



Energizing Education

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

JANUARY 28, 2013

Charged Up and Ready to Run!

VOLUNTEER TRAINING DATES

- February 4
(Reynolds Hall)
- February 5
(UW Center)
11:00 AM
- February 7
(Frost Rm 38)
4:00 PM
Reading Conductors
- February 11
(UW Center)
9:00 AM
Reading Conductors
- February 12
(UW Center)
6:00 PM
- February 14
(Reynolds Hall)
11:00 AM

This month marked the beginning of Energizing Education staff and volunteers' time with students both in and after school, as programs began in the effort to help students at Frost Elementary develop the reading and writing skills necessary to be the world's next set of leaders. In the "Literacy Lounge" at Frost, mentors met their students for the first time, and from ducks to dogs to daisies, the pairs chatted about a variety of topics as they got to know each other over a book during their first session.



Even that half hour of extra attention and focus on literacy makes an enormous difference, as evidenced by the comments of teachers already noticing how the sessions are leaving an impression on their students. First grade teacher Michelle Biondalillo

noted the impact immediately upon one student's return from his first tutoring session, "[He] came back to the room really happy this morning." Other students were so excited about their time with their literacy mentors that they told them they were looking forward to coming again, some even asking if it could be a daily occurrence or if their mentor could come read with them at home. Students and tutors alike left their sessions with smiles on their faces.

The first day of the Energizing Education After School Program started with the students excitedly boarded the bus to St. John's Church. After a little time spent playing outside, the students settled down for a snack, during which one second grader picked up a



book and read aloud to the rest of the kids on the very first day, already eager to spend a little extra time reading.

This extra time with a book is priceless to this age group, as the initiative targets students in preschool through second grade. During this time, students are learning to read. Beginning in third and fourth grade, however, more and more lessons require students to read to learn, as textbooks are used more in other subjects. According to Asa Fleming, the literacy specialist for the EE initiative, the solution to struggles in reading is quite simple, "Kids get better at reading by reading, and both the in school and after school program provide an opportunity for our students to put 'more miles on the page.'" If you'd like to play a part in improving a child's school day and, even more importantly, their literacy, by spending a simple hour a week reading with them, contact Melissa Laird at 517-784-7181 or mlaird@bbbsjackson.org to sign up for a training today!

Mentor Spotlight



Name: Lynette Lynch

Business: Jackson County ISD

Why did you volunteer?: I have tutored children in the past and saw what a big difference it made. A couple of my students increased their reading by two grade levels. Also, I love children!

Why is reading important to you?: It affects everything you do. It can be fun, but is also necessary for everything and key to other subjects in school for these students.

How has your experience been so far?: Wonderful. My student is a very sweet little girl who has been very enthusiastic about the program. I think we're both having fun.

Favorite Book Growing Up: Little Women by Louisa May Alcott. The story really drew me in and I discovered how much fun reading could be.

Favorite Book Now: The Holy Bible. It is filled with amazing stories of comfort and hope - God's guidance on how to live life to the fullest.



**Student Journals:
What was your
favorite part of
the first book?**

- “wolf was looking for duck.”
- “Mama bear is my favites bear.”
- “that they caught the robbers. that he was siting on a horse. he was trying to fit in the hoop.”



Find out more!

<http://energizingeducationjackson.org>

or

[www.facebook.com/
energizingeducationjackson](http://www.facebook.com/energizingeducationjackson)

To volunteer: Contact Melissa Laird at 517-784-7181 or mlaird@bbbsjackson.org

Literacy Lounge at Frost: 517-841-2569

Thank You!

We appreciate every resource donors are willing to give! As such, we would like to thank the donors of the following resources:

- The Stanton Foundation (Wendy’s) for the donation of \$1500 for us to use for “sprucing up Room 38,” which provided us with new furniture for the room!



- Jackson Women Realtors Association- Dawn Fisher Craft Agency for the donation of new books.
- Michelle Biondalillo, first grade teacher at Frost, for donating 14 reading posters to the EE lounge.
- Sara Tackett from Jackson District Library, for the donation of a book collection in honor of her mother, who recently passed away.
- CP Federal Credit Union, for generously allowing their employees to train and volunteer for Energizing Education during paid work hours.

Frost Families Flood Energizing Education Holiday Night

Santa, books, and games headlined Energizing Education’s Holiday Family Fun Night last month at Frost Elementary. But the real story at the ‘Leader in Me’ school was the over 350 students, parents and siblings who flooded Frost December 13th to take part in the literacy focused event. During the course of the evening, families made cards, listened to holiday stories, sang carols, shared a meal and went home with books and literacy materials to make reading fun during winter break.

Storytelling card decks, folder board games and activity booklets provided at the event were designed to help families create reading and writing games together. Each age group took home age leveled materials focused on student interests and needs, and children of all ages were

able to choose books with a wide range of topics and ability levels from the Energizing Education Bookstore. Jon Hart, one of JPS School Board’s newest members and an Energizing Education volunteer, collected gift certificates from families as they left the EE Bookstore, “The kids and families were just mobbing the books. They were so excited. I’ve never seen anything like it.”

“My big literacy message for families is to HAVE FUN reading to and with their children. Families who treat books and reading as entertainment and regularly read together have kids who end up with the best readers,” said Jennie O’Brien, JPS Parent Liaison, who planned the event with Katie Luke from Energizing Education. “Sometimes people forget that reading takes practice, just like sports, dance, music and any other skill.



Good readers read at least 10 minutes per day away from school. GREAT readers read 30 or more minutes per day.”

The event was made possible by volunteers from several groups coming together. Frost School teachers, Head Start teachers, Frost Principal Jeremy Patterson, Jackson County ISD Superintendent Kevin Oxley, and many Energizing Education committee members worked together to make the night run smoothly, even with such an astonishing turnout.