



History of Reading to End Racism™

In the 1980s, a growing concern about racism in the Boulder Valley, Colorado sparked city-sponsored roundtable discussions among diverse groups to highlight and educate about the issue. In 1989, inspired by these discussions, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), developed and coordinated an ambitious week-long education project for school-aged children with the goal of bringing diversity into classrooms throughout Boulder. In 1998, in collaboration with the Anti-racism Taskforce of Boulder, and in response to requests from parents, educators and organizers, the project was revived and launched as a district-wide initiative. RER began as an all-volunteer effort.

Private foundation and City of Boulder funding and individual donations enabled RER organizers to produce a training video, purchase a library of books and expand the program. Support and endorsement from the Boulder Valley School District provided extensive program enhancement through outreach and curriculum guidance.

RER programming now serves thousands of elementary and middle school students throughout the country each year. The program's support materials have expanded into a comprehensive array of classroom facilitation guidelines, age-appropriate activities, and organizing procedures for implementing RER events. As Boulder RER became established and grew, the group created separate councils to manage the RER programs in neighboring communities. RER's versatility, flexibility, and effective presentations resulted in requests for assistance in launching RER affiliates around the country.

In 2004, generous support enabled the creation of RER, Inc. (the national RER expansion initiative) to respond to a growing interest in communities to establish similar programs. The outreach effort is based on nearly a decade of successful program delivery of the RER program.