



Message from President & CEO

This is the time of year for all things “Back to School”! We hope you and your family had an enjoyable Summer 2016 and are as excited as we are about the upcoming school year.

Few subjects are more widely debated than the how, when, who and where education should be delivered. However, there is one thing upon which all professional educators agree, reading at grade level by the third grade is critical to education success and, by extension, success in life. This is why we are focused on early reading readiness and instilling the love of reading in as many young children as possible.

Our vision is for every child in Mercer County to achieve this milestone through the coordinated involvement of both teachers and parents. Through innovation and an outcomes orientation, we have created programs that bring us one step closer to this vision.

For instance, our Reading Oasis Program, focused on elementary school students, is changing how children are learning and engaging with their parents and teachers. The Program is centered on reading, as well as providing additional services around health and economic opportunity.

We invite you to continue reading to learn about our impact on the Grace Norton Rogers School in Hightstown. In addition, we are happy to announce that we are implementing a Reading Oasis in two schools in Trenton - The Gregory and Carroll Robbins Elementary School.

Complementing our Reading Oasis efforts, we are soliciting volunteers to host book drives to ensure that every classroom has a plentiful supply of books. Classroom libraries are vital to encouraging children to read independently every day. The American Library Association recommends at least 300 books per classroom, as well as books that students can take home.

We all know that education is the great equalizer of opportunity and the vehicle to change the world. Education reduces poverty, impacts health and strengthens communities. In the coming year, we promise to both deepen our commitment and communicate our programmatic impact to you. We hope you will partner with us to create a future where all children in the Greater Mercer County area have the opportunity to succeed.

Sincere Regards,

Sandra Toussaint-Burgher
Interim President & CEO



Did you know?

It's never too early to start a child on a path to becoming a strong reader. Learning to read is the most important predictor of a child's future success. Yet, many kids miss this important milestone. The single most impactful thing we can do for the future of our nation and our children is to teach them to read!



If they can read, they will learn. If they learn, they can succeed!

Reading Oasis

In October 2015 United Way of Greater Mercer County introduced the Reading Oasis program into the Rogers Schools in Hightstown with much success! Children, parents and teachers were excited for this unique space within the school. The space provides an inviting environment that promotes literacy and learning. It has inspired many young children to read!

“We believe that the Reading Oasis has been inspirational for the Rogers School community. It has inspired teachers and students because it has ignited something in all of them to want to read! Children, who weren't readers at the beginning of the year, now are!” - Principal, Grace Rogers School, Hightstown

This Fall, UWGMC will open two more Reading Oases in Trenton; at the Gregory School and the Robbins School. It is the goal of UWGMC to provide every Title 1 elementary school in Mercer County with their own Reading Oasis.

A Reading Oasis is made possible by the support of individual donors and corporate sponsors.

A special shout-out to Solvay & Holman Auto Group!

Solvay collected backpacks and supplies for 120 students in the Gregory and Robbins Schools.



As part of their annual Day of Caring, Holman Auto Group sent 15 volunteers to paint and prep the rooms at the Robbins & Gregory Schools for the installation of the Reading Oasis!

Thank you to both organizations for your continued commitment to the community!



**YOUNG PROFESSIONALS
NETWORKING EVENT**

Party with a Purpose!
Hosted by the L.I.V.E. Young Society

BOOK DRIVE!



HOST A BOOK DRIVE

United Way of Greater Mercer County (UWGMC) wants to ensure that every classroom has a plentiful supply of books. The American Library Association recommends at least 300 books per classroom..

Why classroom libraries are important?

- The more time children spend reading the better readers they become.
- Children need time to read independently every day.
- Literacy-related activities can enhance the classroom experience.
- Children develop more complex understandings of stories by talking about their books with others.

Help inspire a great love of reading! **We need age-appropriate books for 1st to 5th graders.** Your donation will provide a variety of books for students in schools that have limited resources in their classroom libraries

HOW YOU CAN HOST A BOOK DRIVE

- Enlist your coworkers, friends and family to collect books for kindergarten to 5th grade reading levels.
- Post fliers provided by UWGMC. Be sure to include the dates for the book drive and promote it on social media.
- Set up and monitor collection locations.
- When collection is complete, hold a book sorting event to organize books for distribution.

For more information please contact
Denise Daniels at
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or 609.637.4903

Literacy Kits

Many of UWGMC's corporate partners have been very busy creating Literacy Kits this summer! A Literacy kit is designed to deepen a child's reading experience and help them build their libraries at home.



Volunteers use their creativity to create and decorate a kit that contains an age appropriate book, a collection of related supplemental activities and games designed to make reading interactive and enjoyable for young children. Contents of the Literacy Kits can help bring books to life and can be enjoyed over and over by children with their teachers and families. Volunteers enjoy creating Literacy Kits as much as the children who receive them!

If you're interested in participating in a Literacy Kit project with your team, please contact Denise Daniels at denise.daniels@uwgmc.org or 609-637-4903.

CLIP- Child Literacy Improvement Project

The CLIP program is designed to increase accessibility of age appropriate books to children by creating small child friendly reading areas in local barbershops and beauty salons. Having access to books outside the typical locations of schools and libraries teaches children that reading can be done anywhere and it'sFUN! For a small investment, you or your organization can support a CLIP location in your area and make a difference in a young potential great reader's life!

Please contact Denise Daniels at denise.daniels@uwgmc.org or 609-637-4903 for more details.





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of Greater Mercer County