



Greater Grand Rapids Reads

Leading Literacy for all Kent County!

Greater Grand Rapids Reads Leading Kent County to Literacy for All

August 2007

In this issue

- [Greater Grand Rapids Reads News](#)
- [Literacy News You Can Use](#)
- [Literacy Grants](#)
- [Literacy Quote](#)
- [Upcoming Events](#)
- [Greater Grand Rapids Reads Leadership](#)

Dear Fritz,

Welcome to the Greater Grand Rapids Reads Newsletter. You are receiving this because you are a Greater Grand Rapids Reads partner and provided your email address to receive communications electronically.

You'll notice that while our look has changed, the valuable content we provide hasn't. We welcome your feedback.

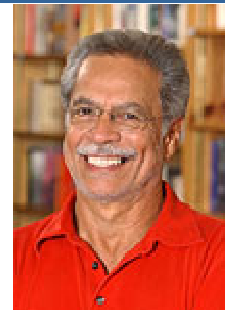
Fritz Crabb
Greater Grand Rapids Reads Coordinator
Director of Literacy Initiatives
Heart of West Michigan United Way
632.1001 [Click to e-mail me!](#)

Quick Links

- waybetterunitedway.org
- [Online Event Calendar](#)
- [United Way News](#)

Greater Grand Rapids Reads News

Save the date!
**Greater Grand Rapids Reads
Community Literacy Summit**
Friday, October 19, at DeVos Place



Fritz Crabb, Director of Literacy Initiatives for Heart of West Michigan United Way, says that the 2007 Summit promises to be the best ever; "The Summit Committee has worked hard to provide a balanced program of workshops and speakers. Anyone with an interest in literacy will find inspiration and motivation and will come away with new skills and ideas."

New! United Way Photo Album



Join our list

Join our mailing list!
[]

This year's program will offer two outstanding national leaders in literacy. This month, we are featuring our morning keynote, Rueben Martinez. Next month, readers will learn more about our luncheon keynote, Janet Ohene-Frempong.

Rueben Martinez - Grassroots Literacy in the Hispanic Community

Rueben Martinez (pictured above) has elevated bookselling from a business to a campaign in support of underserved populations in California and throughout America. His Santa Ana bookstore, Libreria Martinez Books and Art Gallery, was originally a barbershop and is now among the largest commercial sellers of Spanish- language books in the country, serving as the cornerstone of cultural events and community activities that promote the benefits of reading to Hispanic-Americans and Spanish-speaking immigrants. A co-founder of the Latino Book Festival (which now tours nationally), Martinez motivates Spanish-speaking people to value literature, to read for themselves, and to read to their children. The record number of enthusiastic adults and children drawn to Libreria Martinez makes the store a destination for leading bilingual and Latino authors. Acclaimed by educators and librarians throughout the country, Martinez' unique brand of entrepreneurship and advocacy is an important complement to institutional and program efforts to enrich and anchor the lives of a large and growing population in America.

National attention and unexpected good fortune came in fall 2004, when the [The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation](#) named Martínez a [MacArthur Fellow](#), a prestigious honor that carries a cash prize of \$500,000.

"The heart of the MacArthur Fellowship award process is the celebration of creative individuals in American society," says Ray Boyer, a foundation spokesman. "Our intention is that the fellowship will enable them to continue performing the work of their own choosing. All of our recipients are individuals that, in our judgment, reflect these qualities."

Martínez says, "The MacArthur Award made people realize that we were for real. We started out with two books, then 10, then 25. Little by little, we've sold over 2 million books. That's what happens if you dare to dream."

Literacy Providers Survey Online

The old axiom that "you can't tell where you are going unless you know where you are," holds true for Greater Grand Rapids Reads. At this point, there is no good survey of literacy providers in Kent and Allegan* Counties, so we don't know what services are available, who is being served and what service gaps exist.

As you read this, a new Literacy Providers Survey developed in conjunction with Greater Grand Rapids Reads, Heart of West Michigan United Way's 211 and area literacy providers will be online. The program will allow literacy providers to add programs and service sites to their basic agency information. Furthermore, since it is an online survey, providers can update their information at any time.

