

Harford County Education Foundation Visits with Harford's Youngest Learners

Bel Air, MD, December 22, 2017– Representatives from Harford County Education Foundation visited Bakerfield Elementary School's Title I School Readiness Program in Aberdeen just before the holiday break to gift leveled-reading books and responsibility charts to the school's youngest scholars. The children, ages 2 to 4 years-old, are a part of the Title I School Readiness Program, which prepares Harford County Public School's youngest learners for the demands of school.

Tammy Bishop is a Title 1 Teacher Specialist for the School Readiness Program. Ms. Bishop delivers curriculum to students and provides support to parents in helping their own children learn at each Title 1 School. Thanks to the Education Foundation's partnership, Ms. Bishop has had the opportunity to present identical gifts to the remaining children in the Readiness Program.



Title I Teacher Specialist, Tammy Bishop, welcomes Foundation President, Deb Merlock, and Foundation Chair, Warren Hamilton, into her School Readiness classroom. From left to right (first row), Chanel Wason and William Hutton, (second row) Zoe Henss, Ellie Jo, Jessya Schrock, Gracie Goslin received responsibility charts and two leveled reading books to help them on their way to becoming high achievers when they enroll in school full-time.

Harford County Education Foundation, which is one of several leaders in Harford County-based literacy initiatives, believes in the power of owning books, and the earlier, the better, according to Foundation Board Chair, Warren Hamilton. "Our literacy initiative, Books in Hand, isn't just about giving out books as presents, it's about investing in a child's future, the earlier we start, the quicker we see our children reaping the rewards." Based in research that indicates the number of books in the home is the single greatest indicator of future success, the Education Foundation has made building at-home libraries for Harford County youth a core program focus for the last 7 years.



At 4 years old, William Hutton uses his new responsibility chart to practice reciting the days of the week. The charts come equipped with an erasable marker and blank spaces to encourage the development of the soft organizational skills necessary for success in school.

This early childhood education program is available at all Title I schools in Harford County, and focuses on math and reading at the earliest stages of development. Title I Coordinator, Jake Little, states, "Our School Readiness Program aims to prepare our youngest learners with the social, emotional and academic skills necessary to be successful in school. The books that were provided today will help each child in their journey in becoming life-long readers. The benefits to the program are already apparent to the parents and instructors involved. We are looking forward to seeing continued positive outcomes in the years to come."

Each session provides 2 hours of learning each week with instruction delivered by a certified classroom teacher. Children are required to be accompanied by a parent or guardian, as the curriculum also introduces caregivers to new skills and learning strategies to use with their children.



Mother, Brooke Schrock, reads with daughter, 2 year-old, Jessya, during their weekly School Readiness session. Jessya gets to keep this book, [How Do Dinosaurs Say I Love You](#), thanks to the generosity of Harford County Education Foundation.

“We are so grateful to Harford County Education Foundation for their continued support of our efforts in Title I schools”, states Jake Little. The Books in Hand program has reached thousands of kids since its inception, and more than 10,000 leveled-reading books have been gifted to children through the initiative. “Reading is the cornerstone of education, and so much of learning, whether it’s basic or advanced subject matter, depends on our children’s ability to read,” comments Deb Merlock, President and Founder of Harford County Education Foundation. More information about Books in Hand and the Education Foundation’s other core programs can be found at www.harfordeducation.org.

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About the Education Foundation: Harford County Education Foundation (Previously known as Greater Excellence in Education Foundation) invests in the education of 37,000 youth in Harford County Public Schools by providing programs and resources to complement the learning and growth of each student regardless of their economic circumstances. The Education Foundation works in partnership with the community to bring critical resources to help students succeed in their academic and personal goals through middle and high school leadership programs, college and career mentoring, scholarships, free school supplies for low income students, grants to support innovative classroom instruction and celebrating the education profession with the community. Visit <http://www.harfordeducation.org> to learn more.