

For immediate release

Beyond Basics celebrates the legacy of Wayne Webber

\$1 million gift from Wayne and Joan Webber Foundation supports literacy in Detroit

DETROIT, February 16, 2022 – Beyond Basics today announces a \$1 million gift from the Wayne and Joan Webber Foundation that will make a tremendous impact on literacy for Detroit area students in K-12 schools. With this gift, the Webber Foundation’s total investment in Beyond Basics is \$6 million to support its literacy efforts since 2006.

The funds allow the Beyond Basics tutoring program to continue to grow during ongoing pandemic school disruptions. Despite challenges, students are making grade-level movement in reading on average in six weeks.

“We are so fortunate to have a partner help us scale during this moment of increased need. The generous gift helps us to serve more students in Southeast Michigan, including the hiring of many more tutors,” said Pamela Good, cofounder and CEO of Beyond Basics. “While other students have unfortunately fallen behind due to COVID-19 school disruptions, our students can get the resources they need and make gains in reading.”

The partnership between Beyond Basics and the Webber Foundation allows students who require additional support in reading the critical opportunity to improve foundational literacy skills while also learning about the life of Wayne Webber, the former owner of highway construction company W.W. Webber Inc.

As a member of the U.S. Armed Forces who participated in peacekeeping missions in Korea, Wayne was guided by duty. This sense of selfless service carried into his efforts as a caring employer and as a philanthropist whose generosity transformed the lives of Michigan residents both in metropolitan Detroit and in Benzie County, where he spent his life hunting, fishing and enjoying the beauty of Northwest Michigan. Wayne and Joan Webber were among Beyond Basics’ earliest supporters, helping the nonprofit confidently develop its intensive tutoring program. Wayne and Joan understood the urgency of the issue of illiteracy and predicted the day that Beyond Basics’ work would be a “beacon of light” for the nation.

In addition to his dedication to Beyond Basics’ literacy efforts, Wayne and his wife Joan supported many good works. The DIA’s Education Wing is named for the couple, and their support also extended to healthcare facilities including Henry Ford Macomb Hospital in Clinton Township, the Munson Medical Center in Traverse City, McLaren Macomb in Mount Clemens, and the Webber Cancer Center in Warren. Wayne and Joan were dedicated to helping those in need through their support of Gleaners, Capuchin Soup Kitchen, Forgotten Harvest and the Salvation Army. One of Wayne and Joan’s favorite activities was the donation of new winter wear to the students of Benzie Area Schools. Since 2009 the foundation has provided new coats, boots, hats, gloves and socks to the students. Wayne and Joan were always present to help distribute the clothing and meet the children.

“My aunt and uncle understood the critical role of literacy in a young person’s life,” said Cynthia Webber Helisek, president of the foundation. “Wayne always said Beyond Basics would be a beacon of light that would flicker across this nation, waking people to the crisis of illiteracy and the importance of dedicated one-on-one tutoring. The ability to read and comprehend the written word should be the foundation of education in every community.”

Beyond Basics’ model is unique in literacy interventions, administering a diagnostic assessment and implementing an individualized reading plan five days per week, an hour per day, with trained tutors who develop caring relationships with students. Once literate, students can achieve their educational goals, and become adults who thrive personally and professionally.

The \$1 million gift establishing the Webber Foundation as a Beyond Basics Legacy Partner includes lessons about the life of Wayne Webber for the students served. In addition:

- Foundation members to tour classes and attend completion ceremonies at the end of tutoring
- Students at partner school/s will receive a medallion inscribed with Wayne’s motto, “Do Good.”
- A plaque honoring the Wayne and Joan Webber Foundation as a Legacy Partner will be erected at Beyond Basics’ headquarters

Pamela Good, cofounder and CEO of Beyond Basics, announced the Legacy Partner program during a press conference at the Durfee Innovation Society, home of the Beyond Basics Family Literacy Center.

“Wayne and Joan played a pivotal role in the development of our multisensory tutoring program,” Good said. “They were among Beyond Basics’ earliest supporters, and they have continued to step forward to facilitate our growth whenever a need arises. We are indebted to their generosity, and so thankful to have received their encouragement throughout the years.”

About the Wayne and Joan Webber Foundation

The Webber Foundation seeks to provide access to quality healthcare, improve K-12 inner-city education, and nourishment, clothing and shelter for the less fortunate.

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 our structured literacy interventions, we cultivate curiosity and encourage a love of lifelong learning with fine arts activities that expand horizons.

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