



# City of Madison Fire Department

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## News Release

**Date:** November 20, 2008

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### **Fire Chief Amesqua presents *Reading Rocks* Chairs to Elementary Students**

City of Madison Fire Chief Debra Amesqua read to Jean Kokott's 1<sup>st</sup> grade class at Mendota Elementary School from a brand new wooden rocking chair today after presenting six new chairs to the Madison Metropolitan School District for use in City classrooms.

It was another step in the Department's *Reading Rocks* project. Today's experience was a far cry from a similar school visit one year ago. It was during that visit to Lakeview Elementary School that Chief Amesqua discovered a rocking chair in disrepair. She made arrangements to have that chair replaced, but realized there might be additional need.

She was right. Representatives from the school district reported there was a need for the replacement of more than 60 chairs in schools across the district.

"Of the many requests received by the City of Madison Fire Department, reading to children is one of the favorites," said Amesqua. "Not only do the children benefit from having a guest read aloud, they benefit by engaging with someone in uniform in a calm and safe setting.

"Part of this safe setting is the reading corner that is set aside in most elementary classrooms. The corners traditionally have a rocking chair for the guest reader. We're happy to work with the community to maintain this tradition for our City's children. There is a great need for more and we are hopeful that other donors will come forward to fill that need."

The new chairs were provided at cost by Ayers Furniture of Ridgeway, and delivered free of charge.

Anyone wishing to participate in this project to foster student interest in reading in a safe and comforting setting, may send a donation to:

City of Madison Fire Department  
325 West Johnson St.  
Madison, WI 53703  
ATTN: Reading Rocks

Checks should be made out to the City of Madison Treasurer.  
**For information on criteria for in-kind donations, please contact the Department's Community Education Unit at 266-4709.**



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