

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community Invited to Participate in United Way of Greater Stark County Literacy Projects

(Canton, OH) February 15, 2017 – United Way of Greater Stark County (UWGSC) is launching a pair of community service projects to support early learning and literacy for local children.

Read Across America is a national initiative launched by the National Education Association. The annual reading motivation and awareness program encourages children to celebrate reading on March 2, the birthday of beloved children's author Dr. Seuss. UWGSC is inviting our community to participate by reading aloud at early childhood centers throughout Greater Stark County between March 5th - 30th. Dates and times will vary; individuals, groups or workplace teams can schedule a time that works best for them. Early childhood centers hosting the Read Across America event are: JRC Learning Center, Navarre Towpath Trail YMCA, Stuckey Interfaith Child Development Center and YWCA of Canton.

"We know that children who begin school behind their peers are 30% more likely to drop out of high school," explains UWGSC president and CEO Maria Heege. "Preparing children for early success in school supports graduation and career readiness. That's why we invest in community-wide programs that address these vital, long-term goals."

For those who are unable to participate in a reading in March, a Book Drive will be held April 2nd – 27th. The community is encouraged to collect books on their own or organize a drive. The books should be appropriate for children under the age of 6, and can be dropped off at one of the sites listed above or at UWGSC's offices in downtown Canton. The books will be sorted and distributed as part of the annual Day of Caring on May 18th.

"These are engaging volunteer opportunities, and they support UWGSC's Education Bold Goal of 100% kindergarten readiness by 2020," says UWGSC Marketing & Volunteer Coordinator Dan Jenkins. "Workplace teams, service organizations and families can get involved in this project. Motivating children to read is an important factor in student achievement."

Anyone interested in reading aloud or collecting books can contact Dan at daniel.jenkins@uwstark.org or 330-491-9953. More information about UWGSC's Bold Goals in Education is available at www.uwstark.org/education.

About United Way of Greater Stark County

United Way of Greater Stark County fights for the Health, Education and Financial Stability of every person in every community. The agency collaborates, convenes, and partners to support programs and initiatives that break the cycle of poverty, promote a healthy community where children are successful from kindergarten through graduation to a career, and where families have the tools, skills, and support they need to become financially independent. We win by living United. For more information about United Way of Greater Stark County visit www.uwstark.org. Headquarters are at 401 Market Avenue North, Suite 300, Canton, Ohio 44702. (330) 491-0445.

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