



June 27, 2011

Christine Alexander, 66 years old, the founder and Executive Director of New Haven Reads, died June 26 after a decade-long battle with metastatic breast cancer. Chris arrived in New Haven with her husband in 1998 and started New Haven Reads as a free book distribution center for neighborhood



children. When the children needed help reading the books, New Haven Reads, which is located in the Dixwell neighborhood, rapidly grew into one of the state's largest literacy programs for K-12 students, with 350 volunteers tutoring over 450 students after school and Saturdays each week. Over the years, thousands of local students have benefited from the free tutoring and books from New Haven Reads.

Chris' work in founding New Haven Reads reflected a lifelong interest in literacy, education, and children's issues. After graduating from Duke with a B.A. in history, Chris and her husband Bruce joined the VISTA volunteer program and worked with young people in Washington, D.C. She later received an R.N. degree and managed pediatric health care studies at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland.

Because of her work with New Haven Reads, Chris was one of two recipients of the national United Way of America Volunteer of the Year Award in 2008. Chris also received a youth advocate award from Youth Continuum, and Chris and her husband together received the Greater New Haven United Way DeToqueville Award in 2008 for their contributions to the community.

Chris served on many boards, including the Literacy Coalition of New Haven, and was the first woman to chair the board of the 138-year-old McDonogh School in Baltimore.

Chris' interest in education has been adopted by her family. She is survived by her husband of 43 years, Bruce D. Alexander, who is Vice President of New Haven and State Affairs at Yale; her son Matthew, who is principal of an inner-city high school in San Francisco, his wife Laura and two grandsons; and her son Seth, who is President of the M.I.T. Investment Management Company, his wife Cristina and two granddaughters.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers a donation of books or time as a volunteer be made to New Haven Reads. A memorial service to celebrate Chris' life will be held later in the summer.

www.newhavenreads.org

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