



## IT REALLY DOES TAKE A VILLAGE... TO TACKLE A 30 MILLION WORD GAP

Written by by Heidi Schwartz | Wednesday, 05 March 2014 10:56 | font size - + | Print | Email | Be the first to comment!

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7th grader, Rachel Echt

Thirty million fewer words -- that's what a child from a low-income family will hear by the time he or she is four, according to a landmark study of almost two decades ago. Kids' Club of Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow sought, last year, to find out what was available in our community to help new mothers from low-income families give their babies the right start. They found that while pre-K programs have expanded, there was little available for the birth to age three population.

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So Smart Babies was born. Director Susan Gitlitz and teacher Rocio Castaneda of the Public Schools of the Tarrytowns’ Asociacion de Familias Hispanas led the charge to develop a new program, and Kids’ Club worked to facilitate and provide funding. It’s all about harnessing the power of parents’ language by encouraging new mothers to talk and read more with their babies.

Smart Babies debuted this past fall, thanks also to the generosity of Sister Susan Gardella of the RSHM LIFE Center, who offered space in her new Valley St. location. Then the Junior League got on board to help fund some of the books that each mother will receive. And most recently, Rachel Echt, a seventh grader at Sleepy Hollow Middle School collected \$500 in Barnes & Noble and Amazon gift cards for Smart Babies for her Mitzvah Project at Temple Beth Abraham. Rachel also collected 100 new and gently used books for very young children. It’s especially heart-warming, the organizers said, to see the next generation of philanthropists joining the caring community of Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow.

The pioneering study disclosing the gap between the vocabularies heard by young children of lower income families and those heard by children of more advantaged families was published in 1995 in the book, “Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children,” by two psychology professors, Betty Hart and Todd Risley, both Ph.D’s.

For more information, about Smart Babies and to see how you can help, visit;  
<https://www.facebook.com/kidsclubttsh>, [www.kidsclubtarrytown.org](http://www.kidsclubtarrytown.org), or [kidsclubttsh@gmail.com](mailto:kidsclubttsh@gmail.com)[kidsclubttsh@gmail.com](mailto:kidsclubttsh@gmail.com)

Heidi Schwartz is a Board Member of the Kids’ Club

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Weekly Newsletter



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a cooperative school,  
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Written by Maureen Petry  
on Wednesday, 02 October 2013 13:01

Learn About the Video Game World Through New Book by  
Tarrytown Native (Arts & Entertainment)

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Tappan Zee Bridge. Now and  
forever. There...

Written by Madge Halpern  
on Wednesday, 02 October 2013 09:40

Legislator Will Introduce Bill To Name Tappan Zee in Honor of  
Veterans (Tappan Zee Bridge)



i am a middle school English  
teacher...

Written by Carol Evans  
on Wednesday, 11 September 2013 20:08

TT/SH Schools Chosen by Disney to Perform Pilot The Lion  
King Scripts for Young Actors (Arts & Entertainment)



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May 05, 2012 , No comments 

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