



Project READS

ALLEN COUNTY EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

Inspiring Students. Enriching Families.

Summer Newsletter 2014

2014-2015

Board of Directors

Debbie Branfield
President
*Crossroad Child &
Family Services*

Marilyn Hissong
East Allen County Schools

Nicole King
Caring About People

Mark Landrigan
*Brotherhood Mutual
Insurance Company*

Adrienne Romary
Carson Boxberger, LLP

Mary Arnold Schwartz
Co-Vice President
Community Volunteer

Dr. Gloria Shamanoff
Northwest Allen County Schools

Dr. Lynn Simmers
Southwest Allen County Schools

Shawn Sollenberger
Treasurer
Baden, Gage, & Schroeder, LLC

J P Spagnolo
Co-Vice President
University of St. Francis

Rebekah Thomas
Secretary
Lincoln National Corporation

Karyn Tomkinson
Fort Wayne Community Schools

Emeritus Board

Thomas Callison
Wayne Hall
Deborah Hoft
Jackson Lehman
Ian Rolland



Champions for Children's Education

First Lady Karen Pence Honors Local Educators

On Wednesday, April 9, Project READS hosted its inaugural Champions for Children's Education Awards Breakfast at the University of Saint Francis Robert Goldstine Performing Arts Center. First Lady Karen Pence joined us as keynote speaker for the event, which was emceed by Megan Trent of NBC33.

We partnered with the network to honor their 2013 Excellence in Education award winners, whose passion and dedication inspire students throughout northeast Indiana. Pictured above (l-r) are: Megan Trent, NBC33; Gene Guthrie, Blackhawk Christian School; Amy Brown, Arlington Elementary School; First Lady Karen Pence; Lori Sumner, Holland Elementary School; Linda Shafer, Adams Elementary School; Rachael Johnson, Suburban Bethlehem Lutheran School; and Amy Bruney, Fremont Elementary School. Honorees Genia Kottkamp, Covington Elementary School, and Nicole Veit, Waterloo Elementary School, were unable to attend.

In her keynote speech, Mrs. Pence first acknowledged our distinguished educators. She then spoke to the benefits of early childhood literacy through personal stories of how books influenced her life as a child and an adult, and the impact they have had on her son and two daughters as children and young adults. Mrs. Pence delighted our guests by reading aloud one of her favorite

(continued)



A Message from Brian

. . . *Executive Director Brian White*

In April 2014 Project READS changed its mission statement to read, “Project READS is an organization dedicated to helping K-3 students achieve grade-level reading goals.” This change was a necessary step for the agency as it continues the work of refocusing our efforts that started with the beginning of our 2013/2014 program year on July 1, 2013.

This new mission statement clearly defines who we have become, and lets our community know where we stand. American humorist Josh Billings once stated, “There’s great power in words, if you don’t hitch too many of them together.” Our succinct new mission statement is indeed power because through it, we have clearly defined the role that Project READS intends to play in helping our future workforce become more literate and, thus, better prepared for what the future brings.

As our 2014/2015 program year begins, we look forward to another strong year helping “striving” young readers improve their literacy skills to a point where they are able to read on grade level by the completion of 3rd grade. We will continue to work collaboratively with and to help Allen County schools give school-identified students the additional literacy boost they need.

So, when our tutoring sites open in September, Project READS will once again work hard to help make sure that the young learners referred to us are successful. While some may define success in numbers, success is really more than that. Success is a long-term process. In reality, “Success,” as noted by American writer Robert Collier, “is the sum of small efforts repeated day in and day out.” We just hope that our 1-hour-per-week “small effort” helps serve the greater purpose described in our mission statement of *helping K-3 students achieve grade-level reading goals*.

Did You Know?

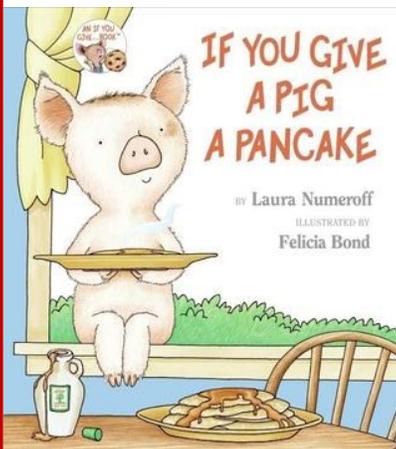
97%

97% of students showed improvement!

