

Winchester Campaign for Grade-Level Reading Launches Hispanic Outreach Initiative

The Winchester Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is launching a new strategy to reach Winchester's Hispanic community the Leyendo Juntos English Language Learner initiative.

Leyendo Juntos, which means "Reading Together" in Spanish, is an effort to educate, empower, and support local Hispanic families to better develop learning and literacy opportunities within the community. The project endeavors to find ways to create cross-cultural understanding for families with school-aged children, particularly for Spanish-speaking parents who may face challenges due to being new adult learners of English themselves.

The initiative will focus on three strategic objectives: creating awareness, developing communication channels, and distributing resources and programming. Among the long-term goals are developing a community ambassador network with neighborhood advocates and providing educational programs for both children and parents.

"I am thrilled to announce the launch of Leyendo Juntos this summer," said Orianna Urbaz Largent, Program Coordinator for Leyendo Juntos. "This initiative represents our collective commitment to breaking down barriers to literacy and ensuring that Hispanic families have the support they need to thrive for a successful future."

The Leyendo Juntos team is comprised of representatives from Handley Regional Library System, Building Bridges, Winchester Public Schools, Literacy Volunteers Winchester Area, Opportunity Scholars, as well as the John and Janice Wyatt Foundation, which is providing the initial funding for the project. For more information about Leyendo Juntos, contact Orianna Urbaz Largent at ourbaez@lvwa.org.

Winchester CGLR Goals



Overarching Goal
Increase the percentage of third graders reading at or above the proficient level to at least 75% by 2032



School Readiness
Increase the number of children ready for kindergarten to at least 80% based on their performance on the PALS-K. Focus will be on further developing high-quality preschool and daycare programs and offering families out-of-school options to further learning and growth.



School Attendance
Reduce chronic absenteeism to rates at or below 10% among K-4th graders at all four elementary schools by 2025.



Summer and Afterschool Learning
Increase by 100% the number of K-4th grade students who have access to summer and afterschool opportunities that focus on literacy-related learning and enrichment.



Spring Back Attendance Challenge

Virginia Avenue Charlotte DeHart Elementary School students won the "Spring Back" attendance challenge with 98% attendance! Students enjoyed a petting zoo, face painting, and snacks thanks to a partnership with the Winchester Rotary, the Winchester Education Foundation, and Winchester CGLR.

Overall, WPS elementary schools achieved a chronic absenteeism rate of 16.5%, down from last year's 17.75%. What a fantastic end to the school year!

Budding Scholars Update



The spring launch of Budding Scholars was a huge success thanks to the dedication of Winchester Public Schools staff and community volunteers. This new reading tutoring program pairs students who are struggling to read on grade-level with a volunteer to read together in weekly sessions. Twenty-seven volunteers tutored students at Virginia Avenue Charlotte DeHart and Garland R. Quarles Elementary Schools. This fall, we hope to expand to John Kerr and Frederick Douglass Elementary Schools. If you're interested in volunteering as a reading tutor, please email Allie Mondell at amondell@lvwa.org.

Our Needs Looking Ahead

Dolly Parton Imagination Library keeps on growing and we need your help! The Campaign is seeking monthly business sponsors to support over 2,300 children enrolled in the program in Winchester, Frederick, and Clarke. [Contact us to learn more.](#)



Last fall, **Preschool Care Packages** were delivered to three-year old Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) students in Winchester as part of the Campaign's preschool kit pilot program. This fall, we hope to provide care packages to reach 200 students in PreK-4 classrooms. The packages include educational tools to help them learn numbers and letters, a bedtime routine chart, bath toys, and a bedtime story. The goal of these kits is to encourage healthy bedtime routines and set families up for success as children enter elementary school. [Contact us](#) to learn more about sponsoring this program.



