

# READY. SET. READ!

FALL/WINTER 2014 UPDATE



## Collaboration: Key to Success

Nearly 150 guests attended the **2nd Annual Ready.Set.READ! Forum** to learn about the community initiative's collaboration, strategies and growth. Significant progress around the Star Readers tutoring program was noted - - over 300 trained volunteers, including corporate employees college students, retired educators and community volunteers, provide supplemental reading instruction to almost 450 first, second and third grade students at 25 elementary schools within 10 school districts to boost reading comprehension and literacy skills.

**Featured speaker, Bill Isler, President & CEO of The Fred Rogers Company**, shared Berks County has the right components for a successful program. "It takes a community. It takes volunteers. It takes parents. It takes all those institutions that work with children." He believes we are on the right track toward ensuring children have success in reading and learning.

**Recognized for their outstanding commitment to Ready.Set.READ!** were corporate partners, EnerSys and Traveler's Insurance, and nonprofit partners, Birdsboro Community Memorial Center and The Highlands at Wyomissing.



Volunteer tutors are dedicated to helping kids become better readers. The Star Readers tutoring program has experienced great growth during the past year.



Bill Isler, The Fred Rogers Company, commended Ready.Set.READ! volunteers and supporters for helping children to learn, grow and build life skills.

## Ready.Set.READ! Welcomes New Staff Member

**Mary Jimenez** recently joined the United Way staff and is a Ready.Set.READ! team member. She will lead the work around the **Growing Readers** program, which is a new approach being implemented to provide early literacy support to several Latino operated childcare centers in the city of Reading providing care to children 3-5 years of age. To be eligible for the support, these centers must be participating in the Pennsylvania Keystone STARS program at a STAR 1 or 2 level. The child care center director and teachers will receive support in strengthening their preschool curriculum to meet the state 2014 Learning Standards for Early Childhood. Outcomes include children entering kindergarten with the foundational skills needed to succeed in school.

## Ready.Set.READ! Partners With The Highlands at Wyomissing

We are excited to partner with the staff and residents of The Highlands at Wyomissing. The continuing care retirement community is supporting the work of the early grade reading initiative by participating in varied efforts, including conducting a children's book drive and serving as volunteer readers and tutors.

The Highlands residents and staff are reading to nearly 40 pre-kindergarten students, ages three to five, on a monthly basis at Spring KinderCare, and a group from The Highlands also serve as volunteer tutors supporting the initiative's Star Readers program by working with students at Cumru Elementary in Governor Mifflin School District.

