



For Immediate Release

Read to a Child® announces its Remote Read Aloud Program and a new interactive Zoom session now on YouTube

Aerospace Systems Engineer Tracy Drain reads “Hidden Figures” and has lively interaction via Zoom with 4th Grade Class at Esperanza Elementary School in Los Angeles

Wellesley, MA, June 25, 2020 – National literacy and mentoring non-profit [Read to a Child®](#) today announced its Remote Read Aloud Program. As part of the new program, Tracy Drain, a Systems Engineer working at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory has been recorded reading aloud the children’s book *Hidden Figures: The True Story of Four Black Women and the Space Race* by Margot Lee Shetterly. With its Remote Read Aloud program, Read to a Child is bringing the magic of reading aloud to students at home across the country.

Ms. Drain is joined on this inspirational, virtual “story hour” by 18 fourth grade students from Esperanza Elementary School in downtown Los Angeles, CA as well as their teacher, Jill Heuberger, Principal Brad Rumble and Read to a Child CEO Paul Lamoureux.

The *Hidden Figures* picture book is illustrated by Laura Freeman, a *Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honoree*, and celebrates the extraordinary contributions of African American women to scientific and technological advancement and is based on the *New York Times* bestselling book and the Academy Award–nominated movie of the same name.

After listening to the story, students ask Ms. Drain questions about her work on space missions in an interactive Q&A. Thanks to permission from publisher Harper Collins, the entire video is available [on YouTube here](#) for all classes, students and families to enjoy at home. The video can also be found at this link <https://tinyurl.com/Read-Hidden-Figures>.

As a woman of color and a leader in a Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) field, Ms. Drain continues the legacy of *Hidden Figures* today. Recently named the Lead Flight Systems Engineer for the Europa Clipper mission, a spacecraft that will study Jupiter’s moon Europa, her past missions also include spacecraft orbiting Mars and Jupiter.

“It was delightful to get to interact with the wonderful kids at Esperanza,” says Tracy Drain. “Reading has had such an enormous influence on my life that I applaud any program that strives to foster a love of reading in young people! It felt particularly special to share a book with the students that touches on topics near and dear to my heart: how people can achieve amazing feats through math and engineering, and the importance of equality and empowerment for everyone, including people who are just like me, and just like them.”

“We are so thankful to Tracy for being such a wonderful role model, and for bringing her wisdom and grace to a class of remote learners and to the world,” said Read to a Child CEO Paul Lamoureux. “We, and partner schools such as Esperanza Elementary in Los Angeles, recognize the huge factor that reading aloud to children plays in eventual success in reading and the great importance of being a strong reader for academic and professional success.”

To find out more about Read to a Child’s **Remote Read Aloud Program** visit the web page <https://readtoachild.org/program/remote-read-aloud-program> or [click here](#) for other videos, including R.J. Palacio reading her bestselling children’s book *Wonder* and Jordan Gershowitz, Nickelodeon head writer, reading his children’s book *Ignore the Trolls*. All titles in the Remote Read Aloud program are books about empowerment, equity or inclusion.

Visit <https://readtoachild.org/program/read-aloud-resources> or [click here](#) to find out more about Read to a Child’s **Read Aloud Resources** web page which includes: five tips for getting the most out of reading aloud to your child/student; racial justice and equity resources; read aloud from home resources; celebrity, author and other read aloud videos; useful websites; and a huge list of Free eBooks.

About Read to a Child:

Read to a Child (readtoachild.org) is a national literacy and mentoring non-profit that inspires caring adults to read aloud regularly to underserved children to create better opportunities for the child’s future. Research shows that reading aloud to children is the single most important activity for eventual success in reading, a key factor for success in school, work, and life. When an adult reads to a child, both parties have a joyful, rewarding experience that instills a love of reading, improves literacy skills, and enhances a child’s self-confidence. Read to a Child’s **Lunchtime Reading Program** utilizes 2,000 volunteer mentors from the community and from 150 socially-minded organizations who read one-on-one to 1,500 at-risk elementary students in the greater metro areas of Boston, Detroit, Hartford, Los Angeles, and Miami. Read to a Child also reaches and inspires thousands more children across the country in its **Remote Read Aloud Program** and **Celebrity Reading Program** where notable authors, celebrities, athletes and politicians read aloud to groups of children either online or in-person.

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