

Pointers For Parents

Steering Teens Toward Books

(NAPSA)—Improving your child's reading skills may help your child start a new and successful chapter in life. Yet according to the National Assessment for Educational Progress, American-student reading scores have made no significant statistical gains since 1970.

The report also suggests a smaller percentage of 13 to 17 year olds read daily for fun today than in 1971. Fortunately, the book is not closed on reading scores, or on how frequently teens read. There are a number of programs that encourage teens to turn a page or two.

For example, the *Drive to Read @ your library*[™] program was developed by HERSHEY'S[®] Milk and the American Library Association. The initiative works with NASCAR driver Ward Burton to encourage young adults to visit libraries, check out and read books and to discover how books can open up worlds of opportunity.

The program offers a contest where teens are challenged to read one of the *Best Books for Young Adults* (a list published by the Young Adult Library Services Association). Teens can submit an entry on a favorite literary hero in essay, monologue, poem, mural or video form, or by any other creative means. The winning entry will receive a trip to Miami to meet Burton and enjoy a weekend at the beach.

Teens can work on the entry



A unique contest may help spread the word to teens about the importance of reading.

alone or in teams of up to four people. Once an entry is completed it must be sponsored by the school or public librarian.

It's thought the contest will help steer teens toward the nearest library. "Young-adult literature is full of wonderful heroes who inspire and excite and offer meaning to an age group often defined by new challenges and change," says American Library Association president Maurice J. Freedman. "The Drive to Read program encourages teens to read for the fun of it by identifying with these characters, and at the same time, discovering all the resources libraries have available specifically for them."

The program is part of the Campaign for America's Libraries—a five year, public-awareness initiative meant to clearly convey the importance of libraries and librarians in the 21st century.

For more information, go to www.hersheysmilk.com.