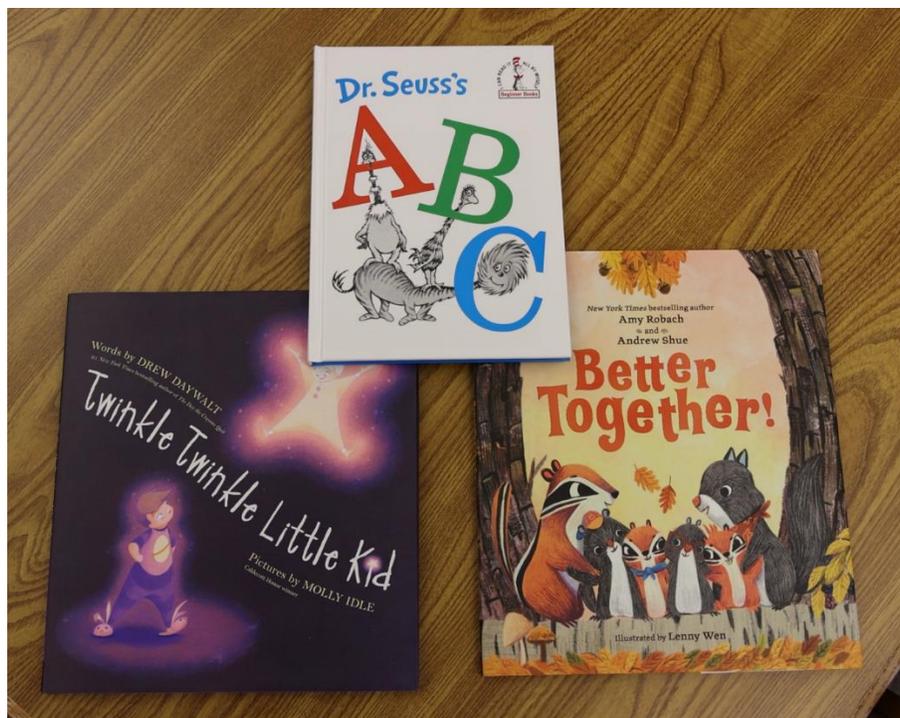




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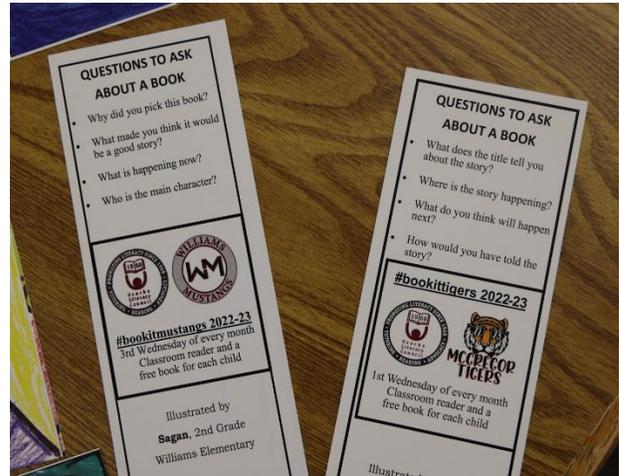
Ozarks Literacy Council awarded Greene County ARPA funds to purchase children's books



SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Nonprofit Ozarks Literacy Council (OLC) was awarded \$30,000 from Greene County's federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds in Oct. 2022 to purchase new books and literacy materials for local school children.

ARPA funds are designed to help with recovery efforts of organizations and small businesses that were negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

OLC used its grant money to purchase over a thousand new children’s books, to help cover payroll costs, and print bookmarks with student art that have tips for parents to help them be more involved.



The nonprofit focuses on increasing literary skills to children at several Springfield Public Schools elementaries through three reading programs: tutoring, resources, and preschool.



The organization’s Executive Director, Amy Jardell, says, “This funding is an amazing opportunity to supply books to our kiddos. They’re brand new books, beautiful and exciting, with titles that kids are familiar with and want to read.”

Jardell says if children are excited about books, they’re more likely to go home and read them. Plus, increasing reading comprehension has a ripple effect by decreasing the chances a child will face disciplinary issues.

“The pandemic really put kids behind educationally, to no fault of our teachers or students, but district wide our reading scores for our children are poor,” said Jardell. “So, reading skills and the idea of having a positive

literacy experience are really important.”

OLC focused on elementaries in the district that are the most impoverished and highly at risk. Students at those schools are more likely to be on free and reduced lunch and have some of the lowest MAP test reading scores.

In a survey, the nonprofit asked teachers if its reading programs are working. 100% said the books were appropriate for their classrooms. 50% saw an overall change in the children’s interest and attitude towards books.

“We want them to be excited about reading and take away the stigma that reading is a chore and something you have to do,” said Jardell. “Reading should be something that you look forward to doing, something you want to do. With this program, we’re introducing the fun, excitement, and anticipation back into reading and books.”

OLC says it’s always looking for volunteers to read a book to a 5th grade classroom once a month. Anyone interested can apply at <https://ozarksliteracy.org/>.



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Greene County is the State of Missouri’s fourth most populous county, serving approximately 295,000 people. Its mission is to provide all citizens of Greene County, including those in its cities, a safe and thriving community through excellent customer service, unparalleled dedication, and the efficient use of taxpayer dollars. The Greene County Commission is the executive body of Greene County operating under guidelines established in the Revised Statutes of the State of Missouri. Within that authority the Commission enacts ordinances, resolutions and policies, supervises the activities of county departments, fixes salaries, adopts the annual budget, provides for construction and other services, and conducts hearings on planning and zoning matters.

For additional information, contact Robert Jehle, Public Information Officer, at 417-844-4311 or rjehle@greencountymo.gov.