



Literacy nonprofit celebrates expansion and presents awards at annual event in Detroit

DETROIT, March 10, 2023 – On Friday, March 3, literacy nonprofit Beyond Basics kicked off National Reading Month by hosting their Coming Together for Children Annual Event at the Detroit Athletic Club. Hundreds of dedicated donors and supporters celebrated the promise and possibility that Beyond Basics has given to its students since its founding.

Beyond Basics shared that the pandemic sped up the process to develop an online program to help students access its program. “We have made strides to reach more children as literacy has become part of a national conversation due to learning loss, even though these problems began long ago,” said Pamela Good, cofounder and CEO of Beyond Basics. “Our story shows that the power of one can change everything. It’s been about each one of you stepping up to help empower the work of Beyond Basics from the very beginning.

“We are grateful to expand our work across Michigan to help more students become proficient readers, thanks to the generous support of our partners and supporters. Our work opens the door to a whole new world to our students,” said Good.

Beyond Basics also announced a partnership with the Joique Bell Foundation and other donors to bring its highest intensity literacy tutoring to Benton Harbor, Mich. Testing is complete and Beyond Basics tutors are on site working with students.

“Illiteracy is a real problem facing Benton Harbor,” said Joique Bell, former athlete, philanthropist, and entrepreneur, [earlier this year](#). “I’m excited to team up with Beyond Basics to bring intensive intervention to students in my hometown. This academic program has the power to drastically improve the lives of every student who struggles to read.”

Good also announced that Beyond Basics is now working in seven counties. These locations include public, non-public, private, and parochial schools.

Honorees announced

Beyond Basics presented the **Literacy Chair Award to The A. A. Van Elslander Foundation**, which was endowed by the late Art Van Elslander, one of Michigan’s most prominent, respected and generous businessmen and philanthropists. His commitment to helping others was a cornerstone of his life’s values. “We are grateful and proud to work with the Beyond Basics team to support their efforts to address the literacy crisis. This honor represents a lifetime of service and charitable support by my parents around the state of Michigan, a well-documented legacy created by my parents primarily by my father,” said David Van Elslander.

Beyond Basics presented the **Partner of the Year Award** to two individuals. Karina Lepkowski, principal of

Most Holy Trinity Catholic Academy and Msgr. Charles Kosanke, pastor of two Detroit parishes, The Basilica of Ste. Anne and Most Holy Trinity both received this award. They both have been instrumental in bringing Beyond Basics' important literacy work to the private and parochial school communities.

Upon accepting this award, Lepkowski said, "Thank you on behalf of Most Holy Trinity for this Partner of the Year honor. We are so blessed to have this partnership with Beyond Basics. They have come into the fold of our community and have really been helpful in raising the standard and the rigor that our students have in our school. We're very thankful and we look forward to the continuing partnership."

Mark S. Lee, host of "In the Conference Room with Mark S. Lee," which airs on 910 am Superstation, emceed the event and presented **The Jack Aronson Radiating Character Award** to students demonstrating outstanding character. Jack Aronson, founder of Garden Fresh Gourmet and president of Great Fresh Foods, joined the Beyond Basics Board of Directors in 2015 and served as Chairman from 2016 to 2020.

About Beyond Basics

Founded in 2002, Beyond Basics is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit working to eradicate illiteracy, transforming the lives of students and creating stronger communities. Our one-on-one, multisensory tutoring program helps students achieve grade-level movement in reading in an average of six weeks. In addition to its structured literacy interventions, Beyond Basics cultivates curiosity and encourage a love of lifelong learning with fine arts activities that expand horizons.

###

Media Contact: Janine Krasicky Sadaj, J9 Media Solutions, janine@j9media.com, 248-514-4558 (cell)