

# Mayor's Holiday Reading Challenge begins

November 22 | 2022



*Mary Kay Connolly, director of the City's Early Literacy Initiatives who coordinates Read Ready Covington, and Garret Freeman, an intern with Neighborhood Services, organize prizes.*

***Motivated young readers will earn prizes***

COVINGTON, Ky. – 'Tis the season for young readers and pre-readers in The Cov to accept the mission at hand: the annual Mayor's Holiday Reading Challenge began Monday with a whole lot of prizes at stake.

The challenge runs until Dec. 31 and is open to all Covington children Pre-K through Grade 3 who are enrolled in the free bilingual apps offered through the Read Ready Covington early childhood literacy initiative: CleverKidsUniversity (ages 3 to 5) and Footsteps2Brilliance (ages 5 to 8).

Last year, 900 students participated in the reading challenge, and within a month they'd collectively read almost 9.6 million words and almost 16,800 books and played over 42,000 skill-building games.

"I'm consistently impressed by the tremendous upward trajectory of this reading challenge," said Covington Mayor Joe Meyer. "Each year we see more and more children engaged in improving their reading skills. It's the precise energy that Read Ready Covington aims to foster."

Mary Kay Connolly, the City's director of Early Literacy Initiatives who coordinates Read Ready Covington, or RRC, said a "community" of readers is critical to overall school success, starting at home before children ever reach a classroom.

"We want to see more children master grade-level reading by the completion of third grade," Connolly said. "To see that happen, we have to work together to ensure that literacy is a high priority in our community. Along with building vocabulary and decoding skills, children need practice following directions, listening, and speaking. All these things work together to promote literacy."

One thing that's different about this year's challenge is that instead of five grand prize winners emerging by the end of the challenge, there will be five weekly winners – 30 total prizes awarded across the six weeks. Winners will be selected based on the amount of time they spend on literacy apps, reading the books, and completing the comprehension and skill-building exercises.

Also, each week, students who log 75 or more minutes on the literacy apps will enter a drawing to win prizes that can include a loaded new backpack with a \$75 Walmart gift card, along with story books, a stuffed animal reading buddy, board games, RRC T-shirt, school supplies, and treats. Guest visitors will deliver the prizes to the classrooms.

Connolly encourages local business to be part of the effort by displaying reading challenge signs, encouraging their employees to read with children, and donating toward items for prize baskets. So far, prizes have been donated by Sixth District Elementary, James E. Biggs, Covington FOP Bookworks (run by the Covington Fraternal Order of Police Lodge # 1) and private donors.

## **About Read Ready Covington**

Besides the use of the apps, Read Ready Covington also organizes regular literacy events in housing communities around Covington, solicits donations of books to give out, supported the increase of Little Free Libraries, and has installed several sets of metal signs around the city displaying words beginning with the 26 letters of the alphabet that are “collected” by young children as part of a literacy scavenger hunt.

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