As you all may know we have implemented the Scholastic R.E.A.L Book Pilot Program at Asbell Elementary School this semester with Funds awarded from the University of Arkansas Women’s Giving Circle Grant. The Scholastic REAL program provides each elementary student in the VAC Literacy program at Asbell with one brand new scholastic book per month to keep.

Copies of each book are 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 more of our elementary schools in fall 2013.

It has been a great experience to see how the scholastic book program at Asbell Elementary has impacted the students in this school. You can see the excitement in the students’ faces when they are given their free books. This small gesture has shown our reading buddies how much we care for them and has brought our reading groups closer together. The program has also been able to connect students to reading in closer way by giving them the opportunity to bring home their joy of reading through their free books.

-Marcela Carrasco

"It has been a complete honor to participate in the Volunteer Action Center’s Literacy Program, however this semester of service has been especially memorable. Having been switched to Asbell Elementary this spring, I was paired with a new buddy in the fourth grade who did not show signs of enthusiasm for reading early in the semester. Through the help of the Scholastic book program, I experienced great joy at seeing an excitement for reading being cultivated in my reader. After being given the first book, he slowly stopped reaching for books that were far below his level and instead took interest in more challenging reads. "When is the guy with the books coming back?" he asked each week until finally he returned to both his joy and mine.

-Marcela Carrasco

Program participant, Lindsey Roes, also shares her experience with the Scholastic R.E.A.L Book program.

Program participant, Marcela Carrasco (right). Carrasco shares her experience with the Scholastic R.E.A.L Book program.
Fun Reading Tips

1. Read for Meaning
   Make sure your reading buddy actually understands what’s happening in the stories that they are reading. It’s not enough for them to just read the words on the page. Comprehension will be key later on for better grades and test scores.

2. Choose Age Appropriate Books
   While you want to allow your reader to pick books, remember to help them along by guiding them to the right grade level. The color star guide will help. It’s important for them to read books at their own age level so that they will not get too frustrated. If you have a strong reader, move up to the next grade level and if you have a weaker reader encourage them to try a more simple book.

3. Start a Sticker Chart
   Some volunteer readers are already doing this. Keep a chart and give a sticker for every book your reader finishes. This is a great tool for affirmation and an incentive to get your readers to finish the books that they pick. You can even create categories for answering questions as well.

Literacy Games and Activities

"There is more treasure in books than in all the pirate's loot on Treasure Island."
~ Walt Disney

Tongue Twisters
Tongue twisters are generally useful for the purpose of practicing pronunciation. They are used to practice certain sounds within words. It helps them focus because the words are difficult or in difficult order so you have to focus word by word. It can help the flow of words in reading come more naturally. You can print one out a week and your reader can practice it for the next time you see them.

Examples:

Skunk Stump
A skunk sat on a stump and thunk the stump stunk, but the stump thunk the skunk stunk.

Beyond Sally
She sells sea shells by the sea shore. The shells she sells are surely seashells. So if she sells shells on the seashore, I'm sure she sells seashore shells.

One Crazy Night
You've no need to light a night-light On a light night like tonight, For a night-light's light's a slight light, And tonight's a night that's light. When a night's light, like tonight's light, It is really not quite right To light night-lights With their slight lights On a light night like tonight.

Tough Times
What time does the wristwatch strap shop shut?

Cohort Competition Update

The moment you've all been waiting for is soon approaching! As it stands, the group currently leading the cohort competition with the most amount of points is Monday at Asbell. The competition is very close and there are 7 other teams trailing closely behind. There is still ample time to improve your overall team scores and steal the victory.

A few tips on improving your team score:

♦ Encourage fellow team members to attend every volunteer session.

♦ Remind the lead to send in the lead report in a timely manner.

♦ Like the VAC Literacy Facebook page.

If you would like to know where your team stands in the group competition feel free to email vaclit@uark.edu with your name, elementary school and volunteer weekday. The official winners will be announced the week of April 22nd, 2013. We wish the best of luck to all of your teams in the race to the Literacy finish line.
Literacy Program Calendar: Mark the Dates

As we all know, all good things must eventually come to an end. The VAC Literacy Program for the spring 2013 semester will be coming to an end soon. The last week of the program for Leverett, Washington and Holcomb is April 29, 2013– May 2, 2013.

For volunteers at Asbell Elementary School, the last week of the program is April 22, 2013– April 25, 2013 and during that week the final distribution of Scholastic R.E.A.L. Books will take place.

We, the Literacy Team, appreciate your dedication and commitment to the program to your reading buddies, and we encourage each of you to reapply to volunteer next semester.

Volunteer Appreciation

Volunteer appreciation for Asbell volunteers will be April 22nd– April 25th. That week, there will be a VAC staff member coming to bring cupcakes for all of the volunteers and their reading buddies. This is also the last week for Asbell volunteers ONLY. April 29th– May 2nd will be volunteer appreciation and the last week of the literacy program for volunteers going to Washington, Leverett and Holcomb. You all will be receiving cupcakes as well so please be there because it’s the last opportunity to see your reading buddy before summer starts and the kids absolutely love it!

End of Year Survey

The Spring 2013 Volunteer Survey is going out to all of the volunteers on Monday April, 22nd and will close on Sunday April, 28th at noon. Volunteers are very highly encouraged to take this survey because it gives the literacy board very valuable information that we use to help improve the program for the future. The survey does not take very long at all and the feedback we get from it is extremely beneficial. All volunteers need to take the survey! Check your email for it.

“Volunteers are not paid -- not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.”

Be sure to complete the end of year survey! Let us know how we can make this experience better for you!
Volunteer Opportunity: Altrusa of Fayetteville

Altrusa of Fayetteville needs volunteers to help with their Trade-a-Book event on Saturday, April 20th at the NWA Mall. The event runs from 10:00A.M.-4:00P.M. in the central court of the NWA Mall. Volunteers are needed from 8:00A.M.-10:00A.M. to help unload book boxes and assist with setting up the book tables. Volunteers are also needed from 10:00A.M. to 4:00P.M to help children select books and 1-2 volunteers are needed to dress in a costume (clown) or Sherlock Homes. At 4:00P.M volunteers are needed to help with packing/loading books at the end of the event. To volunteer for this event, sign up on volunteer.uark.edu.

Meet the 2013-2014 VAC Literacy Team

We are very excited to announce the new VAC Literacy Committee for next year. Our current Curriculum Coordinator, Cicely Shannon, will be taking over as Chair. Kristin Wiley, the Volunteer Coordinator, will be our new intern. We have added five new members of the Literacy Committee. The first is Elizabeth Freeman, who will serve as volunteer coordinator and her goal for the year is to get more people involved in volunteering with the VAC and to educate more people on campus about volunteering opportunities. Jackson Edwards will be serving as volunteer coordinator as well. His goal is to encourage more young kids to become involved with reading. Our next volunteer coordinator is Drennan Dallas and his goal for next year is to get even more students across campus involved in the Literacy Program and all of the other programs offered through the VAC.

The fourth volunteer coordinator is Katy Clark and one goal she has is to get both Greek houses and RSOs as a whole involved with the Literacy Program. The curriculum coordinator for next year is Ainsley Huffman and she plans to continue to develop a curriculum for the literacy program that encourages children to love reading.