WHAT A STORY



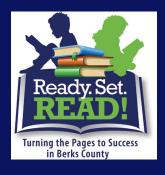




Ready.Set.READ! 2014 Progress Report

A community initiative focused on improving early grade reading proficiency-the key to academic and future success

Ready.Set.READ! is managed by United Way of Berks County



MISSION: Develop and implement a comprehensive and collaborative system of support throughout Berks County that will ensure reading proficiency for students by the end of third grade.

GOAL: 90% of Berks County 3rd Graders will be proficient readers by 2023, as measured by 3rd Grade PSSA test scores

LEADERSHIP MESSAGE:

The past year has been filled with tremendous growth and commitment as the work of Ready.Set.READ! paves the way for more children to become better readers and ultimately achieve greater success.

In continuing the work of the original Founders Council, a board of directors was established earlier this year to provide direction and chart the course of the work around the initiative's key strategies. The group represents our county's educational and business communities, as well as nonprofit and faith-based organizations. Their dedication to the initiative's mission and work has helped achieve several significant milestones in 2014.

For example, Ready.Set.READ!:

- Developed a strategic plan and key tactics to guide our work.
- Enlisted Capital Area Intermediate Unit to conduct an independent evaluation of the initiative's development.
- Increased community awareness and volunteer recruitment with an advertising campaign in partnership with Reading Eagle Company.
- Received \$165,250 in Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) contributions to invest in school-age literacy programs.

Ready.Set.READ! experienced significant progress around its school-age strategy as partnerships with schools, businesses and volunteers fueled the success around these efforts. Over 300 trained volunteers are now working with close to 450 students in 25 elementary schools within 10 school districts, compared to six districts last year. School administrators, teachers, parents, and students have all shared their excitement around the initiative, noting improved reading skills and the strength of the bond formed between the tutor and student.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sharon Danks, Chair *Tweed-Weber, Inc.* Jerry Simcik, Vice Chair *SFS intec, Inc.*

Margarita Caicedo RACC

Dr. Andrea Chapdelaine Albright College

Johanna Fletcher Wells Fargo

Wayne Gehris Reading School District

Brad Hall UGI Energy Services, Inc.

Ellen Horan Greater Reading Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Dr. Melissa Jamula Retired Superintendent

Kim Johnson YMCA of Reading and Berks County

Steve Keifer Hamburg Area School District

Tammy Mitgang Community Volunteer

Dr. Rev. Steve Ohnsman Calvary UCC Church

Barbara Pattison National Penn

Dr. Juliette Pennyman Reading School District

Lou Schucker Attorney

Teresa Schutt BCIU

Senator Judy Schwank Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Denise Shoup *EnerSys*

Robert Spengler Grafika Commercial Printing, Inc.

Liz Sterner Comcast

Denise Sticha Berks County Public Library System

Jeff Stoicheff Penske Truck Leasing Co.

Robert Stovko UGI Utilities. Inc.

