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ReadCLT Insiders: SPECIAL EDITION

Read Charlotte [elise@readcharlotte.org]

Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2019 11:50 AM

To: Steve Johnston



Open Books. Open Opportunity.

ReadCLT Insiders



READ CHARLOTTE EXPANDS COMMUNITY-DRIVEN INITIATIVE WITH \$600,000 INVESTMENT FROM KNIGHT FOUNDATION

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation today announced a three-year, \$600,000 investment in the expansion of Read Charlotte, a collaborative, community-wide initiative that engages families, educators and other local partners to improve children's literacy from birth to third grade.

"The Charlotte community has rallied around Read Charlotte's mission, demonstrating that children's literacy is a key local priority," said Charles Thomas, Knight Foundation program director for Charlotte. "Knight Foundation hopes to build on this momentum, supporting a promising initiative that engages all members of the community and promotes literacy, an important prerequisite for building a more informed



Read Charlotte, in partnership with HELPS Education Fund, Tutor Charlotte, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, the Augustine Literacy Project and Heart Math Tutoring, honored the generous contribution of hundreds of selfless & dedicated individuals at the 2018-19 Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast on Wednesday. Held at Myers Park Presbyterian Church, volunteers came together from both the Reading Mentors and HELPS tutoring programs to celebrate successes and learn about volunteer opportunities in the upcoming school year.

[VIEW EVENT PHOTOS](#)

Charlotte.”

Read Charlotte is working to increase the reading proficiency of Charlotte’s third graders from 39 percent to 80 percent by 2025. Reading proficiency at third grade is a critical predictor of school, career and life success. For example, children who are not reading at grade level by third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school.

Knight’s investment will help the organization grow its [“Transformation Network,”](#) a group of literacy-focused school partnerships in in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. The Network will more than double the number of under-resourced schools it works with, from 12 to at least 30 over the next few years. It will launch a recruitment program to double the number of volunteer literacy tutors needed to serve 1,500 students. Additionally, it will expand its innovative programming to enable more families to support their children’s reading development at home.

“The Read Charlotte Transformation Network has worked tirelessly to improve early literacy in this community, and our top priority right now is scaling these efforts,” said Munro Richardson, Read Charlotte executive director. “This new funding from Knight Foundation equips us to respond to community requests to bring more schools into the Transformation Network and grow our efforts.”

The Transformation Network launched in fall 2018 at 12 schools. In less than a year, 50 partners worked with schools to coordinate the distribution of 23,981 books to nearly 4,000 students at “Book-A-Palooza” events. In addition, they hosted 17 Family Literacy Nights, where over 1,000 parents learned effective ways to support their children’s reading at home; and they recruited 152 volunteers to provide fluency tutoring to almost 200 third graders.

Earlier this year, Read Charlotte launched its second-annual [“Commit to 80”](#) campaign, in which, during a two week period, nearly 1,300 Charlotteans pledged their commitment to the community goal of reaching 80 percent third grade reading proficiency by carrying out specific, evidence-based practices and strategies.

Read Charlotte’s [Lead Funders](#) made five-year commitments that support operations through 2019. This new support from Knight Foundation, along with recent commitments from Bank of America, Albemarle Corporation, C.D. Spangler Foundation, Ann Dunlap Hendrix Charitable Fund and The Belk Foundation brings the organization closer to creating transformative change in Mecklenburg County by 2025. Read Charlotte has an additional \$3.9 million to raise for core operations through the next five years.



Spread the news!
#SummerReadingCLT is helping families incorporate reading into summer break. Free resources and fun ideas can be found at SummerReadingCLT.org. One of the best ways we can help kids succeed in school is by encouraging reading over the summer.



[Read our 2018 Annual Report](#)



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