82% of these students progressed
by 4 or more reading levels!

82%

Champions for Children’s Education (continued)



children’s books, *If You Give a Pancake*. As a parent and former educator, Mrs. Pence encouraged our guests to appreciate all educators and invited all attendees to give back to our community by sharing their love of books, reminding us all that no student is ever too old to be read to by a caring adult. In support of Mrs. Pence’s messages, Project READS gave every attendee one of our favorite children’s books so they could cultivate the glorious potential of the young readers in their lives.

Thank you to Mrs. Pence, her Chief of Staff Brenda Morrissey, our outstanding educators, and all who sponsored and attended our inaugural Champions Breakfast. Our program would not be possible without your generous support. We look forward to having you join us for breakfast next year!

Volunteer Profile: Keith Kolkman



Keith Kolkman raised his two daughters with three family guide lines, one of which was SHARE. Though he is semi-retired, Keith still follows that principle by serving as a tutor at New Haven Primary, the same school he attended as a child.

A former factory worker who keeps busy restoring model GM cars, he finds a student's "Ah-ha!" moment most rewarding. "You see that child's eyes open a little wider, a big smile starting, and their face brighten up with an 'I get that' feeling!"

We are thrilled that Keith will begin his third year of sharing in the fall at New Haven Primary, where he will be eagerly awaiting those "Ah-ha" moments—and proving you can, indeed, go home again.

Did You Know?

52

52 of our students graduated by reading at or above grade level!

Board Update: Thank You, Welcome and Congratulations!

The end of a program year is always bittersweet, as we often have to say farewell to board members whose terms have ended. Thank you to **Tim White, Exelis, Wayne Hall (2nd full term!), formerly of the Fort Wayne Museum of Art, and Dr. Phil Downs, Southwest Allen County Schools (SACS)**, for your dedication to our mission and generous support of local students. You have become prudent mentors and dear friends, and you will be missed.

We are proud to welcome **Dr. Lynn Simmers to the SACS seat** on our board! Dr. Simmers serves as the assistant superintendent. She has 20 years experience in education as a teacher, coach, assistant principal, athletic director, principal, summer program director and assistant superintendent. Dr. Simmers is an educator dedicated to excellence and therefore believes that our focus must always be student learning. She has experience in facilitating strategic planning processes; guiding professional learning opportunities; training and facilitating building-level curriculum teams; using student achievement data to guide curriculum and instruction; implementing strong literacy programs; facilitating the opening of a New Tech high school as well as extension work at the middle and elementary levels; and optimizing student learning through quality learning practices and technology integration. Dr. Simmers is a certified trainer through the Southern Regional Education Board in the Curriculum Prioritization, Mapping and Monitoring framework, and she provides consultation, professional development and support to schools and districts across the state as a field consultant for the AdvancED Indiana office. Dr. Simmers has the privilege of facilitating national district accreditation visits as a lead evaluator. She currently serves on Indiana's AdvancED State Council and the AdvancED Accreditation Commission. We look forward to working with Dr. Simmers!

Finally, congratulations to **Nicole King** (pictured at right), who accepted our invitation to join the board upon completion of her year as a Leadership Fort Wayne intern. Nicole brings phenomenal passion to her role, and we are delighted that she has chosen to continue to make a difference in the life of area children via Project READS!





Project READS

ALLEN COUNTY EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

Inspiring Students. Enriching Families.

709 Clay Street, Suite 101
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46802
Phone: 260.423.6447
Fax: 260.426.8989

Our vision is that all Allen County students will read at grade level by the completion of third grade.

Project READS/Allen County Education Partnership Staff

Brian White	Executive Director
JC York	Bookkeeper/Office Manager
Deb Dutton	Student Program Manager
Lisa Fabian	Marketing & Communications Manager
Craig Nix	Parent Program Manager
Toma Davis	Delivery Assistant



CONNECTIONS | CAREERS | COMMUNITY

2014 Chapter Nominee

Corporate Non-Profit Firm Award

Thinking about joining
Project READS?
Sites open the week of
September 15th!



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Fort Wayne, IN 46802
709 Clay Street, Suite 101
Inspiring Students. Enriching Families.



NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
FORT WAYNE IN
PERMIT NO 1200