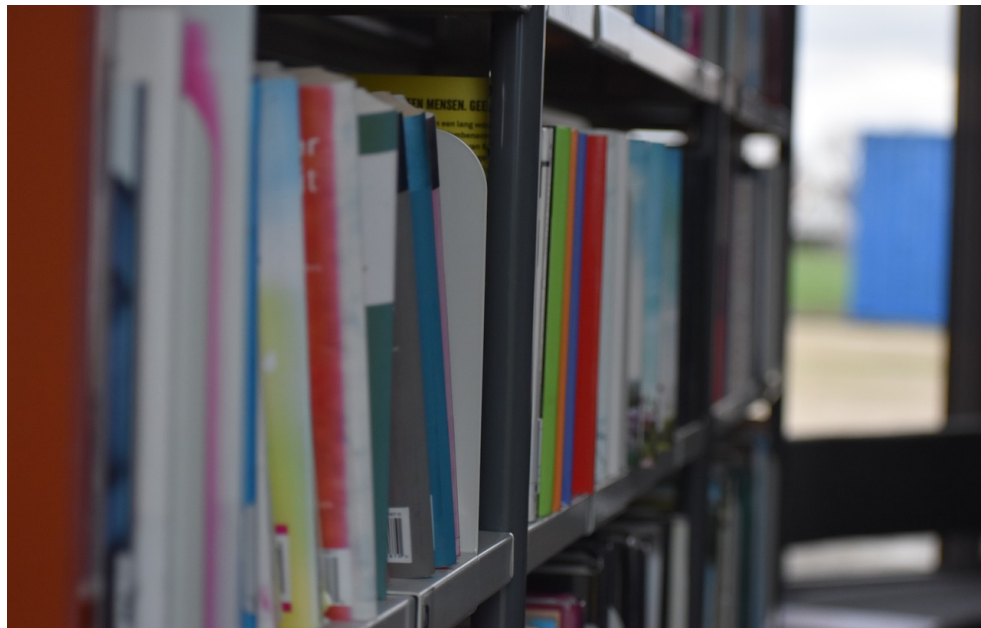
STARBASE Partners with Handley Regional Library for Summer Program

In June, STARBASE offered a camp at Handley Regional Library for students to explore STEAM and literacy. Campers created kites and foam rockets and enjoyed flying their creations!



WPS PreK-3 Classroom Continues in 24-25 School Year

The WPS three-year-old preschool class has been approved in the WPS fiscal year 2025 budget. The class is fully enrolled with a waitlist and will be housed at Frederick Douglass Elementary School. We are excited this class will continue to be available to families in the WPS service area!



Thoughts from the Field: Empowering Winchester's Hispanic Community Through Literacy

Samuel Chavez, Educator

When I imagine the future of Winchester, Virginia, and its Hispanic community, I envision a developed community that is the envy and model for neighboring Spanish-speaking areas. I imagine our students achieving high graduation rates and our young people reaching the highest professional standards and echelons. All my experiences and intuition as a student and educator tell me that these goals start with a strong literacy foundation and culture.

I am thrilled to see Leyendo Juntos take off as part of the Winchester Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (CGLR). As an educator and a former student who benefited from similar initiatives, I know firsthand the transformative power of school and community literacy programs.

The Winchester CGLR, led by Literacy Volunteers Winchester Area, is a collaborative effort of over thirty local organizations to ensure more children succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career, and active citizenship. Leyendo Juntos, which means "Reading Together" in Spanish, is an initiative to educate, empower, and support local Hispanic families to better develop learning and literacy opportunities.

Coming from a humble immigrant and Hispanic background, my family's exposure to literacy was limited to bibles and church music templates. We didn't have bedtime stories or a home library. I gradually learned that American culture places great emphasis on reading and that we were at a disadvantage by not buying into it.

In my early childhood, school and community volunteers visited our home to read to my siblings and me. They often gifted us books, which we cherished even if we couldn't fully understand. At Winchester Public Schools, my siblings and I would stay after school or attend summer enrichment programs that emphasized a love for reading.

