

# ***NEWS RELEASE***



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## **Harlem Students Start Holiday Season with New York Giants Star Tiki Barber**

### ***Verizon to Provide Grant for NYC Literacy Programs***

**NEW YORK** – New York Giants star running back Tiki Barber will read to school children in Harlem tomorrow (Dec. 6) when he helps Verizon kick off this year’s “Season’s Readings” program in New York, Verizon’s national book drive and reading campaign.

Barber, who is a Verizon Literacy Champion, will read to a group of students from the Police Athletic League at 2:30 p.m. at the Verizon Plus retail store at 148 West 125 St. Through the Verizon Literacy Champion program, Verizon partners with celebrities like Barber who donate their image and time to help raise awareness of and funds to solve the critical problem of low literacy in the U.S.

At the event, Verizon also will announce a \$44,000 grant to NYC Reads, a partnership between Verizon and the Literacy Assistance Center (LAC), a nonprofit literacy resource organization in New York.

“Reading helps nurture and build strong communities,” said Eileen O’Neill Odum, president National Operations for Verizon. “Verizon is committed to supporting New York City organizations in their efforts to improve literacy and increase awareness of this fundamental need.”

Last year Verizon awarded a grant to LAC to launch NYC Reads, which supports over 400 youth, adult, and family literacy programs in New York City.

“The ability to read forms the foundation for success in life,” said Elyse Rudolph, executive director for LAC. “Verizon’s support strengthens our mission to offer quality literacy services for children and adults. It will help New Yorkers of all ages gain the skills they need to be good citizens, workers, and family members.”

Throughout the holiday season, Verizon’s 236,000 employees nationwide are being encouraged to donate a new or gently used book to the campaign and to pledge that they will read to a child during the holiday season and throughout the coming year.

To promote the importance of reading to children, the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) has developed a list of Ten Great Holiday Books to Read to Your Children,” for the Seasons Reading program.

NCFL also has provided tips for reading to children and a list of 15 children’s books that are excellent for year-round reading. The reading tips and book list are separated into three age categories – birth to toddlers, three to five years, and six to eight years. (EDITOR’S NOTE: See attachment for titles and details. More information about NCFL’s lists and tips is available at [www.verizonreads.net](http://www.verizonreads.net).)

The tips for reading to children and the holiday and age-specific book lists can serve as a catalyst for parents, grandparents, siblings and others in emphasizing the importance of

developing literacy skills in young people. These also are helpful when choosing books for holiday gifts.

Season's Readings is part of Verizon's national campaign to increase U.S. literacy levels. Through its signature Verizon Reads program and the Verizon Literacy Network, Verizon works to increase community and corporate awareness, raise funds, encourage collaboration among literacy providers, and engage employees in supporting literacy programs. For more information on Verizon Reads, visit [www.verizonreads.net](http://www.verizonreads.net).

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