Welcome Back!

Dear VAC Literacy Volunteers,

On behalf of myself and the rest of the VAC Literacy team, I would like to welcome you to a great semester as a reading mentor. Thank you so much for your willingness to volunteer each week. I think you will find that your day to read soon becomes the best day of your week. Your work in this program leaves the City of Fayetteville a better place than it was when you arrived.

By participating in this program, you are truly making a difference in the life of the elementary student with whom you read. Reading skills are so important for future success and developing a love of reading starting at a young age will help your mentee in all areas of his or her life.

We have worked hard to make changes to the program to help it to run more smoothly and to ensure you as a volunteer have the greatest impact. The Literacy Team is here to help make sure you have the best experience possible so please don’t hesitate to contact any of us with questions, concerns, or comments.

Go Hogs! Autumn Lewis, VAC Literacy Chair

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Literacy Volunteer News

As the VAC Literacy Program continues to grow and develop, the number of collegiate student volunteers remains very impressive. For the spring 2013 school semester we have nearly 140 volunteers at 4 different local elementary schools: Leverett Elementary, Holcomb Elementary, Asbell Elementary and Washington Elementary. As a new goal for the following semesters, we would like to increase the number of volunteers we have from 140 volunteers to the range of 175-200 volunteers. Be sure to tell your friends about the VAC Literacy Program!
Program Updates and Improvements

This semester, the VAC Literacy program board has implemented some changes to the literacy program. We’ve started by ordering new books that will be placed at each of the elementary schools. With some of our grant money we have been able to purchase multiple copies of books that have literacy tips and activities in them. Also, we are creating literacy games and homework kits that will be placed at each school so our volunteers will have more resources to help improve their reading buddy’s literacy skills. During the VAC MLK Day of Service, we had volunteers create five “get to know you” questions on cards. We are going to give these to our volunteers before their first day of reading so they may use them to get to know their reading buddy a little better! The homework kits have different supplies in them that will help our volunteers affectively assist the children with any homework concerns they may have. If you would like to suggest any additional items you would like to see at the sites, please email us at vaclit@uark.edu

Literacy Team Cohort Competition

This semester we will introduce our Literacy Team Cohort Competition. There will be 16 teams; One for each day and school and each team is competing against the other teams to obtain the highest amount of points. Teams are able to gain points in the following categories: group attendance, lead weekly reports, likes on the Facebook page and most creative team name. By the end of the program, the team with the highest amount if points will be awarded a HUGE prize. The purpose of the team competitions is to allow students to develop new working relationships, and encourage team members to retain the commitment to volunteering every week.

Scholastic R.E.A.L Program

Funds awarded from the University of Arkansas Women’s Giving Circle Grant will be used this semester to provide additional training materials for program volunteers and literacy instruction resources at each mobile library. This grant will also be used to pilot the Scholastic Read Excel Achieve Lead program at Asbell. The Scholastic REAL program provides each elementary student in the VAC Literacy program with one brand new scholastic book per month to keep. Copies of each book will be placed in the mobile libraries for volunteers to use to read along with their book buddy. Each Scholastic book comes with a mentor guide designed for non-educators that helps volunteers generate ideas for discussion and activities, and a student guide designed to help the elementary student gather evidence and read for meaning. After evaluation of the pilot semester at Asbell, the Scholastic REAL program will be implemented in all of our elementary schools in fall 2013.
1) The Mentoring Cycle
A mentor is somebody older and more experienced who provides support to and fosters the progress of a younger, less experienced person. Most mentoring relationships pass through 4 phases.

Phase I
Building Trust
Learning to communicate
Bridging differences

Phase II
Setting goals
Choosing activities
Celebrating accomplishments

Phase III
Navigating Rough Spots
Knowing your limits
Remaining in control
Seeking outside support

Phase IV
Continuing Cycle
Reaping the rewards
Expanding the movement
Beginning again

When setting goals:
Be realistic. An overly difficult goal may lead to frustration and defeat.
Be challenging. If it is not challenging, then there is little incentive to achieve a goal.
Have a deadline. With no deadline there will be a tendency to put off completing a goal.
Be specific. Specifics keep you focused so that you know what you want to accomplish.
Be measurable. Provides a way to gauge progress throughout the year.

2) Setting Goals
Setting goals with your student will give the student ownership of the goals and help them learn how to set their own achievement levels in the future.

VAC Full Circle Food Pantry Food Fight

The Full Circle Campus Food Pantry’s annual “Food Fight” food drive began on Saturday, Feb. 16, and will run through Tuesday, March 5. The food drive is a campus and community wide competition that helps stock the pantry shelves for the spring and summer.

This year, in addition to competition among campus community teams, Full Circle is in competition to collect more items than the Mizzou Tiger Food Pantry, a similar student led campus food pantry that opened last fall. Both drives kicked off when the Razorbacks played the Tigers in basketball on Feb. 16, and will end when the two teams face off again on March 5.

Organizations can register in one any of the following categories: Registered Student Organization, Greek Life, University Department, or Non-University. Individual donations are also accepted. All requested items are assigned a point value and a winner is announced in each category. The organization in each category that collects the most points through their donations will receive recognition from Full Circle. Category winners will be announced on Monday March 11. Sign your team up today at volunteer.uark.edu.

For more information about Food Fight, contact Daniel Caruth at pantry@uark.edu or (479) 575-7693.
Dream B.I.G. (Believing in Girls) is a girl empowerment mentoring program for 6-12 grade girls from Marvell Elaine High School in the Arkansas Delta. This year, Dream B.I.G. student mentors will facilitate the Dream B.I.G. spring break overnight camp March 17-20 at Mount Sequoyah for 45 girls. Mentor relationships are established by dividing the mentors into small groups to allow for individual attention and trust-building. Mentor relationships will be continued following the conclusion of camp through virtual communication.

The Dream B.I.G. Student Mentors partner with community and campus resources to expose Marvell Elaine High School girls to a wide range of opportunities including a visit to the Boys and Girls Club and the University of Arkansas campus. During Fall Break 2013 mentors will travel to visit Marvell Elaine High School for a reunion.

For more information about Dream B.I.G. visit the website: http://service.uark.edu/asb.php.

“Like” Dream B.I.G. on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/ASBDreamBIG?fref=ts and follow us on Twitter @ASB_BIG!