We are asking any agency who provides literacy services in

Kent and Allegan Counties to e-mail Meg Bennett at mbennett@waybetterunitedway.org to receive a user name, password and instructions. This will enable them to add their information to the database. Examples of programs who should consider participating include:

- Dedicated literacy agencies
- Faith based organizations providing literacy tutoring or instruction to children or adults
- School programs specifically dedicated to reading that occur outside of the school day or year and are generally open to the public or all students
- Tutoring or mentoring programs that provide literacy services to children or adults
- All English as Second Language (ESL) programs (excluding school based, school day programs)
- Programs providing literacy instruction as students are working towards a GED (excluding public school based, school day programs)

If you have a question about whether your program should be included in this survey, please contact Fritz Crabb at fcrabb@waybetterunitedway.org or 616.632.1001.

The first agencies who enter data will notice that there is no way to extract data from the system. We are waiting until we get a reasonable amount of data in the system to design the reports and searches that will be available. Once the site is fully operational, data in the system will be available to the general public.

*Greater Grand Rapids Reads serves Kent County. Allegan County literacy providers are being included in this survey because of funding provided through ACSET which services Kent and Allegan Counties.

Watch for Free Books

Thanks to a donation from Faith Alive Resources, a division of the Christian Reformed Church, Greater Grand Rapids Reads has received a donation of approximately 52,000 books. Some of these books deal with immigrant stories and some are based on specific books of the Bible. At this point, we do not know how much religious content the immigrant stories contain. Our understanding is that they are suitable for secondary school students and beginning adult readers.

We are currently in the process of transferring these books to a warehouse in the Grand Rapids area where we can distribute them. We will have more information related to content and distribution times and locations as soon as the books arrive and we have a chance to examine them.

We will send out a special notice as soon as a distribution

date and location is determined. This much we know already:

- Books will be available to any faith based organization, non-profit or school.
- The object is to get books into the hands of families and children who can least afford their own books. We ask organizations to self select on that basis.
- Books must be picked up. We will not deliver.
- Books are on a first come, first served basis. We ask that organizations take only what they can use or distribute.
- To receive books, each organization must bring a letter **on organizational letterhead** to the distribution site. The letter need only be one or two sentences simply requesting books and briefly stating how they will be used. This letter will be used for our records. It is not part of a selection process.
- At the distribution site, the person picking up the books will be asked to sign an agreement stating that the organization will distribute the books free of charge and will not re-sell them.

New this Year

Greater Grand Rapids Reads would like to recognize individuals that champion literacy in our community with a Literacy Champion Award to be presented at Summit 2007. If you know an individual who is going above and beyond the call of duty to improve literacy, please contact Meg Bennett to request a nomination form at mbennett@waybetterunitedway.org or [click here](#).

Summit Volunteers Needed!

The Summit Planning Committee is looking for volunteers to assist with registration, information/directions, and breakout session preparation. Volunteers will receive free entry to the summit, a t-shirt, and lunch will be provided. If you are interested, please contact Meg Bennett at 632.1002 or [click here](#).

Literacy News You Can Use

Congratulations to the Grand Rapids Public Schools!

The Grand Rapids Public Schools was recently awarded a federal grant to support school libraries.

From the Grand Rapids Press, Wednesday, July 25, 2007

GRAND RAPIDS -- The city's public schools will receive a \$299,271 federal grant to extend the hours at all elementary school libraries and to buy books and other resources. The

U.S. Department of Education grant is intended to serve more than 10,000 students at elementary and middle schools. It will help pay for training for library assistants, cover the cost of additional library materials and fund staffing for extended library hours and family reading nights. The federal grant compliments efforts by the nonprofit arm of GRPS, the Student Advancement Foundation, to restock school libraries. The foundation raised more than \$1 million over two years to replace outdated materials.

Community Literacy Defined

Community Literacy is becoming a new movement across the country and is a major topic when literacy providers and literacy coalitions gather. The definition offered by Darlene Kostrub, from the Palm Beach County Literacy Coalition, closely mirrors what Greater Grand Rapids Reads is trying to do in Kent County.

"One of the key goals of community literacy is to help position literacy at the top of the community's agenda so that everyone will understand that one of the best ways to address crime, poverty, teen pregnancy and so many other social issues is through making literacy resources and programs available to all those with limited literacy and English skills."

"Key community literacy stake holders include business, the media, literacy providers, local education institutions, government, chambers of commerce, faith-based organizations, civic clubs among others."

