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[Home](#) > Oliver Wendell Holmes School in Tonawanda Receives Martin Luther King, Jr. "Readers Are Leaders" Honor

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Oliver Wendell Holmes School in Tonawanda Receives Martin Luther King, Jr. "Readers Are Leaders" Honor

What: Project Flight awards local elementary schools with books for students as part of annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Literacy Initiative.

When: Thursday, February 5, 2015, at 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Where: Oliver Wendell Holmes Elementary School, 365 Dupont Ave., Tonawanda

Project Flight, a local not-for-profit literacy organization, will recognize **Oliver Wendell Holmes Elementary School** in the Ken-Ton School District as the top recipient of its 2015 "Leaders Are Readers" during a special assembly program on Thursday, February 5 at the school. Each student will receive a book to keep as part of the 2,000 books being donated to the school.

The "Leaders Are Readers" program is a Martin Luther King Jr. literacy initiative started by Project Flight in 2004. Annually, winning schools receive books and reading materials to give to their students in an effort to promote literacy. In exchange, each school must plan a program which promotes Dr. King's vision of equality and justice through literacy. Schools are also required to strengthen relationships with their local public libraries.

"Education uplifts the power to fulfill dreams," said Project Flight co-director, Dr. Betty Cappella. "We believe that the legacy of literacy is democracy and freedom."

Often referred to as Holmes Elementary, the school serves 350 Pre-K through fifth grade. Its mission has six strategic components: teamwork, celebrate success, lifelong learning, respect, empathy and high expectations. Teachers encourage parents to be actively involved in their child's learning with results leading to higher levels of academic achievement and social responsibility. Their "Second Step" program teaches students about nonviolence, problem solving and being responsible.

Honorable mention schools, both to receive new books, are: **Frank A. Sedita Academy** - Buffalo Public School #30, serving Pre-K through eighth grade, and **John T. Waugh Elementary School** - Lakeshore Central School District, serving Kindergarten – fifth grade.

William L. Hill, Jr., Assistant Commissioner, New York State Office of General Services, Minority and Women-owned Business (MWBE) & Community Relations Office will be on hand for the presentation. This year's selection committee included Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System Director Mary Jean Jakubowski; Project Flight co-directors Drs. Betty Cappella and Geraldine Bard; and Drs. Wendy Patterson and John Siskar, both of Buffalo State College. Program partners include: the New York State Governor's Office, the Office of Children and Family Services, the Division of Minority and Women's Business Development, Community Relations of the New York State Office of General Services and Buffalo & Erie County Public Libraries.

Project Flight works to promote literacy throughout the Western New York region. To date, the organization has donated over 126,000 books to 23 local schools.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the annual **Books for Kids** donation program which will take place in March. Donations of new children's books will be collected at various locations including at the Buffalo News, WGRZ TV Channel 2, Wegmans and Buffalo & Erie County Public Libraries.

Questions: Project Flight 716-858-8608

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