

AAUW Poughkeepsie Branch, Inc.
Leading to Reading Community Initiative
Annual Report June 2016

Leading to Reading was started in 2004 and its scope continues to grow. The goal is to support literacy programs in our area and provide books and reading experiences to children from low and moderate income families. A number of new members have gotten involved, and enthusiasm for the project remains high.

Activities: Throughout the year, work sessions were held to assemble family reading kits and prepare books for giveaways. The Community readers program was expanded to include several new pre-school centers. Gift wrapping was held at Hudson River Lodging and involved Kohl's Associates in action. As part of their community learning curriculum, a session was held with middle school students at the Poughkeepsie Day School. Books for Babies, which started in January 2015, has provided a book for every newborn at Vassar Brothers Medical Center. A Book Week Celebration was held at the Community Family Development Center. Several presentations were made at local Rotary clubs and networking took place with other organizations. Members volunteered at the Friends of the Poughkeepsie Public Library book sale and as the registrars at the Writers' Tea. A brief presentation was made at one of the AAUW program meetings and numerous articles were submitted to The Branch and on the website.

Community Partners: We have provided books and family reading kits to Astor Preschool Programs, Community Family Development Center, Tubman Terrace Afterschool Program, Rural and Migrant Ministry, Catharine Street Community Center, Abilities First, Agribusiness Child Development Center, Literacy Connection Book Buddies, AAUW Healthcare Initiative, House of Hope, Vassar Brothers Medical Center, and Hudson River Lodging.

Donors: A meeting was held with a group of AAUW volunteers to seek additional funding sources, and results were very successful. Funding was received from the AAUW Writers' Tea, AAUW-NYS Program Grant, Little Kindness Fund, Central Hudson, East Fishkill Rotary, Kohl's Associates in Action, Paintbrushes and Party, Stewart's Holiday Match, Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers, Greenspan Charitable Trust, and the McCann Charitable Trust, Inc. In-kind services were provided by Adams Fairacre Farms, Books for Kids, Manor at Woodside, Macy's/RIF (Reading is Fundamental) and the Friends of the Poughkeepsie Public Library. Members donated stuffed animals at the annual dinner. Additional grant applications were submitted to local businesses and foundations.

Over the course of the project, 23,000 books have been provided to children from low and moderate income families in our region. Leading to Reading has continued to serve as a membership and visibility tool.

Betty Harrel
Project Director