Pablo Tejada Olivets Boys & Girls Club of Reading & Berks County

Mike Toledo Centro Hispano

Stephanie Towles NAACP

Dr. Karen Wang Reading Health System

Jay Worrall *Alvernia University*

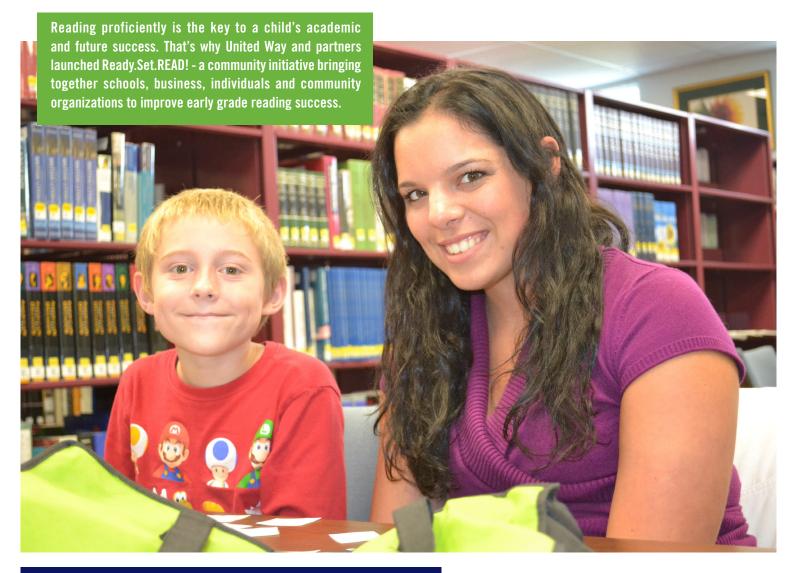
Cheri Woyurka BCIU

We share our gratitude with the hundreds of individuals and organizations that have made these milestones possible, and for helping ignite the joy of reading and learning in children throughout our community. We're very fortunate to have a community that believes in us, supports us, and encourages us. Thank you for being that community and for joining us in our mission. Together, we are making a difference in a child's life.

Sharon A. Danks

Sharon Danks

Board of Directions Chairperson, Ready.Set.READ!



Early Grade Reading: A Community Focus

Ready.Set.READ! is a community-wide initiative managed by United Way of Berks County that brings together schools, businesses, organizations and individuals to improve early grade reading success. Based on the county-wide 2013 PSSA data, 27% of Berks County third graders were not reading proficiently. The collaborative is working towards the goal of 90% of third-graders in Berks County reading on grade level by 2023, as measured by the third grade PSSA exam.

This collective work concentrates on four implementation strategies:

- Implement school readiness activities for pre-school children
- Provide supplemental support to struggling readers in the early grades
- Engage parents to promote literacy
- Mobilize the community around this effort

UNITED WAY STAFF SUPPORTING READY.SET.READ!

Pat Giles Jane Moyer
Jessica Heil Jen O'Brien
Mary Jimenez Chris Spanier
Stella Leonti Tammy White
Jean Morrow Darby Wiekrykas

AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteer: Danielle Motze

Ready.Set.READ! Strategies

Implement school readiness activities for pre-school children



Quality early care and education settings provide an opportunity to expose young children to learning environments that can help to build their language and literacy development. However, many children either aren't able to take advantage of those programs or attend low quality programs instead.



Ready. Set. READ! is committed to developing strategies to expand access to quality early learning experiences for children that help prepare them to learn to read when they enter school.

HOW WE'RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Story Friends are corporate and community volunteers who read to children in Head Start and Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts classrooms once a month. This group of volunteers helps three to five year olds develop a love of books and reading. They also model how to read with fluency and expression. Fourteen corporate and community volunteers participated in the pilot from January to May 2014. This fall, the number of volunteers has increased to 41, and the program is expanding into child care centers as well.



Barr, Gregg Barth, Colleen Binter, Jennifer Brown, Diane DeAcosta, Kevin Eppenstein, Susan Frederick, Andrew Giles, Nancy Henderson, Sandra Henshaw, Vicki High, Terry
Johnson, Susan
Kalbach, Heide
Levine, Margaret
Miller, Patricia
Najee, Qwame
Nawa, Barbara
Pagan-Santos, Erictza
Park, Andrew
Phillips, Mary
Reyes, Paige
Ricketts, Sherry
Rosado, Taina
Ruiz, Brain
Sanchez, Gabriel

Sanchez, Kassandra Shamus, Anne Shellabear, Linda Spatz, Patricia Steinmetz, Maureen Strausser, Judith Swanson, Paula Wagner, Emily Wagner, Kerry Weiler, Patricia Wells, Carol Wiedinmyer, Jane Wilson, Jeff Wunder, Michelle Zabinski, Sherrie Zazo. Lisa



Growing Readers is a new approach being implemented to provide early literacy support to several Latino operated childcare centers in the city of Reading providing care to children 3-5 years of age. To be eligible for the support, these centers must be participating in the Pennsylvania Keystone STARS program at a STAR 1 or 2 level. The child care center director and teachers will receive support in strengthening their preschool curriculum to meet the state 2014 Learning Standards for Early Childhood. Outcomes include children entering kindergarten with the foundational skills needed to succeed in school.

