

Making a paw-sitive difference: introducing literacy skills with Lucky

<https://www.dailylocal.com/2024/02/21/making-a-paw-sitive-difference-introducing-literacy-skills-with-lucky/>



Lucky visits Montgomery County Head Start students, who are holding their new books. (Courtesy of RSVP)

Smiles erupted when Lucky the dalmatian visited Montgomery County Head Start students to share his story. Every child received a new book to bring home to their family, sharing a fun night reading with siblings, cousins, parents and grandparents.

RSVP's Family Literacy program promotes a love for reading through the Lucky Readers Club. Preschool children meet Lucky, a dog who needs help discovering the joy of reading. Each child takes the stuffed Lucky animal home for the night with a tote bag full of books and a journal, incorporating the family into the program to encourage time together, further developing literacy skills.

The program and its impact are made possible by grantors and sponsors who believe in its mission. The Justamere Foundation generously funded a copy of the Lucky Readers Club for each student and classroom. That totals over 400 children throughout Montgomery County. The students were ecstatic to receive their own book to keep at home.

RSVP also places volunteers in the classroom to read with students regularly. Volunteers develop meaningful relationships with the children while sharing their experiences and love for books. Sometimes, they even help Lucky come to life and visit the children.

In addition to this, the Family Literacy program gifts six books throughout the school year to every child in the Montgomery County Head Start program. Each book has learning materials inside for the family to extend the impact of the reading, teaching the children about colors, math, verbal skills and more.

Sponsors help RSVP purchase and deliver other books throughout the school year to stock student home libraries. Peoples Security Bank and Trust (PSBT), a longtime supporter of RSVP's Family Literacy program, visited Head Start classrooms with Lucky to deliver the book in January.

The organization recognizes the importance of supporting youth and their families: "At PSBT, we are honored to contribute to RSVP's Family Literacy Program. We understand that literacy is a crucial building block for success in life, and believe that by improving literacy abilities, families can better their overall quality of life. We are privileged to be part of such a meaningful program that makes a positive impact on families in our community."

Michele Moll, executive director at RSVP, is grateful for the support of these organizations, "Literacy programs are critical right now, especially starting at a young age," Moll said. "We are very thankful that the Justamere Foundation and Peoples Security Bank and Trust believe in our mission and invest in our Family Literacy program."

RSVP recruits volunteers across Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties to serve education and wellness needs. Many volunteers who work in the Head Start classrooms are retired seniors who have found a new purpose in giving back to their community.

Some are former teachers, and others have practice with years of reading to their own children and grandchildren. RSVP assists with placement and training to ensure the volunteer has the best experience.

The Family Literacy program is recruiting volunteers for the 2024-2025 academic year. RSVP also has virtual opportunities if individuals cannot help in the classroom. Learn more about these programs at <https://www.rsvpmc.org/volunteer-opportunities>.

To learn more about volunteering with RSVP Volunteers, email volunteer123@rsvpmc.org or call 610-834-1040, extension 123.