In spring 2014, with Board of Directors approval, RESET initiated an effort to improve the way it communicates with its stakeholders and the public. Spearheaded by RESET’s Communications Director, Lyndi Schrecengost, the project got underway in early summer, and this RESET Report announces the formal launch of our new website: www.resetonline.org

Lyndi and RESET Executive Director John Meagher felt that RESET’s communications were dated and no longer accurately reflected the organization, including its volunteer demographics and the number and type of programs offered. When RESET began in 1988, there were seven volunteers, all of them retired, who worked exclusively in inner-city schools. Today, the program serves PreKindergarten through 8th-grade students, in schools of both low and moderate income throughout the Washington, DC metro area, including northern Virginia and Maryland. And our volunteer pool—now numbering more than 100!—ranges in age from 21 to 95. We are a more diverse organization now, and we offer a variety of different program options, from our traditional school-time program to extended-day, Saturday, and summer programs. In addition, volunteers have the option of working individually or as part of a workplace or professional organization team.

“It was important that our volunteer recruitment materials present a more accurate and compelling snapshot of RESET,” explained Lyndi. “The most consistent piece of feedback we received was that people thought the organization was just for retired people and didn’t communicate the diversity of programming RESET offered.”

The branding effort began with a marketing survey sent out to volunteers, teachers, staff, the Board, and select funders. The results of the survey were then captured in a creative brief, which presented recommendations for messaging and a direction for a new “look and feel.” Shortly after that, the organization decided on a new tagline. “Initially, we thought of changing the RESET name,” says John Meagher. “But we struggled a bit to find a name that, first of all, was available to us to use, and secondly wasn’t too limiting. We realized that the RESET acronym had 25 years of brand equity behind it. So, instead, we opted to change the meaning of the acronym—from the
The recent outbreak of the Ebola Virus has been traced to a human infection from what animal?

... See inside for the answer

original “Retired Scientists, Engineers, and Technicians” to “Raising Excitement for Science, Engineering and Technology.” RESET will be upper case wherever it appears from now on. The message that we heard over and over again from the branding surveys was that RESET should convey “excitement” for STEM, so we were pleased to be able to incorporate that word into the new acronym, and reinforce it with the tagline: Classroom Adventures in Science and Math.”

Once the name was finalized, a logo and web design firm—MillerCox Design—was commissioned to help with the rebranding effort. MillerCox was selected in part because they had an extensive portfolio of nonprofit clients and clearly understood that sector well.

RESET’s new logo was the first product in this effort. “We knew we wanted a logo and tagline that highlighted children, education, and different fields of science. But mostly we just wanted it to be positive and fun. MillerCox did an excellent job of listening closely to our needs and delivering a great logo right out of the gate at a reasonable cost,” shares Lyndi. Heather Cox, Principal of MillerCox, commented: “As parents and designers focused on the nonprofit sector, we immediately felt a positive connection with the mission of RESET, and were thankful to be a part of the rebranding team. Over the last decade, we have designed many logos, and this one was one of the most fun to create!”

Now with the new logo in hand, the website project could begin. Lyndi worked on messaging and content development, while MillerCox focused on design and technical issues. Says Heather: “We realized that RESET’s website wasn’t as engaging as it could be, it was hard to update, and it wasn’t easy to view on mobile platforms. We were eager to work with John and Lyndi to design a website that was more eye-catching, lively, colorful, and representative of RESET’s work.”

We thank all who provided suggestions during this project. RESET is now well-positioned to reach out to new and existing volunteers, schools, financial supporters, and other advocates for hands-on STEM education. Next steps include updating our recruitment brochure, Volunteer Handbook, and recruitment and training videos. In addition, Lyndi and John will receive training from MillerCox on how to use the site’s content management system so that editing and posting of new content is quick and easy. If you have any feedback on the new logo and website, please let us know! Email John Meagher at reset@resetonline.org.