Provide supplemental support to struggling readers in the early grades

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Children who encounter challenges in learning to read once they enter school are especially vulnerable to never catching up. Schools and classroom teachers work hard to identify those children and intervene as early and as much as possible. However, one of the most basic strategies is providing extra time for children to practice reading with the guidance of a supportive adult. This simple strategy provides the perfect opportunity to call the community to action to volunteer by spending an hour a week with a child encouraging them to read.





Star Readers expanded significantly during the past year thanks to the support and involvement of dedicated volunteers. Over 300 trained volunteers, including corporate employees, college students, retired educators and community volunteers are demonstrating tremendous dedication by providing supplemental reading instruction to close to 450 first, second and third grade students within 10 school districts to boost their reading comprehension, accuracy, fluency and literacy skills.

Partner School Districts:

Antietam
Brandywine Heights
Conrad Weiser
Daniel Boone
Exeter
Governor Mifflin
Hamburg
Muhlenberg
Reading

Schuylkill Valley



Did you know children can lose up to three months of academic progress over the summer?

Ready.Set.READ! partnered with Birdsboro Community Memorial Center and Olivet Boys & Girls Club of Reading & Berks County to implement two summer reading programs. More than 150 kids participated in Birdsboro's Camp Adventure to maintain and improve reading skills over the summer months. Through activities centered on literacy activities, Readers Theatre performances and reading to pets, 65% of the participants maintained or improved their reading fluency. Over 250 kids in second through fifth grades joined the Olivet's Bookworms program and read a wide variety of literature and reenacted favorite chapters to increase vocabulary and fluency.

2<mark>013-1</mark>4 Star <mark>Rea</mark>ders EVALUATION



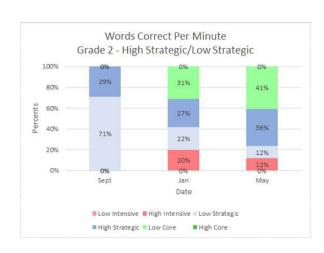
Year Two Progress:

Capital Area Intermediate Unit was once again engaged to conduct an independent evaluation of the Star Readers program in the 2013-14 school year. Each participating school conducted assessments of tutored students using the DIBELS assessment indicators, at the beginning of the school year, mid-year and end of the year. Students were assessed on Fluency, which is the rate of students' reading (words correct per minute) and Accuracy which assesses students' reading errors. Assessment scores are then categorized into three levels: Core, Strategic or Intensive, with the score ranges for each category increasing over the course of the school year.

A total of 252 students were assessed over the entire school year and were therefore included in the full evaluation report. The target group for participation in Star Readers was 2nd Grade students assessed as Strategic in the beginning of the year. This was the group of students that saw the greatest improvement in their DIBELS assessment, with nearly half of them reaching the Core level by the end of the year.

Additional goals for the 2014-15 Star Readers evaluation is to compare the growth in DIBELS scores of tutored students to similarly assessed non-participating students and track PSSA 3rd Grade Reading test scores for tutored students.

"Ever since my daugther started the tutoring program, I've noticed that her reading has improved. I'm really thankful. It makes me proud every time I hear her read."



The DIBELS words-correct-per-minute (WCPM) indicator revealed that 41% of the participating second grade students moved from Strategic to Core.



The DIBELS accuracy indicator identified that 44% of the participating second grade students moved from Strategic to Core.