ANNOUNCING: Equipped for the Future: Preparing for Work-

An EFF Work Readiness Course
Training for Instructors in Adult Education and Workforce Development

August 28 and 29, 2007

Martha O'Bryan Center Nashville, Tennessee

Preparing for Work, developed by Equipped for the Future at the Center for Literacy Studies, University of Tennessee, is a skills-based course designed for implementation in organizations and agencies involved in preparing their clients and students for entry level work. Each of the instructional modules that comprise the *Preparing for Work* course has integrated the specific SCANS tasks (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Basic Skills) and the EFF Content Standards, identified on the National Work Readiness Credential (NWRC) profile. The learning activities within the curriculum, designed to model authentic, work related experiences and tasks, provide opportunities for learners to apply the skills being taught, with an added focus on how skills transfer from one situation or context to another as individuals advance along a

career path. **Register on-line at:** http://utk-cls.ra.utk.edu/register/eff_event.asp **Registration deadline is August 13.**

Effective Transitions in Adult Education

We wish to invite you to join us for the National Conference on Effective Transitions in Adult Education that will take place on November 8-9, 2007 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Providence, RI. The two-day conference will focus on strategies and promising practices that help adult learners succeed in postsecondary education and training. The registration for the conference is now open! For registration, visit <http://collegetransition.org/conference/registration.html>.

The keynote speaker, Dr. JoAnn Crandall, will kick off the event with a discussion of transition for English language learners. For more conference details, visit <http://www.collegetransition.org/novconference.html>.

VISTA Job Openings

Heart of West Michigan United Way will be hiring 7 AmeriCorp*VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) workers to work with the FACTS program in the Grand Rapids Public Schools. Each VISTA will be assigned to two Grand Rapids Public Elementary Schools (that participate with FACTS) with the purpose of increasing the use of and enhancing the effectiveness of literacy volunteers in area schools and increasing/improving school and family partnership literacy efforts in low-income neighborhoods.

AmeriCorps*VISTA is a paid national service program with one year service required. Volunteers will receive \$833 per month living stipend, full health care package, optional child care, \$4725 education award at the end of one year service OR \$1200 cash bonus, mileage reimbursement, relocation expenses paid, one year deferred student loan interest (if applicable).

if interested, please contact Renee Borg at rborg@waybetterunitedway.org or 616.752.8634.

For more information visit <https://recruit.cns.gov/>.

Literacy Cooperative of Greater Cleveland

This is a joint initiative of The Cleveland, George Gund and Martha Holden Jennings Foundations, and is currently housed at *Suite 1300 Services, Inc.*, while it pursues a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit status. Suite 1300 is seeking an Executive Director to lead the The Literacy Cooperative of Greater Cleveland during this transition period and as the organizations spins off into a separately incorporated nonprofit organization. This

position will report to the Board of Directors of The Literacy Cooperative. **Deadline is August 5.** Visit <http://www.literacycooperative.org/>.

Book Drive Opportunity

In case you are visiting a Borders/Waldenbooks/Borders Express during the month of August, look for the book drive Borders is sponsoring for Reach Out and Read Michigan! A display will be set up with a wonderful selection of children's books for children ages birth to five years. Buy a book and donate it to Reach Out and Read locations throughout Michigan.

In addition to the books, Borders will be donating 5% of the sales to ROR! Some Borders locations will also be having special story hours and Teddy Bear Clinics. Check out your local store.

Reach Out and Read is an early literacy program in which doctors and nurses provide information to parents during every well-child visit from 6 months to age 5 about the importance of reading aloud to their young child. The child goes home with a brand new book. By the time the child is five, he or she has their own library of 10 brand new books.

Literacy Grants

[The Make It Your Own Awards](#), a new initiative from the Case Foundation, launched in June, is about giving grants, tools, and recognition to people who are coming together to discuss what matters, form solutions, and take action. Twenty semi-finalists will each receive **\$10,000** grants to start bringing their ideas to life. Four final grant recipients will then be chosen by the public using an online voting system. These finalists will each be awarded an additional **\$25,000** grant.

Literacy Quote

"[Mark] Twain once said, 'The man who doesn't read good books has no advantage over the man who can't read them.'" Twain knew that reading is how we shape our beliefs and our character. He knew that by losing ourselves in a good book, we can find fundamental truths about our own lives. He understood that reading is vital to a good education. Across the U.S., students are receiving a better education because they have greater access to books."

