

WGBH and Massachusetts Campaign for Grade Level Reading Partner for Book Distribution Program

Public media leader WGBH has partnered with Strategies for Children, the Massachusetts lead for the national Campaign for Grade Level Reading (CGLR) on a free book distribution program designed to support the CGLR's objective of getting all kids in the community reading at grade level by third grade.

The project is funded through a generous grant from long-time WGBH supporter, the Krueger Charitable Foundation, a key partner in WGBH's community outreach work. Since the project's inception, The Krueger Charitable Foundation has made it possible for WGBH to purchase more than **200,000 books** and distribute them to vulnerable children and families across Massachusetts.

Six Massachusetts communities have been selected to receive the grant—Boston, Holyoke, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Springfield, and Worcester—which will make possible the purchase and distribution of more than 15,000 new children's books to vulnerable families.

In New Bedford, the Birth-3rd Partnership has announced the Smooth Sailing Into Kindergarten event for community partners at Keith Middle School on October 12. There will be one session at 8:30 a.m. and a second at 6 p.m. The event will include a distribution of free book bundles for partners to distribute to families made available through the WGBH grant.

The events will include complimentary coffee and snacks, a welcome from New Bedford Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Pia Durkin, a WGBH book announcement, and more.

“Public media can play an important role in keeping children excited about learning, especially during the summer months when school is out and many of our most vulnerable families lack access to educational programs,” said Mary Haggerty, WGBH Director of Media Engagement. “Through the free distribution of new books, selected by community leaders that know their children best, and access to engaging hands-on activities from WGBH’s iconic children’s series, we hope to put the brakes on the ‘summer slide.’”

Amy O’Leary, director at Strategies for Children said, “Reading proficiency by third grade is the most important predictor of high school graduation and career success and we know boosting all children’s reading takes a multi-pronged approach. Increasing access to books for young children and families is an important part of this effort and we are grateful to WGBH for this partnership.”

Ralph Smith, managing director of the Campaign for Grade Level Reading, said “combatting the summer slide matters because a century of research shows it’s one of the biggest but least addressed contributors to the achievement gap. Community driven solutions that leverage the power of public media, schools, housing and health agencies to reach struggling readers during the summer months are needed to assure they don’t return to school in August or September farther behind than when they left in May or June.”

“Sharing a story with a young child is an important way for children and parents to connect and build life-long habits of reading. Just 20 minutes a day is all it takes to start a wonderful tradition. We are so grateful to the Krueger Charitable Trust and WGBH for this amazing opportunity to get books into the hands and homes of Worcester’s children,” commented Kim Davenport, Co-Chair of Worcester Reads through Edward Street Child Services.

About WGBH

WGBH Boston is America's preeminent public broadcaster and the largest producer of PBS content for TV and the Web, including Masterpiece, Antiques Roadshow, Frontline, Nova, American Experience, Arthur, Curious George, and more than a dozen other primetime, lifestyle and children's series. WGBH's television channels include WGBH 2, WGBX 44, and the digital channels World and Create. WGBH TV productions focusing on the region's diverse community include Greater Boston, Basic Black and High School Quiz Show. WGBH Radio serves listeners across New England with 89.7 WGBH, Boston's Local NPR®; 99.5 WCRB Classical Radio Boston; and WCAI, the Cape and Islands NPR® Station. WGBH also is a major source of programs for public radio (among them, PRI's The World®), a leader in educational multimedia (including PBS LearningMedia™, providing the nation's educators with free, curriculum-based digital content), and a pioneer in technologies and services that make media accessible to deaf, hard of hearing, blind and visually impaired audiences. WGBH has been recognized with hundreds of honors: Emmys, Peabodys, duPont-Columbia Awards and Oscars. Find more information at wgbh.org.

About Strategies for Children

Strategies for Children works to ensure that Massachusetts invests the resources needed for all children, from birth to age five, to access high-quality early education programs that prepare them for success in school and life. SFC leverages its core strengths in policy development and monitoring, constituency building and partnerships, research, advocacy, communications/outreach, and practice at both the local and state levels to achieve its goals. SFC is a catalyst for critical resource allocation, helping state policymakers and communities make smart choices to ensure that investments in early learning achieve high-leverage impact and lasting outcomes.

About the national Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

Launched in May 2010, the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is

a collaborative effort of funders, nonprofit partners, business leaders, government agencies, states and communities across the nation to ensure that many more children from low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career and active citizenship. By 2020, the GLR Campaign aims to increase by at least 100 percent the number of children from low-income families reading proficiently at the end of third grade in a dozen or more states. Visit **gradelevelreading.net** and follow the movement on Twitter @readingby3rd.