Engage parents to promote literacy

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Parents and families have a critical role in helping children develop their language and literacy skills, starting at birth. Helping children build their vocabulary by talking to them about everyday tasks and experiences, and telling stories and sharing books builds an interest and excitement of reading. These are just some of the simple things that parents can do to help children be prepared to learn to read ... if they know the importance of these activities and have the knowledge and resources to put them into practice.





Raising a Reader is an evidence-based early literacy and family engagement program that helps families develop, practice and sustain home literacy routines with their children, aged 0-8 years old. Each week children bring home a bright red book bag filled with several high quality, culturally and linguistically appropriate books. The bags are exchanged each week so that over the course of a year, families will get the opportunity to read over 100 books together.

Ready. Set. READ! will partner with 10th & Green and 16th & Haak Elementary Schools in the Reading School District to provide Raising A Reader to nearly 400 children in their Pre-K and Kindergarten classrooms, starting in January.

HOW WE'RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors is a nationally recognized 10-session group education program for parents of children 0-5 years old. It is designed to help them understand the importance of their role as their child's first teacher and increase their child's school



readiness. Developed in California, especially for Latino parents, it also helps them learn how to best support their child's educational progress.

Centro Hispano has partnered with Ready. Set. READ! to take the lead in offering the program to Berks County parents. Centro Hispano staff have been certified as Opening Doors trainers and are working closely with the BCIU Head Start program, to train Parent Outreach staff and to support them in facilitation classes for Head Start parents. Plans for the future also include training personnel from churches and other community-based organizations to offer the program to their members and clients.

Mobilize the community

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Reading is a critical bridge to success in school, work and life. Children learn to read until third grade, and by fourth grade they read to learn. Students who don't read well have challenges with grades, disengaging from school and at greater risk of dropping out of school. The issue of reading proficency is one for the community to rally around, as the issue is at the heart of our county's future.

HOW WE'RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Hundreds of Ready.Set.READ! supporters and volunteers shared their caring spirit to make the past year a success. Organizations conducted book drives for local child care, school and youth programs. And, great strides were made in raising awareness about the importance of this issue and recruiting additional tutors to support the work of the initiative. Berks Countians continue to step up to the plate to make a difference as they recognize the need and importance of this work in the lives of children, families and our community.





Ready.Set.READ! celeberated it's first year of work and achievements at a community forum in 2013. Ralph Smith, senior vice president, Annie E. Casey Foundation and managing director for the National Campaign on Grade Level Reading, commended the initiative's efforts and emphasized the continued crucial need to implement programs and to work with community partners to improve literacy and reading proficiency of pre-school and elementary school students.

Special recognition was shared with several key supporters, including BCIU as the Education Partner; Centro Hispano as our NonProfit Partner; and Reading Eagle Company and The UGI Companies for their strong corporate support. Barbara Hall, a retired educator who has played an integral role in the Star Readers Training Program, was recgonized as a key community volunteer.



2013/14 School Year

29,854

total hours kids spent in various reading activities as part of Ready.Set.READ!





1,129 books donated



\$234,452.35

total dollar value of volunteer hours (based on Independent Sector value of \$22.55 per hour)



10,397

volunteer hours in support of Ready.Set.READ! activities



297 volunteer tutors helping kids become better readers



8,774 hours tutoring elementary students





to the following individuals and organizations who are actively engaged in Ready. Set. READ! activities for 2014-15



Education Partners

Alvernia University Albright College:

Jasmine Clarke, Dorothea Miller

Antietam School District:

Mt. Penn Elementary School--Shirley Fevers Berks County Intermediate Unit Child Care Berks County Intermediate Unit Head Start

Berks County Migrant Education

Brandywine Heights Area School District:

Brandywine Heights Elementary School-

Karen Long, Jean Condos, Erin Davis

Capital Area Intermediate Unit - Sue Voigt

Conrad Weiser Area School District:

