



# THE MOUNTAINEER

"Care with Compassion"

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**Did you know ?... In 2008, 2,300 babies were delivered at Madigan Army Medical Center! Kudos to the Labor and Delivery Staff!**

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## Pilot program encourages reading to children



Photo by Julie Calohan

Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Kevin Walsh distributes a new book to Julia Goodman, 10 months, who is being held by her father, Staff Sgt. Stewart Goodman.

by Julie Calohan  
Staff Writer

Madigan Army Medical Center's Department of Pediatrics is implementing a new pilot program this month that promotes literacy as a standard part of pediatric primary care.

The program, called Reach Out and Read, coordinates the distribution of new books to children during their well-child visits. Madigan and 19 other military treatment facilities across the country were chosen by the Department of Defense to take part in the program.

"We are thrilled to be able to bring Reach Out and Read to military families," said Jill Sells, Director of Reach Out and Read Washington State. "Having Madigan on board is fantastic."

Initially, children between the ages of six months and 18 months will be given a new book at their scheduled appointment in the Well-Child Clinic. The program will eventually include all children up to age five who have scheduled appointments in the Department of Pediatrics, and will then be expanded to

include the Family Medicine clinic and other medical clinics on post.

The director of the program for Madigan, Dr. Karen Fitzgerald, is excited about having the program here.

"The ultimate goal is to make books an important part of children's lives," said Fitzgerald.

Reach Out and Read has three key elements - training providers to encourage parents to read aloud to their children, providing developmentally-appropriate reading material to children, and placing books in the waiting rooms of clinics to promote reading. The books that will be distributed are popular titles, like "The Tales of Peter Rabbit" and the "Three Little Pigs." Children served at Madigan will also receive books intended to calm fears about deployment and military service, such as "While You Were Away." Some books are available in Spanish as well.

"There is research that indicates that children who have books as a normal part of their lives do much better academically," said Fitzgerald. "Reading is part of a good foundation and a healthy childhood."