

the reading agency

15 June 2009

The Reading Agency: a new home and new trustees

The Reading Agency is delighted to announce that it is now based at Free Word Centre for literacy, literature and free expression.

It is also excited this month to welcome new members to The Reading Agency's board of trustees, who bring with them a wealth of ideas and experience.

New home at Free Word

On 8 June, The Reading Agency moved to Free Word Centre, which will open in September 2009 and is housed in The Guardian's former newsroom at:

- **60 Farringdon Road, London, EC1R 3GA**
- **The Reading Agency's telephone number stays the same: 0871 750 1207**

Nine organizations will be resident at Free Word Centre. The eight founders are: Apples and Snakes; Index on Censorship; Article 19; English PEN; The Reading Agency; the Literary Consultancy; Arvon and Booktrust. They will be joined by the Dalkey Archive.

Free Word Centre brings together organisations like The Reading Agency to enhance their work and the profile of their sectors. It will be a national resource, with strong links to associates and partners throughout the UK and internationally. It is the base for the charity Free Word, whose mission is innovation and collaboration, pushing boundaries to promote, protect and democratise the power of the written and spoken word for creative and free expression.

"The Reading Agency specialises in inspiring more people to read more by working with the public library network and partners and we're excited to be bringing the library connection into Free Word," says Miranda McKearney, director of The Reading Agency. "There's a perfect fit between Free Word's values of democracy and innovation and libraries' role in making available to everyone anything and everything that is legally published in this country."

The Reading Agency plans to link its library and Free Word partners through new initiatives and use of the spaces which Free Word Centre offers. A conference on reading, libraries and health is being planned, together with a showcase event for groupthing.org – The Reading Agency's new social networking site for young people.

New trustees

The Reading Agency welcomed four new members to its board of trustees at a meeting in May. They are:

- **John Brown:** John worked for 20 years in venture capital private equity. He has subsequently developed a portfolio of interests in charities and has wide experience in

working as a trustee on boards. He has expertise in strategic planning, finance, fundraising plans and advising on grant applications.

- **Joseph O'Reilly:** Originally from Australia and a trained lawyer, Joseph has over 15 years' experience working in Asia, Africa, North America and the Caribbean for public interest organisations and causes. Most recently he has been working to support education and literacy in developing countries. This work has led him to establish [First Read](#), which supports family literacy and education in poor communities around the world. With expertise in financial planning, HR, management and governance of charities, Joseph is a passionate believer in the importance of information and literacy and the power of reading to change people's lives.
- **John Readman:** John is Divisional Director of Children's and Young People's Services for the London Borough of Lambeth. John was an early supporter of The Reading Agency's work supporting readers, reading development and libraries: he has been a Head of Library services and an active librarian. He is now operating at a very senior level in Children's and Young People's Services, a position from which he will be able to advocate for The Reading Agency, as well as offering an insight into the corporate aspects of the local authority world.
- **Jenny Stevens:** A New Zealander, Jenny trained as a high school teacher, but has worked mostly in adult education. She directed a pioneering adult literacy scheme in London, and co-directed the national Right to Read campaign. She worked on the BBC's first major adult literacy project, subsequently moving into production where she was an executive producer, commissioning editor and then Head of Education at the BBC World Service, commissioning educational output in 40 languages. For the last ten years Jenny has worked a freelance consultant and project manager, specialising in educational and literacy projects.

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Notes to editors:

- The Reading Agency is an independent charity working to inspire more people to read more. It is funded by the Arts Council and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. (www.readingagency.org.uk)