-- First Lady Laura Bush (7/24/07), announcing school library grants in Waterbury (CT) , before visiting Twain's house in Hartford.

Upcoming Events

We will report upcoming events on the local level if our members give us ample advance notice. The general deadline for the newsletter is the 23rd of each month.

Send event information to Fritz Crabb at fcrabb@waybetterunitedway.org or 632.1001.



Summer Events at the Grand Rapids Public Library and Kent District Libraries

NOTE: We edit these for space and encourage our readers to go to the web sites or the respective organizations for full details and a full list of activities.

Grand Rapids Public Library:

All events are free and open to the public and held at the Main Library, 111 Library St. NE, unless noted. For further information on these and other GRPL events call 988-5400 or visit www.grpl.org.

Author Visit - ReShonda Tate Billingsley

Monday, August 27, 2007, 7:00 pm

Main Library - 111 Library St. NE

Gold Pen Award-winning author ReShonda Tate Billingsley will read from her most recent book *Everybody Say Amen* and discuss her methods for writing teen and adult inspirational fiction. This event is free and open to the public.

Kent District Library:

Check your local branch or www.kdl.org for more information.

Byron Twp. Branch - Byron Festival Book Sale

Event Type: Program for all ages

Date: Saturday, August 1 through 4, 2007

Start Time: 9:30 AM

Library: Byron Township Branch

Description: Great used books at bargain prices - \$1.00 books and media. For all ages.

Kent County Literacy Council:

Offers 1- hour information sessions for people who want to learn more about becoming a volunteer reading or English language tutor.

- **August 1, 2007 (Wednesday)-** Grand Rapids Public Main Library- 111 Library St. NE- Grand Rapids- 4th

Floor, VanderVeen Center for the Book- 6:30p.m. to 7:30p.m. (Parking ticket will be validated- bring to meeting).

- **September 13, 2007 (Tuesday)**- Gaines Township Library- 421 68th Street, SE- Grand Rapids- 6:30p.m. to 7:30p.m.

****Call 459.5151, ext. 10 to register****

Greater Grand Rapids Reads Leadership

Executive Committee

Dr. Juan Olivarez, GRCC; Mayor George Heartwell; Bob Haight, United Way; Win Irwin - Workforce Development; Cheryl Endres, GGR Reads Steering Co-Chair; JoAnn Dunker, GGR Reads Steering Co-Chair; Tempy Mann, Kellogg; Sue Schmidkofer, UPS; Barb White, Mary Free Bed; Edwin Hernandez, RDV Corporation; Judge Dennis Kolenda; Mayor Cindy Bartman, East Grand Rapids; Susan Heartwell, Student Advancement Foundation; Jeanne Englehart, Chamber of Commerce; Birgit Klohs, The Right Place; Ron Shockey, State Farm Insurance; Marcia Warner, Grand Rapids Public Library; Tony Campbell, United Way; Diana Sieger, Grand Rapids Community Foundation; Gordon VanHarn, Van Andel Education Institute; John Schwartz, SBC; Julius Koenigsnecht, Kent City Public Schools.

Steering Committee

Cheryl Endres: Co-Chair, Data Co-Chair; JoAnn Dunker: Consultant, Co-Chair, K -12 Co-Chair; Carolyn Evans: GRPS, K - 12 Co-Chair; Charles Burt: GRCC Learning Corner, Adult Co-Chair; Barbara Foster: Bethany Christian Services, Adult Co-Chair; Char Firlik: Kent ISD; JoAnn Kelty: Grand Rapids Public Schools, Birth-5 Co-Chair; Susan Ledy, Kent Literacy Council; Ruth Lumpkins, Commissioner, GR Public Library; Erin McGovern: Kent ISD, Birth-5 Co-Chair; Jesse Herstein: Alticor, Data Co-Chair; Jean Seman: Consultant.

Committee Leadership

- Adult: Charles Burt (CBurt@grcc.edu) and Barbara Foster (bfoster@bethany.org)
- Birth to 5: Erin McGovern (ErinMcGovern@kentisd.org) and Jean Seman (jeanseman@comcast.net)>
- K-12: JoAnn Dunker (dunkerj55@hotmail.com)
- Data & Evaluation: Cheryl Endres (endresabc@earthlink.net) and Jesse Hertstein (jesse.hertstein@alticor.com)

Questions? Contact communications@unitedwaycares.com
Or visit <http://www.waybetterunitedway.org>