Conrad Weiser East Elementary School-

Janet Heilman, Kathy Pachuilo

Conrad Weiser West Elementary School-

Jennifer Hassler, Cathy Penta

Daniel Boone Area School District:

Monocacy Elementary Center -

Melanie Hefter, Janet Ebner, Charlene Richards

Exeter Township School District:

Christy M. Haller, Julie Kline,

Monica Weisser, Peggy Gumpert

Governor Mifflin School District;

Brecknock Elementary School-

Dr. Marvellen Kuenv. Patricia Nierle

Cumru Elementary School-

Richard Kaskey, Kirstin Shockey

Mifflin Park Elementary School -

David Argentati, Holly Garner

Hamburg Area School District:

Tilden Elementary Center,

Lacie Cucciuffo, Michelle Semian

Kindercare Learning Center- Morgan Drive

Kutztown University

Live 'n Learn SMILE Center

Muhlenberg School District;

Muhlenberg Elementary Center-

Steven Baylor, Dr. Roula Elliker

Penn State University - Berks Campus -

Dr. Chrystine Mitchell, Dr. Carole Roberts

Reading School District:

10th & Green Elementary School-

Wanda Gonzalez-Crespo, Kathy Sallade

10th & Penn Elementary School--RowBee'C Kasisky

12th & Marion--Paul Hunter, Billie Jo Long, Cyndi Hyriak

13th & Green Elementary School-- Kevin Collins,

Christine Reichardt

13th & Union Elementary School-

Margaret Brown, Melissa Houptley

16th & Haak Elementary School-

Traci Webb, Lauren Walton

Amanda Stout Elementary School-

Susan Higginson, Melissa Moyer

Glenside Elementary School -

Melissa Fisher, Andrea Salsano

Lauer's Park Elementary School-

Gordon Hoodak, Lyvia Petris, Meredith Weisman

Millmont Elementary School-

Jennifer Murray, Margaret Schlauch

Northwest Elementary School-

Maria Wengyn, Enes Zimmerman

Tyson Schoener Elementary School-

Salvador Sepulveda, Robin Scarpaci

Riverside Elementary School-

JuliAnne Kline, Melissa Eggert

Schuylkill Valley School District:

Schuvlkill Valley Elementary School-

Melissa Kelchner, Kathleen Gwiazdowski

Springrose Child Care

Community Partners

AmeriCorps VISTA

Berks Community Health Center

Berks Encore

Birdsboro Community Memorial Center

Caron Treatment Centers

Centro Hispano, Daniel Torres, Inc.

Grace Lutheran Church

The Highlands at Wyomissing

Hope Lutheran Church

John Paul II Center

Muhlenberg Community Library

Olivet Boys & Girls Club of Reading

and Berks County

Opportunity House

Phoebe Berks Village

Reading Musical Foundation

Reading Public Library

Salvation Army: Reading Corps

State Senator Judith S. Schwank's Office

United Community Services

Corporate Partners

Ametek-Reading Alloys

Boscov's Department Store LLC

Carpenter Technology Corporation

Enersys

First Energy

Freedom Auto Group

Merrrill Lynch Wealth Management

National Penn Bank

Offsite Advantage LLC

Penske Truck Leasing Co.

Reading Eagle Company

Reinsel Kuntz Lesher Travelers

UGI Energy Services

UGI Utilities, Inc.

"The program works! When they succeed, it's all over their face - - a smile from ear to ear."

