



# READING CAPTIONS WAKES UP THE BRAIN CELLS!

By Christina Paige Brooks

***I like nonsense—it wakes up the brain cells. Fantasy is a necessary ingredient in living.***

**—Dr. Seuss**

Enter a world of Bar-ba-loots and Things, of a black singing cat and the joy that he brings. Find if you will a red and white hat, and eat eggs and ham until you are fat! (*Green eggs and ham*, that is.)

Sound too incredulous to be true? I assure you it's not, and you can escape to the celebration March 2 (and any other day of the year as well) for the National Education Association's (NEA) [Read Across America event](#).

The [NEA](#) is a volunteer-based organization headquartered in Washington, D.C., that is committed to advancing the cause of public education. Members of the NEA work at every level of education, from preschool to university graduate programs. Those employed in or retired from educational settings and students studying to enter the field of education are eligible for membership.

It's Read Across America program started in 1998 as a way to motivate children to put down their video games and pick up books instead. The nationwide reading celebration takes place each year on the birthday of children's author Theodor Geisel (Dr. Seuss). The theme for the March 2006 event is "Oh, The Places You'll Go," taken from Dr. Seuss's book of the same name.

Dr. Seuss's use of rhyme makes his books an effective tool for teaching young children the basic skills they need to become proficient in language and writing. Many supporters have joined in the effort to promote this event, including the [American Library Association \(ALA\)](#), the [Public Broadcasting Service \(PBS\)](#), and the [Parent-Child Home Program](#).

***Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not!***

**—Dr. Seuss, *The Lorax***

From the [United States Department of Education Web site](#):

Three years ago, President Bush made a commitment to provide a quality education for every child and to close the achievement gap that plagued our schools and society. The president has delivered on his promise—thanks to [No Child Left Behind](#), our nation's

schools are making great strides toward ending the soft bigotry of low expectations and ensuring that all children have the opportunity to learn.

Studies show that the use of captions on media improves literacy, yet only 15 percent of educational media is captioned. Let's join with the president in ensuring that every child receives an equal opportunity toward a full education—that means providing captions on educational media for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Teach children to read by encouraging them to watch captioned media! That's where the Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP) makes opportunities real.

The DCMP is a nonprofit organization funded by the U.S. Department of Education that offers open-captioned free-loan media to students who are deaf or hard of hearing or work with deaf and hard of hearing students. The 4,000 titles in the collection are housed in over 30 libraries located across the United States. The goal of this service is to provide accessible media to the 31 million people who need it.

The Described and Captioned Media Program cares about the education that children are receiving. For that reason, many children's literature titles that can be used in classrooms as well as enjoyed at home are available. The DCMP is proud to add to the collection some of Dr. Seuss's most memorable works: [\*The Cat in the Hat\*](#), [\*The Lorax\*](#), and [\*Green Eggs and Ham\*](#), where viewers are transported to worlds with cotton ball trees and zigzag roads. Where a fish can actually walk around his living room and a piece of clothing can be a hat, a skirt, or a shirt—all at the same time.

Other DCMP literary titles waiting to take you to faraway places are [\*By the Light of the Halloween Moon\*](#), enjoy a bayou; [\*Charlie Needs a Cloak\*](#), shearing time on the farm; [\*Curious George\*](#), one never knows where you'll end up; [\*Five Creatures\*](#), a pleasant home that leaves you guessing; [\*The Red Shoes\*](#), take a trip from rags to riches; and the [\*Ramona\*](#) series, her adventures never end. Please be sure to check out the literary titles available in Spanish as well.

***A person's a person, no matter how small.***

***—Dr. Seuss, Horton Hears a Who***

Dr. Seuss once said, "Children want the same thing we want—to laugh, to be challenged, to be entertained and delighted." So let's give them what they want; it can only help them. Reading can be fun as well as educational, whether you're reading from a book or from a captioned DVD or video. The whimsical characters, bright colors, and nonsensical words found in Dr. Seuss's work will captivate and delight any child, opening a world of artistry and poetry.

Let's accept the challenge to keep children who are deaf or hard of hearing interested and motivated in school and at home by encouraging the utilization of captioned media. By doing so, we allow them the potentials brought forth from having the same educational opportunities that hearing children have. Who knows—the next great children's book writer might be the deaf child sitting in your classroom.

***Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened.***

**–Dr. Seuss**

Dr. Seuss passed away in 1991. Help continue his legacy by joining with the NEA, the DCMP, and others to honor this poet by reading and viewing his artwork and poetry, whether in a book or on captioned media. Join in Read Across America celebrations, such as the one at the Oregon School of the Deaf--says DCMP library manager Charleen Hoiland, "We celebrate this every year at our school with an all-morning event for the kids from kindergarten through 8th grade, followed by a birthday cake after lunch. It's quite an event!" Encourage parents to set aside a few minutes in the day for "story time." Take advantage of the DCMP and all the captioned literary titles that are available. And never stop reading, whether it's a book or a captioned story—you'll be amazed at the places you'll go.

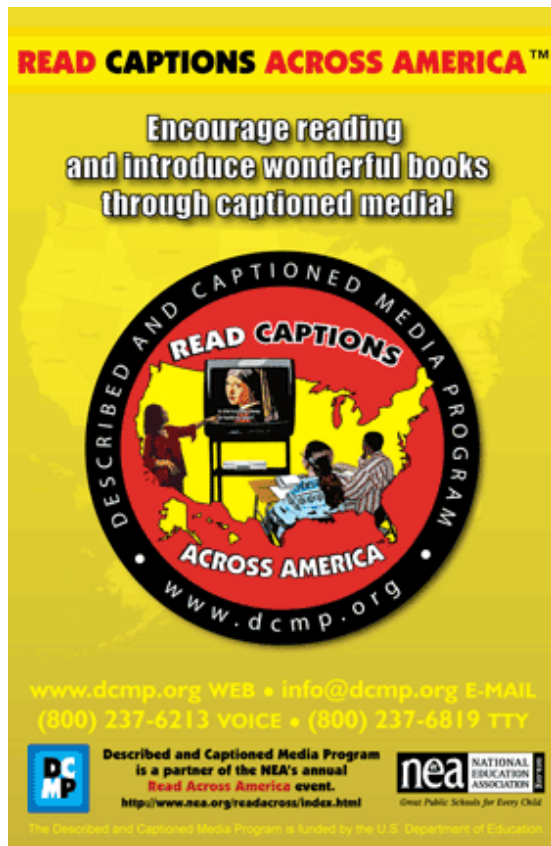
Enjoy the nonsense!

Christina Paige Brooks is a former proofreader and editor for the Captioned Media Program, a government-sponsored program that provides free-loan open-captioned media to persons who are deaf or hard of hearing or to individuals and groups that work with persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. She hopes to one day be a published writer and illustrator of children's books.

# READ CAPTIONS ACROSS AMERICA™

## DCMP Materials for Teachers and Librarians

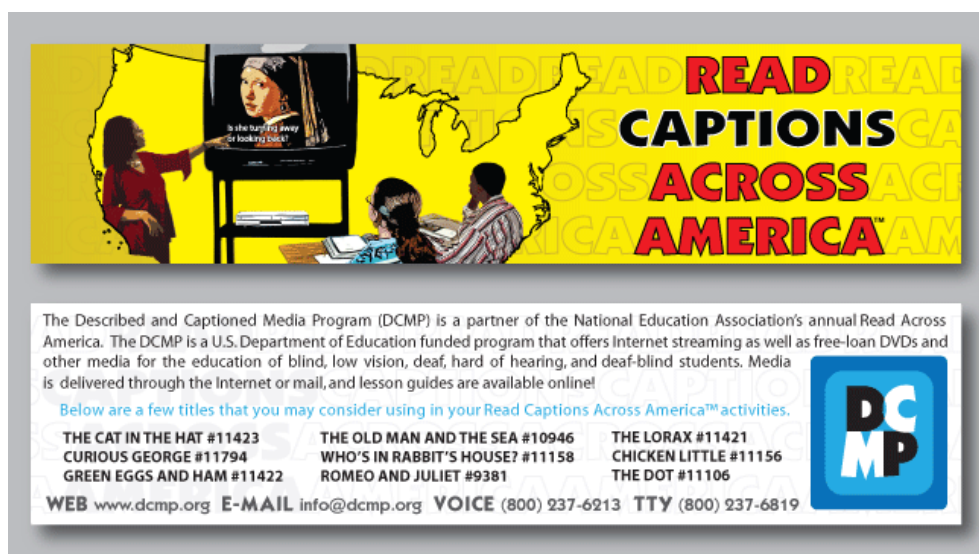
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