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United Way Mobilizes Reading Tutors, Promotes Literacy in Elementary Schools

In partnership with Kenosha Unified School District, Readers Are Leaders is launching with more than 30 tutors volunteering across three schools

January 24, 2022 (Kenosha, WI) — United Way of Kenosha County (UWKC), mobilizing the caring power of our community, plans to relaunch Readers Are Leaders (RAL) in the coming weeks. More than thirty trained reading tutors will volunteer across three Kenosha elementary schools: Wilson, Brass and Forest Park. The goal of the program is to help promote literacy and provide additional support to students.



Laurie Hill, RAL program coordinator, leads a tutor training session, which guides volunteers through reading techniques, resources and skills.

Volunteer tutors will spend at least one hour a week at their assigned school. During this time, tutors catch up with their students and practice their reading and writing skills. The benefits of time spent together extends beyond just practicing skills. Students also gain the comfort of having an extra trusted adult in their life who is dedicated to supporting them and helping them succeed.

RAL launched in 2014 at McKinley, serving students in kindergarten through third grade. The program has since grown to other schools. Before the program disbanded in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions, tutors were working across five schools. Historically, an average of 45 students benefit from the program annually.

Mobilizing the caring power of our community since 1923.

The path to relaunching RAL has not been clear of challenges. Throughout planning, however, one thing remained clear: students need additional support as soon as it safe to do so. After postponing the program's return in fall 2021, conversations continued between the UWKC and KUSD teams. It was then decided to get up and running, with COVID-19 safety precautions in place, at the three designated schools in January 2022. Still today, the teams are juggling turning virtual on top of increased absences.

"Readers Are Leaders has been on hiatus since March 2020," saysCarolynn Friesch, chief executive officer at UWKC. "We are excited to relaunch the program even though we are at a smaller scale than what we are used to. This will allow us to collect feedback from our volunteer tutors and KUSD's school coordinators so we can enhance the program and reach a higher impact in the coming school years."

UWKC extends a warm thank you to all Kenosha Unified teachers and staff for their dedication to preparing students for success, especially throughout these challenging, uncertain times.

For more information and questions, contact Marisa Markowski, resource development manager, at mmarkowski@kenoshaunitedway.org or (262) 671-2208.

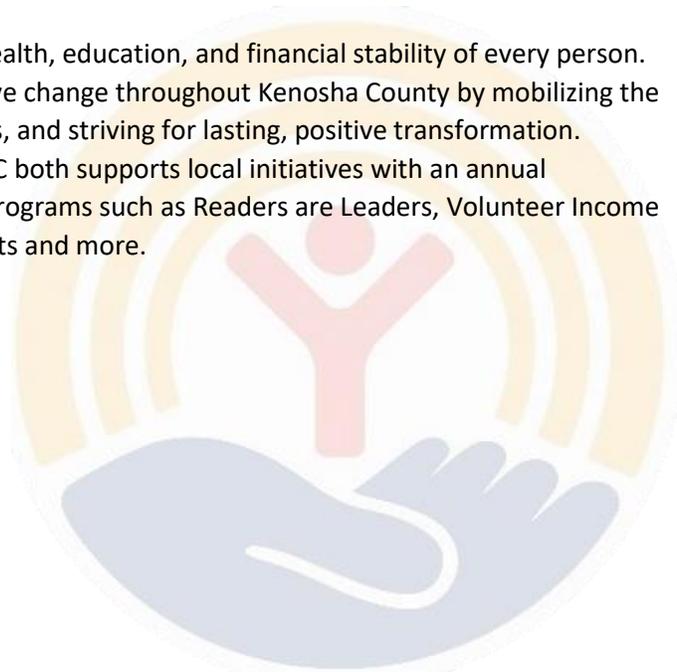


Readers Are Leaders tutors meet their students for the first time at school orientation before the program kicks off at Forest Park on January, 24.

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About UWKC

United Way of Kenosha County fights for the health, education, and financial stability of every person. For almost 100 years, UWKC has created positive change throughout Kenosha County by mobilizing the caring power of the community, improving lives, and striving for lasting, positive transformation. Through partnerships and collaborations, UWKC both supports local initiatives with an annual community investment process and manages programs such as Readers are Leaders, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, SingleCare Prescription Discounts and more.



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