Steve Weik, Volunteer Tutor, Mifflin Park Elementary School, Governor Mifflin School District

Tutors 2014-15 School Year

Antietam School District

Constein, Anne

Cress, Jacquelyn

Dupell, Michele

Farrell, Jane - substitute

Flanagan, Kristina

Formando. Joie

Schmale, Javne

Brandywine Heights Area

School District

Christman, Karen

Etchberger, Debra

Felegy, Doug

Landis, Kathy

Pattison, Barbara

Quinn, Shannon

Schnader, David

Schnader, Jean

Sloughfy, Frances

Stockdale, Carol

Sturtevant, Joyce

Sturtevant, Ed - substitute

Conrad Weiser School District

Bossard, Mary

Buffington, Christine

Charnigo, Jodi

DiCintio, Riva

Godfrey, Kelly

Lichtenwalner, Judith - substitute

Lincoln. Joan - substitute

Miller, Karen

Nicotra, Fileen

Peters. Bernie

Savarese, Jennifer

Unger, Denise

Weatherholz, Sarah

Zechman, Loretta

Daniel Boone Elementary School

Ewald, Marjory

Gunzelmann, Carol

Jardine, Kayla

Moreno, Jorge

Matchett, Dr. Charles Reitmeyer, Margaret

Sweet, Wendy

Wiley, Carol

Exeter School District Gunzelman, Carol

Jurasinski, Dorothy

Kalbach, Allison

Kline, Judy

Lindenmuth, Dave Miller, Charles

Miller, Kathy

Papich, Todd

Paquet, Jacqueline

Pyle, Ann Ruffner, Dennis

Schaffer, Rosemary

Seidel, Ilona Simcik, Beth

Wagner, Bethanne

Vild, Rose -substitute

Governor Mifflin School District

Beem, Jackie
Bernstein, Tamara
Blatt, Rachel
Bock, Kelly
Calder, Sharon
Coller, Gary
Dieruff, Bob
Dunn, Nancy
Fryberger, Karen
Gassert, Jean
Gensemer, Charmaine

Gerber, Lori Gordon, Yvonne Harrington, Ann Hoffman, Debra

Holmes, Christopher - substitute

Homsher, Barbara Hood, Jennifer Kane, Sylvia Kramlich, Deidra Lazarchick, Lorena

Linderman, Sandra - substitute

Little, Kerri Mancuso, Elizabeth Matzuk, Susan Mohn, Barbara

Murray, Steve - substitute

Naugle, Amy
Ormsbee, Tracey
Oxenreider, Joan
Pursel, Trish
Reinhart, Marcella
Richards, Anne
Schwoyer, Christine
Schumacher, Pam
Schultz, Lisa
Snyder, Christine
Snyder, Christine
Swartz, Martha
Swody, Barbara
Stripling, Don

Young, Ann Hamburg School District

Thomas, Novelette

Wodehouse, Angela

Worthington, Joan

Weik. Steven J.

Wolfe, Bonnie

Bear, Susan
Easterbrook, Alice
Fischer, Jean
Killough, Jackie
Macbeth, Pam
Miller, Fay
Murphy, Kathleen
Smith, Lori
Spohn, Chris

Stanton, Dalci - substitute

Strouse, Amy Vardjan, Nancy Weidenhammer, Alyse **Muhlenberg School District**

Daniel, Fabienne Futrick Barbara Helms, Katherine Hoffman, Lori Horvath, Karen Huemmrich, Bridget Lambert, Kalli Livinghouse, Ellie Lott, Lacey Schlegel, Janet Schlegel, Sandi Smith, John Spangler, Elaine Reading School Dist

Reading School District Adams, Stacie

Affleck, Jennifer

Albright, Sue - substitute

Arndt, Karen
Atlas, Jennifer
Baskin, Harriet
Beckett, Chantel
Bell, Rose
Berlin, Stephanie
Biechler, Tim
Blatt. Ruth

Boalton-Esslinger, Misty
Bowman, Simon
Boyd, Kristen
Bracho, Matthew
Breaux, Kathleen
Breisch, Dawn
Bruno, Jessica
Calderon, Marco
Carles, Karen
Chakrapani, Sandhya
Clark, Maryann

Costenbader, Aaron Crawford, Asia Davidson, Mary Ellen DiFilippo, Robert DiLeo, Danielle Dobrosky, Hope Dunkle-Moser, Clare Eckert, Eric Eichlin, Susan Engleman, Marilyn Endy, Caroline

