



Reach Out and Read of Greater New York's 3rd Annual Conference Brought Mental Health Awareness to Medical Professionals Across New York

The virtual conference, titled Supporting Mental Well-Being in Our Community, brought in speakers from across the US to talk about how medical professionals can support the mental well-being of their patients, families, and themselves.

New York, NY, April 14, 2022 – Reach Out and Read of Greater New York (RORGNY), the 501(3)c nonprofit that incorporates books into pediatric care and encourages families to read aloud together, successfully produced their third annual conference virtually on April 7 and April 8, incorporating 13 speakers to bring their expertise on mental health topics to over 100 attendees. “RORGNY was thrilled with the success of our 2022 Annual Conference,” said Kari Kurjiaka, Senior Manager of Literacy & External Affairs. “A special thanks to our generous sponsors: Jack E. Pace III, Gary Tannenbaum, Wegner CPAs, Parker Waichman, Sergey Kravtman, and Candlewick Press.” The [conference recordings](#) are available to view for free for all who were not able to attend the event.

Keynote speaker **Michael Yogman, MD** from Cambridge Pediatrics and co-author of the AAP Policy statement, [Preventing Childhood Toxic Stress: Partnering With Families and Communities to Promote Relational Health](#), summarized the impact that Reach Out and Read can have on supporting children's mental well-being; “Moving beyond toxic stress towards the solution of relational health. What is critical and what ROR highlights, is that medicine has been all too preoccupied with diagnosing problems and identifying deficits. [...] The resilience metaphor shows that with more positive support than negative experiences you can create resilience. You can see positive support in these responsible relationships. Again, ROR encouraging that kind of communication between parents and children is a critical factor of strengthening positive support.”

During the event, the 2022 RORGNY medical professional award winners were announced. These 5 awards recognize the outstanding healthcare heroes who go above and beyond to serve their community. The Advocate for Diverse Books Award winners were **Patricia Anderson, MD, Acklema Mohammad, MD, and Shamiza Ally, MD** from Urban Health Plan, Inc. The Jack Pace Living, Breathing ROR GNY Award went to **Pamela Piyavunno, RN** from Mt. Sinai South Nassau Family Medicine and **Barbara Zion-Green** from Cohen Children's Medical Center. The Mental Health Advocate Award went to **Ilana Palgi, PsyD** from NYC Health + Hospitals/Queens - Pediatric Practice. The Trusted Messenger Award went to **Jennifer Gomez** from LINC'S Program at the Children's Hospital at Montefiore and **Gary Chin** from Morris Heights Health Center. The Whole Family Advocate Award went to **Claudia Aristy** from Bellevue Hospital and **Faye Kokotos, MD** from Montefiore Medical Center / Pediatric Primary Care at FCC.

About Reach Out and Read of Greater New York



GREATER NEW YORK

Reach Out and Read of Greater New York gives young children a foundation for success by incorporating books into pediatric care and encouraging families to read aloud together. We provide books and training to over 230 Reach Out and Read programs in predominantly low-income communities in New York City, Long Island, and the Greater Hudson Valley. The program is built on the unique relationship between parents and medical providers to develop essential early literacy skills in young children via the existing health infrastructure. Our program is a proven intervention, supported by 15 independent, peer reviewed research studies. Studies were published in renowned journals including *Clinical Pediatrics*, *Journal of the National Medical Association*, and *Pediatrics*. Follow RORGNY on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#). To [donate](#) or learn more about Reach Out and Read of Greater New York, visit, reachoutandreadnyc.org.

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