's winner of the writing competition, sponsored by the Santa Barbara Book & Author Festival, brought in several writers who contributed essays to the book, *My California*. Writers Carolyn See, Deanne Stillman, Thomas Steinbeck, and Chryss Yost read their own stories, while Tran-Le and her fellow students from Laguna Blanca School – Vanessa Tomm, Rachel Barbour and Lauren Danson – read other essays from the book and monitored the celebrity authors.

Tom Thomas, outgoing President & CEO of SB Bank & Trust, was joined by several of the banks employees, including Lompoc Branch Manager, Adam Johnson, who is a member of RFB&D's Board of Directors; members of the area's Rotary Clubs and its service club for young men and women, Rotaract, took up five hours in the booths on the Friday afternoon of Record-A-Thon week. Wrapping up the week on Saturday morning was sculptor and new author Bud Bottoms, who read from his book for children called *Kid Ethics*. His sons Joe and Ben Bottoms joined him along with some of the

grandchildren. Employees from *SAGE Publications*, one of the leading publishers of textbooks and other educational materials, joined RFB&D for the first time to read one of their books.

Concluding the 2007 Record-A-Thon, the Kiwanis Club of Santa Barbara Suburban cooked up a BBQ at the nearby Goleta Valley Community Center as a thank you to all the guests, student borrowers, regular volunteers, and staff who participated throughout the week. Seventy-five attended the BBQ and they were thanked for the Herculean effort achieved by RFB&D's Executive Director Tim Owens and Studio Director, Ethan Saxton.

Ten scholarships will be presented at a luncheon ceremony on Saturday, June 9, at RFB&D's studios in Goleta.

All in all, nearly 300 guests joined in reading books for this year's Record-A-Thon – up from last year's 270 guests, and the year before at 242. Among the books read this year were *the Measure of A Man* by Sidney Poitier; *Andrew Carnegie* by David Nasaw; *Justice For All* by Jim Newton; *Walt Disney* by Neal Galbler; *In An Instant* by Bob Woodruff; *Silver Tongue* by Steve Crandell; *My California* (various authors); *Field Notes From A Catastrophe* by Elizabeth Kolbert.

Sponsors for the 2007 Record-A-Thon included RFB&D Volunteers; The RORD Foundation; Frederic E. Steck Family Foundation & Kelly LeBrock; The Ann Jackson Family Foundation; Von's Charitable Foundation; students, parents and friends of Laguna Blanca School; Santa Barbara Bank & Trust, Venoco, Inc.; Mid-State Bank; Village Properties Realtors; Peebles-Sheen Foundation; Reicker, Pfau, Pyle & McRoy, LLP; St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church; Chaucer's Books; Rusty's Pizza; Fresco At The Beach; Kiwanis Club of Santa Barbara Suburban; Santa Barbara Independent; KCLU Radio.

The Santa Barbara Unit of RFB&D, one of 21 units of Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic was founded in 1976 and is celebrating its 31st anniversary of service to Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Kern Counties. RFB&D volunteers produce more than 150 audio textbooks each year that are housed in a lending library at RFB&D's corporate headquarters in Princeton, New Jersey. Books are provided to schools and individual students – from kindergarten through graduate school. Print disabled students, who utilize RFB&D's "*learning through listening*" service, report greater comprehension, higher grades and renewed confidence and self-esteem.

Contact 805-681-0531 for more information or go to RFB&D Santa Barbara's website at www.RFBD.org/SB.