Endy, Caroline
Estevez, Stephanie
Ferguson, Ann Marie
Fessler, Ashley
Fields, Elizabeth
Fleming, Michael
Flynn, Emily
Forktus, Nicole
Forrer, Traci
Forte, Victor

Forte, Victor Franks, Jan Fry, Karen Gernert, Jennifer Gincley, Brielle Goehle, Melissa Goldstein, Martha Green, Alexis

Greenly, Lisa Grim, Katie Groce-Volinski, Lanee Gruber, Bonnie Gudikunst, April Guido, Jonelle

Haas, Judy Hagenman, Cheryl Hager, Julia Haldeman, Elaine Hall, Barbara Hall, Christine Harmon, Althea Hartranft, Mary Hedemann, Miranda Hillkirk, Suzanne Hoplock, Samantha Houser, Jill Jallu, Frances Kempinski, Maryann Kinik, Kalev

Kohl, Lisa Kotas, Brian Krempl, Joan Kring, Shauna Kuhlman, Nancy Lawlor, James Lengel, James Lengel, Kelly Lillis, Lori Lopez, Raquel Lowenstein, Julianne Lukens, Kathleen Maderia, Patricia Malenda, Ruth Malick, Sydney Mancias, Mary Beth Martin, Veronica Mason, Thomas Markel, Jessica Matos, Marcus Matz, Carol

McCormick, Millie McMahon, Tom Meade, Sharon Morlock, Eryn Nankervis, Sydney Niroumand, Katherine Nong, Alexis

Oatman, LuAnn
O'Connell, Courtney
Oglesby III, Lonnie
Olszewski, Robert
Oritz, Danielle
Orso, Jason
Palmer, Imani
Parks, Amanda
Pietrowski, Joanne
Plummer, Cliff
Posten, Bruce

Priest, Margaret
Ranck, Lois
Rauenzahn, Donald
Reese, Mike
Reilly, Peter
Renninger, Elise
Reyes, Roland
Rivieccio, Nicole

Rodriquez, Addie Rushing, Brittanie Russell, Joel Ryal, Perrin

Saigh, Jaina Sanders, Esq. Molly Sanders, Robin Scherer, JoAnn Schiavone, Ben Schiffman, Michael Schwank, Senator Judith

Scott, VeeVee Shoup, Denise Smith, Bruce Smith, Richard Smith, Sarah Smith, Susan Snyder, Susan Spadacinni, Ans

Spadacinni, Anatasia Stauffer, Karen Strautz, Courtney Strozak, Michael Summer, Susan Sundberg, Larry Swisher, Betsy Szajek, Bonnie Taylor, Samantha Terry, Nicole Tobias, Cheryl Trethaway, Reann Tucciarone, Deanna Tunnell, Patricia Varughese, Sofia Ward, Victoria Watrous. Sue Weand, Eileen Wegeland, Jennifer Weiss, Denise

Schuylkill Valley School District

Driben, Lynn
Dunlap, Colleen
Egbert, Janine
Gambler, Gloria
Gaspari, Jordann
Koller, Chad
Reichard, Linda
Shucker, Esq.,Lou
Walborn, Helen

Wilder, Joshua

Williams, Cindy

Williams, Leah

Substitutes-Multiple Schools

Budzik, Gery Fegley, Jeanne Oplinger MD., Arthur Ripple, Barbara Stoicheff, Delores Williams, Geri

This list reflects our volunteers as of October 10, 2014. We have made every attempt to ensure the accuracy of this list. If you discover an error, please accept our apologies and contact us at 610.685.4574 so that we may correct our records.

"My child had a great time in the Ready.Set.READ! Program, and we are very grateful to the tutors who volunteered their time and patience for this wonderful program. Thank you!"

Parent



www.ReadySetReadBerks.org



www.uwberks.org

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