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**VOLUNTEER JERRY MARTIN SALUTES YOUNG READERS WITH THEIR
FIRST CHANCE ON TELEVISION; WINS EXCELLENCE AWARD
FROM NRTA: AARP's EDUCATOR COMMUNITY**

Washington, DC – Jerry Martin has been honored with an NRTA *With Our Youth!* Excellence Award by NRTA: *AARP's Educator Community* at its Leadership Conference here.

For eleven years, Jerry Martin has been creating, developing and expanding a program known as Saluting New Readers. An *American Idol* for young readers, without the competition, this innovative and replicable program uses low budget video--\$15 per class--to motivate elementary children to love and value reading. The television programs feature classes of students reading their favorite books. These are recorded and later broadcast on the local area public access station. Tapes are also made available for Internet viewing.

Martin's program captures the imaginations of its young readers and allows its adult viewers the opportunity to see what it looks like to witness a child's confidence grow before their eyes. Each child chooses his or her favorite book and is given ample time to practice reading it with emotion and expression.

The goal of "Saluting New Readers" is not to produce an award-winning, technically excellent videotape, rather Martin's central purpose is to give each child a significant growth experience and help them to gain confidence in reading.

"Jerry Martin is a model citizen. He shows the world how educators keep giving long after leaving the classroom. Multiple generations benefit and go on to contribute thanks to the dedication of volunteers like Jerry," said Megan Hookey, Interim Vice President of NRTA.

With Our Youth! was formed in response to the 1997 Presidents' Summit for America's Future, at which the NRTA network made a three-year pledge to provide 45 million volunteer service hours with 1.5 million youth in 2,000 communities. Since 1999, it has reached more than 2.5 million youth in over 42 states.

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The goal of the program is to provide youth with five key resources: an on-going relationship with a caring adult, a healthy start in life, safe places to grow and learn, a marketable skill through effective education and an opportunity to give back through community service.

A total of nine awards representing 7 states, were presented this year: one in the state category, four in the local category and three in the individual category.

About NRTA

Founded in 1947 by retired educator Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus, NRTA: *AARP's Educator Community* is a division of AARP. NRTA members share a commitment to learning, voluntary service, and civic participation. NRTA is the largest national organization that represents the interests of 50+ educators, with a membership of more than one-million active and retired higher-ed and K-12 educators and school personnel at the local, state and national level. The NRTA Network includes a national office in Washington, DC, 53 state and city associations, and more than 2,700 local associations. NRTA members are dedicated to continuous educational opportunity, advocacy, and service as a means of safeguarding the economic security, work opportunities, and future well-being of all generations. Visit NRTA's Website at www.aarp.org/nrta for more information.

About AARP

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to either political campaigns or candidates. We produce AARP The Magazine, the definitive voice for 50+ Americans and the world's largest-circulation magazine with over 34 million readers; AARP Bulletin, the go-to daily news source for AARP's 39 million members and Americans 50+; AARP Segunda Juventud, the only bilingual U.S. publication dedicated exclusively to the 50+ Hispanic community; and our website, AARP.org. AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.