

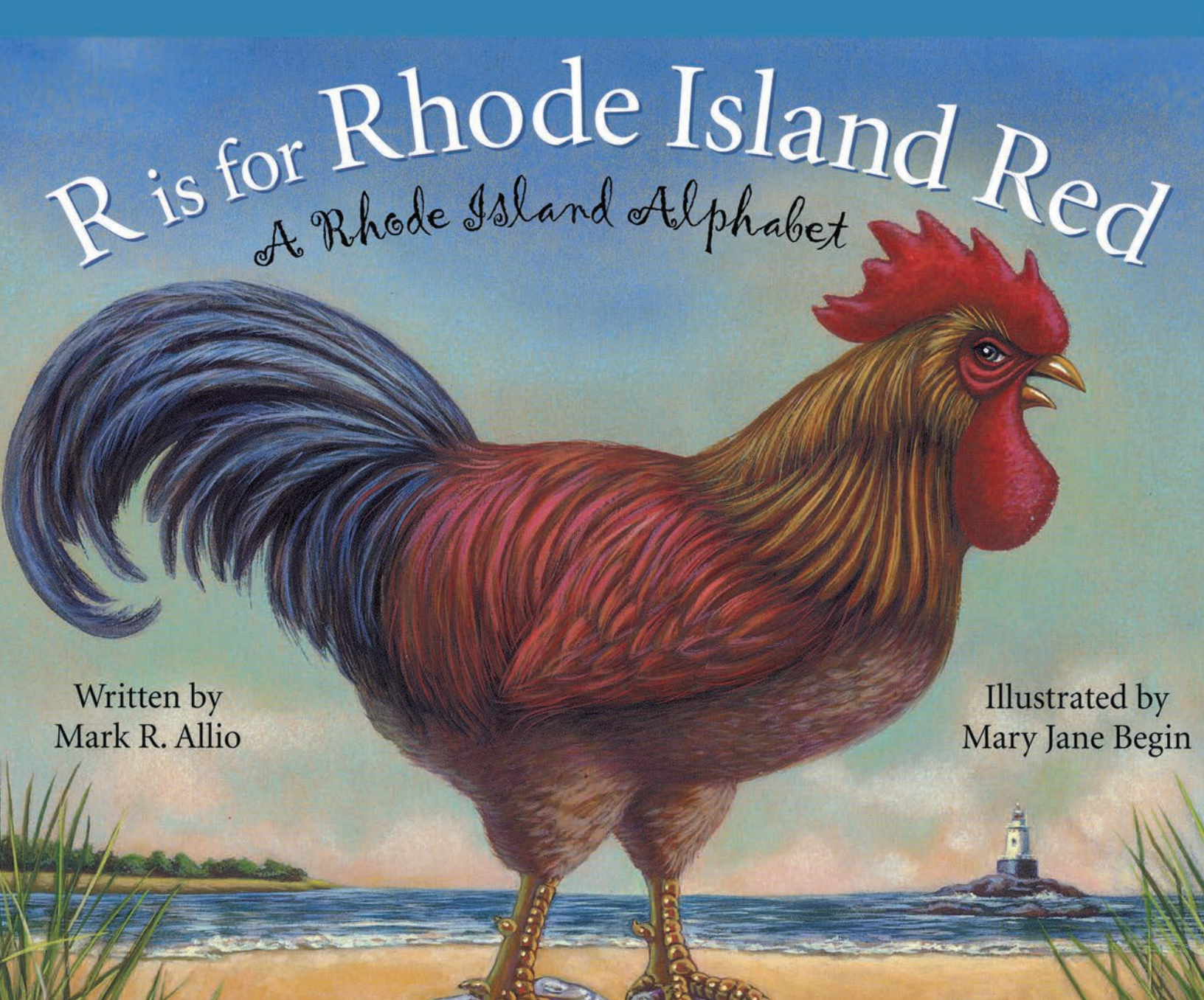
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Building Blocks for the Future



**Children's
FRIEND**



What did our children do last summer?

They embarked on a summer of discovery and learned about Rhode Island in our FUN, exciting and imaginative program focused on building literacy foundations, social studies, math skills and executive functioning.

