

Media Contact:

Marisa Markowski
(262) 671-2208
mmarkowski@kenoshaunitedway.org

PRESS RELEASE

June 14, 2022

Keira Clark, Scout Troop 505G, Provides 50 Students with Summer Reading Packs to Encourage Literacy Throughout Summer

In partnership with United Way of Kenosha County, Keira Clark donates backpacks full of books and other reading materials to students who participated in Readers Are Leaders.

June 14, 2022 (Kenosha, WI) — United Way of Kenosha County (UWKC), mobilizing the caring power of our community, congratulates Keira Clark on the completion of their Eagle Scout Project: Preventing the Summer Slide. In doing so, Clark assembled and donated roughly 50 backpacks to students who participated in UWKC’s Readers Are Leaders (RAL) during the 2021-2022 school year.

As the title suggests, the project aims to prevent the summer slide, which refers to the learning students typically lose over summer. According to [Scholastic](https://www.scholastic.com/learningresources/summer-slide), students lose about 20 percent, or two months, of their school-year learning in reading during summer break, resulting in up to six weeks spent relearning old material when school resumes in the fall. By providing students with backpacks and reading materials, including age-appropriate books, notebooks, workbooks and writing utensils, students will have access to some materials to help them learn over summer, lessening their summer slide.



Keira Clark celebrates literacy with Wilson Elementary students, Kenosha YMCA staff, and UWKC RAL tutors and program coordinators after distributing backpacks at the 2022 end of year celebration.

“I have a passion for reading, so I wanted to help younger kids receive materials that can help them develop a love for reading just like me,” says Keira Clark, Eagle Scout and tenth grader at Indian Trail High School & Academy. “When I was younger, I completed the Summer Bridge Workbook every summer. I included it in each of the backpacks because it provides so many fun activities and unique ways to learn. I hope the students enjoy their new reading supplies!”

To help bring the project to life, Clark raised funds through a GoFundMe as well as a [Youth As Resources \(YAR\) grant](#). Preventing the Summer Slide was one of 14 youth-led service projects to receive funding during the 2021-2022 grant cycle. Additionally, Pat Fisher with Tryad Solutions helped acquire the backpacks to be used, and volunteers from Troop 505G helped assemble the backpacks to be donated. Then Keira distributed the backpacks to students at the RAL celebrations which took place on May 18, 31 and June 3.



Keira Clark assembles a backpack full of reading supplies to be donated.

“When Keira reached out to me regarding completing an Eagle Scout Project, I immediately thought of how closely the idea aligned with Readers Are Leaders,” says Marisa Markowski, resource development manager at UWKC. “It brought all of us so much joy to see the students’ smile as they opened their backpacks and started looking at their new books and supplies. Thanks Keira!”

The goal of Readers Are Leaders is to promote literacy and provide reading support to students who need it most. The program pairs volunteer tutors with students at participating schools, including Brass Community School, Forest Park Elementary and the YMCA Achiever’s after-school program at Wilson Elementary. Volunteer tutors spend at least 30 minutes a week catching up with students and practicing reading and writing skills. In total this school year, RAL’s 47 volunteer tutors spent roughly 365 hours reading with the 41 participating students.



Keira Clark distributes summer literacy materials to Brass Community School students, pictured with RAL tutors.

Readers Are Leaders is made possible by a partnership between United Way of Kenosha County and Kenosha Unified School District. UWKC looks forward to continuously collaborating to improve the program and gives thanks to the KUSD staff, teachers and administration as well as UWKC volunteer tutors for helping to make RAL a success.

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

###

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.