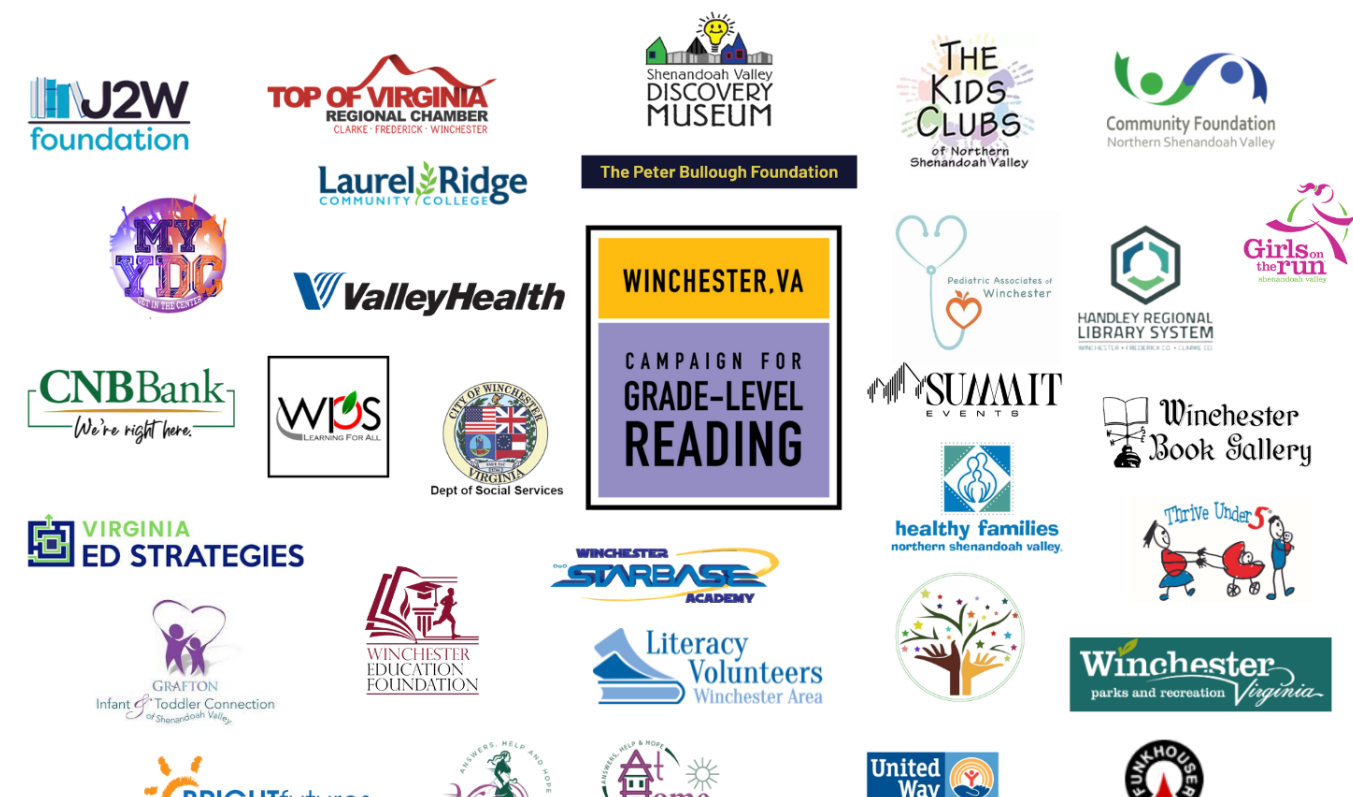
The Handley Library was a sanctuary for my brother and me. Its extensive collection of children's books, manga, comics, and history books, along with its welcoming staff, fueled our learning and curiosity. We often used the library's computers for homework and to explore the world beyond our immediate surroundings. Programs and facilities dedicated to literacy played a critical void in my family's development.

Leyendo Juntos is crucial in our community, especially where language barriers exist. It empowers parents and children to build strong reading skills, fostering a love for books and creating a learning culture within families. It also bridges gaps, enabling families to read, communicate, share, and grow together. The program presents a wonderful opportunity for Winchester to keep promoting the value and love of literacy to a community that is still finding its voice.

Leyendo Juntos needs your support. You can make a difference by volunteering your time, donating, or spreading the word. Together, we can ensure that more families experience the joy and benefits of reading.

Let's remember that literacy is more than reading words on a page; it's about opening minds and hearts to new possibilities. Leyendo Juntos is making this a reality for many in our community, and with your help, it can reach even more.

Coalition Partners



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Upcoming CGLR Events

July & August



Summer Camps

HRLS is hosting a variety of day camps this summer for kids of all ages to explore science and literacy!

July & August



Building Bridges

English as a second language conversation classes for both kids and adults with engaging activities and giveaway prizes.

September 14



Big Buzz

This free parenting event offers expert speakers, vendors, lunch, and classes all about parenting children ages birth to age 3.