Q is for Quahog!

The inventive curriculum was themed around the children's book, **R is for Rhode Island Red**, written by Mark C. Allio and illustrated by Mary Jane Begin. In class, the children learned about our Ocean State, including its significant landmarks and features, through an alphabetical tour based on the book.

Of course, this approach also helped them learn and remember the alphabet! Then, through weekly field trips and special hands-on activities, the children had an opportunity to experience some of the state's special treasures, such as **Narragansett Bay (N)**, the **Independent Man (I)**, **Federal Hill (F)**, and even the historical **Looff Carousel (C)**. These experiences helped them form strong connections with the words and concepts learned in class, and taught them to be proud of the state where they live.



Summer Counts

According to the National Summer Learning Association, all students experience learning losses when they do not engage in educational activities during the summer. However, more than half of the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities.

Sadly, the start of the summer often means an end to essential services families rely on throughout the school year. Imagine being cooped up in a small, hot apartment all summer long, unsafe to play in your own neighborhood. This is a reality for many vulnerable children living in our core cities. The Children's Friend Summer Learning & Enrichment Program offers a solution.

Thanks to the tremendous support of our sponsors, donors, and community, Children's Friend provided 200 preschool students with consistent, safe, and fun educational activities last summer in a ten week program, consisting of eight hour days, five days a week.



Special Supports

Some of our children had special needs, including cognitive delays. Our highly qualified staff designed a visually supportive curriculum that included many hands-on activities that not only helped prevent academic slide, but that engaged preschoolers who otherwise might not have been able to participate and learn.

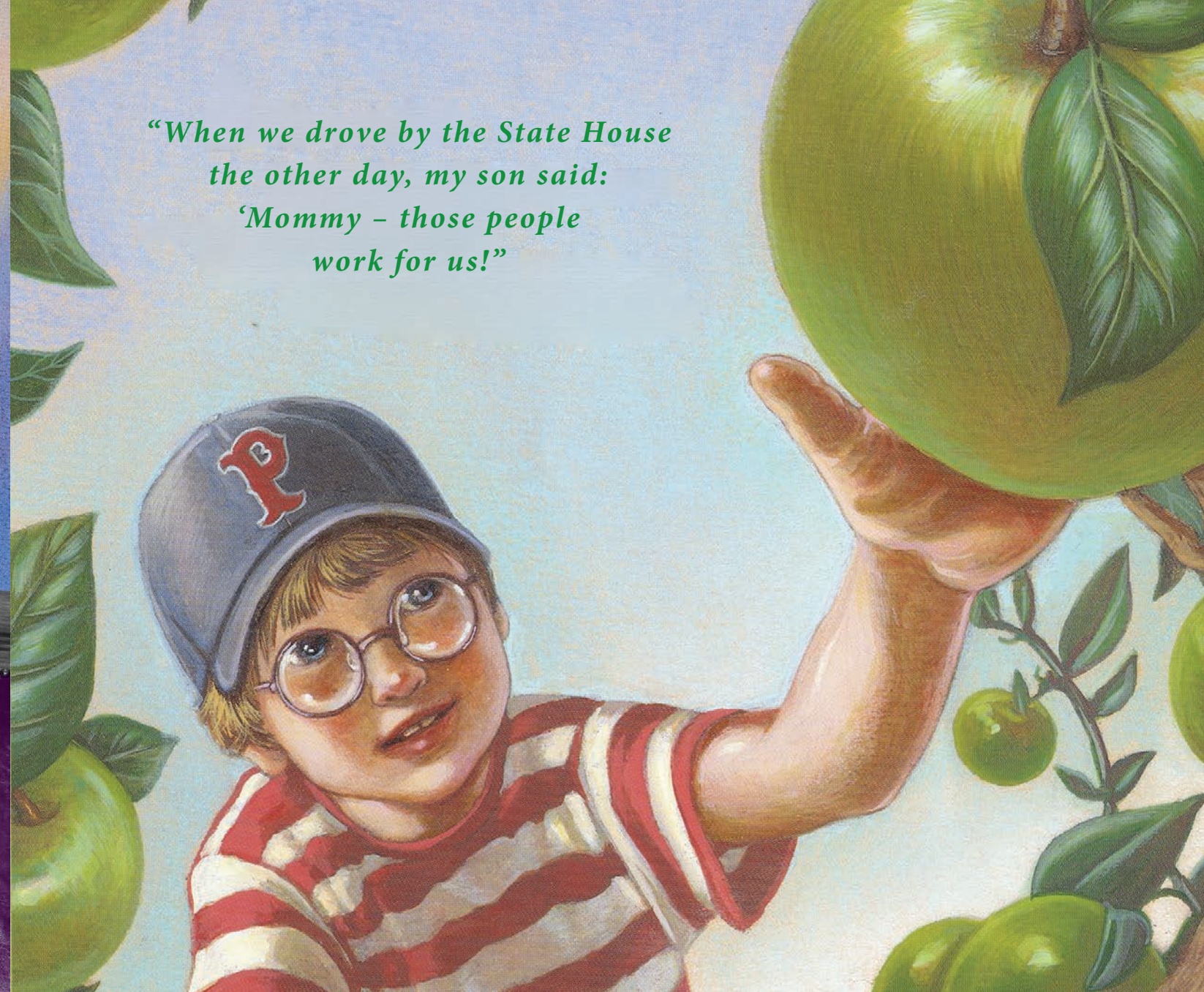
Andrew was a quiet four year old with developmental delays, unable to express his needs, when he came to the Summer Learning & Enrichment Program. Through the consistency and structure of engaging daily activities, Andrew's confidence grew slowly, but surely over the course of the summer.

