

BOOKREACH

VOLUNTEER READING PROGRAM

An early childhood literacy program of the Lewiston and Auburn Public Libraries



BOOKREACH HAS THREE GOALS:

1. To bring a regular reading program and the best in children's literature to toddlers and preschoolers in family childcare homes and centers
2. To foster children's enthusiasm for books so they will be ready to learn when they reach school
3. To increase familiarity of area families and childcare providers with a great variety of quality children's resources



HOW BOOKREACH BEGAN

The Lewiston and Auburn Public Libraries are pleased to sponsor BookReach, a community collaboration of volunteer readers who deliver Storytime to children in licensed family childcare homes and centers. Our mission is to raise a community of readers by enriching the lives of young children through the pleasure of reading. BookReach began in the fall of 1997 with a grant from L.L.Bean and is now funded by the Lewiston and Auburn Public Libraries. BookReach volunteers bring weekly Storytime sessions to children who may not have an opportunity for them on a regular basis.

Q: Who are the volunteer readers?

A: BookReach volunteers are community members who are committed to children and their education. BookReach offers an excellent opportunity for retirees, business people, and young adults to make a lasting impact on a youngster's educational development, and an important difference in a child's life. Our program fosters warm intergenerational relationships between the children and their readers. Any person over 18 years old with an interest in literature, language, and children is encouraged to apply. Volunteers are trained in effective ways to read to preschoolers, emphasizing fun, caring, and sharing. All volunteers pass State Bureau of Identification (SBI) and Department of Health and Human Services checks before they are authorized to hold Storytime.

Q: Why is it important to read to our community's children?

A: Children who are read to before kindergarten are more likely to become proficient readers in school. They are more successful students, and enjoy higher self-esteem and aspirations. And it's fun for everyone!



HOW BOOKREACH BRINGS STORYTIME TO CHILDREN IN OUR COMMUNITY

BookReach supports its mission by bringing volunteer readers into the homes and centers of local childcare providers. Once a volunteer is recruited, that volunteer is matched with a childcare provider. The reader starts by picking up a bag of books from the Lewiston or Auburn Public Library. The reader then brings the bag to the provider and completes a Storytime session for 20-30 minutes. After Storytime, the bag of books is left at the home or center so children can continue to enjoy the books. The next week, the reader returns with another bag of books and Storytime. The first book bag is brought back to the library, and the new book bag is left at the home or center. Each week brings a new storytime and bag of books, keeping children interested and engaged in a new series of fun and educational stories.

A FEW WORDS FROM OUR PARTICIPANTS

"The BookReach program is great. I have had 3 different readers over the time. They have all been wonderful."

- Michelle, childcare provider
participant for over 20 years

"...This is a great program! It's a great opportunity to provide new reading materials to the kids."

- Susan, volunteer reader
participant for over 4 years

"It's wonderful to see [the kids] so excited about books! I believe [our volunteer]'s contributions are making a significant positive impact on our students."

- Beata, childcare provider
participant for over 2 years



HOW TO JOIN BOOKREACH

If you are looking to become a volunteer reader and can dedicate at least one hour per week *OR* are a provider for a licensed childcare center and would like to join, please call the BookReach Coordinator at **513-3004, ext. 3515** or email BookReach@lewistonmaine.gov to learn more.