He was able to increase his social-emotional skills, as well as his self-help skills. He is now able to feed himself using utensils as well as clean up after himself and has been able to express his wants and needs with words.

“Many of the kids had never seen the ocean before.”

Jason, who comes from an extremely low income family, had never been to the beach before participating in our Summer Learning & Enrichment Program, something his mom didn't feel they could have ever done on their own.

At first, Jason was apprehensive and approached the water very timidly. By the end of the field trip, he had turned into a real “fish”. His Mom says Jason continues to work on his “swimming” in the bathtub! Adds his Dad, “If it wasn't for this program, Jason would not have had much of a summer. He returns home each day, happy and energized from his new experiences.”



*“When we drove by the State House
the other day, my son said:
‘Mommy – those people
work for us!’”*

Parent Engagement

Not only did the children learn about the Ocean State, but parent volunteers had the chance to experience the state in a whole new way themselves. Parental engagement is one of the goals of the program. This goal was soundly achieved in 2013 through the active participation of many parents in both the classroom and on field trips. Participating parents who previously had little or no English language skills found their language skills improving dramatically. Some even joined the Policy Council based on their experiences with the Summer Learning & Enrichment Program.

For every 6 children in class and 4 children on field trips, a qualified adult supervises and ensures their safety. Our staff is trained in first aid as well as CPR. Children also receive the nutrition they need to learn: breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack.

Volunteers from Rhode Island based companies such as Panera Bread, Providence Children’s Museum, Swarovski , Citizens Bank, and Casserta’s Pizza joined in the fun by helping children learn about their work. Children had an opportunity to make their own jewelry, count money, and even make pizza.

Program Impact

The Children’s Friend Summer Learning & Enrichment Program had great impact on the children we served last year. Through the Head Start program, we were able to track our children in the spring, throughout the program, and into the fall. Children were tested in eight domains – language, literacy, math, science, creative art, social emotional, approaches to learning, and physical growth – through the Developmental Readiness Review.

What we found was amazing! Not only is there no summer learning loss for children participating in the Summer Learning & Enrichment Program, but our children also continued to grow and show significant improvement across the domains. The children who participated in the Summer Learning & Enrichment Program showed improvement in all eight domains of the Development Readiness Review from the spring 2013 to fall 2013.

This reinforces what we’ve witnessed firsthand – children who lose the stability of a safe learning environment are at greatest risk to lose ground in their development during the summer. Those who have access to high quality enrichment activities thrive.



Children's
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Thank you for helping make the Summer Learning & Enrichment Program possible! Your investment provided access to healthy meals, a safe and engaging learning environment, and highly qualified teachers all summer long.

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