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BUFFALO'S MIDDLE EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL RECEIVES "LEADERS ARE READERS" TOP HONOR FROM PROJECT FLIGHT

Governor's Office, State Agencies, Buffalo Public Schools and Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Participate in Ceremony WHEN:

Thursday, February 4, 2016, 1 p.m.

Where: Middle Early College High School, 2885 Main Street, Buffalo

Project Flight, a local not-for-profit literacy organization, will recognize Middle Early College High School in Buffalo as the top recipient of its 2016 "Leaders Are Readers" program on Thursday, February 4 at 1:00p.m. Five other local schools will also be honored. "Leaders Are Readers" is Project Flight's Martin Luther King Jr. literacy initiative, designed to promote literacy in the school and at home.

Winning schools each receive 2,000 books and other reading materials. In exchange, the schools offer programs to promote Dr. King's vision of equality and justice through literacy. Schools are also encouraged to strengthen their relationships with their local Buffalo & Erie County Public Libraries. The winning schools are: P.S. 415 Middle Early College High School, Buffalo; West Buffalo Charter School, Buffalo; North Collins Elementary School, North Collins; Windermere Boulevard Elementary School, Amherst; Maryvale Intermediate School; Cheektowaga; A. J. Schmidt Elementary School, Lakeshore.

Project Flight's mission is for every child to have a book and to be able to read it at grade level; to help children live in a literate environment, whether at home or at school, and make literacy an outlet from poverty. "There is no doubt how education uplifts the power to fulfill dreams. We believe that the legacy of literacy is democracy and freedom," said Project Flight Co-Director Dr. Betty Cappella. "Our vision at Project Flight is to make sure all children will increase their aptitude in literacy to gain a wealth of knowledge which will spread throughout their lives and families," added Project Flight Co-Director Dr. Geraldine Bard.

"Children should be given the opportunities and encouragement to read. Having access to books can open a child's imagination, expand a child's creativity and promote exploration of interests," said Library System Director Mary Jean Jakubowski. "Books support the notion that learning can be fun. The more you learn, the more you grow. The more you grow, the more you know. The prospects are endless."

The Martin Luther King Jr. literacy initiative was established in Buffalo in 2004. This year's selection committee included Library Director Jakubowski; Project Flight's co-directors Drs. Cappella and Bard; and Drs. Wendy Patterson and John Siskar, both of Buffalo State College. Program partners include the Governor's Office, the Office of Children and Family Services, the Division of Minority and Women's Business Development, and Community Relations of the New York State Office of General Services. Buffalo Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Kriner Cash participated in Thursday's ceremony.

Project Flight, now in its 22nd year, works to promote literacy throughout the Western New York region. To date, nearly 140,000 books, valued at over \$1.12 million, have been donated to 29 local schools.

Recipients of the 2016 "Leaders are Readers" are:

Winner of Distinction: P.S. 415 Middle Early College High School

Buffalo Public School #415 is located in the North Buffalo area and works in partnership with Buffalo State College. This partnership is in conjunction with the requirements of a Middle Early College High School: "Middle Early College High Schools are secondary schools, partnered with two or four year post-secondary institutes across the country, educating under-served students who have the potential to benefit from a rigorous academic curriculum offered within a supportive and nurturing environment." Students interested in participating must be committed to longer school days and mandatory summer sessions. The purpose of the middle early college high school model is to prepare students for a rewarding college career. By completing the program, students earn college credits towards a Bachelor's degree. Career education or community service is a requirement of the program as well as parent involvement. Project Flight's donation of books will help enrich students' learning experiences in their journey to obtaining a college degree.

Source: <http://www.buffaloschools.org/MiddleEarlyCollege.cfm> Winner of Achievement:

West Buffalo Charter School West Buffalo Charter School caters to grades Kindergarten through fourth grade and is located on Buffalo's west side. The school year begins in mid-August and ends on June 24th, providing a longer learning period for students. Their school day is extended as well; beginning at 8 a.m. -3:30p.m. According to the school's website, the core mission of the school is to: • Provide differentiated and intensive instruction in all academic areas; • Develop language acquisition, literacy skills, and reading proficiency; • Build positive, respectful relationships between staff, students, parents, and the community; • Integrate art, music, dance, technology, and

physical education to educate the whole child; • Provide ongoing staff professional development focused on innovative instructional tools and technology integration. These points of concentration provide students with a well-rounded learning environment.

West Buffalo Charter School also puts into practice the “Response to Intervention” Program. Project Flight recognizes this school's honorable dedication to its students and gladly gives this recipient books and materials to help achieve their academic goals. Source: <http://westbuffalocharter.org/>

Winner of Achievement: North Collins Elementary School North Collins Elementary School focuses on grades Pre-Kindergarten to sixth grade and is located in Southern Erie County. North Collins Elementary also implements the “Response to Intervention” Program. In this academic school year, a focus is being placed on “strengthening the home school partnership by increasing understanding of educational programs, opportunities and activities,” and further developing “parent and community involvement opportunities.” The school's website provides an in-depth Common Core Toolkit for parents and families to give parents /caregivers a better understanding of what the focus of their children's learning will be during the school year. A community outreach program that the school conducts annually is their Senior Citizen Luncheon held in December in celebration of the holidays. Project Flight's donation of books will be a boon in helping to strengthen the learning partnership between parent and child and a partnership between the students and their surrounding community.

Source: <http://www.northcollins.com/Elementary.cfm?subpage=14335>

Winner of Achievement: Windermere Boulevard Elementary School

Opened in 1951, Windermere is one of the most diverse schools in the Buffalo-Niagara area. Its pre-kindergarten through fifth grade student body numbers are close to 750 and includes children from over 30 countries in any given year. The school is organized into an Early Childhood Education Center (grades preK-2) and an Intermediate Education Center (grades 3-5), each having a dedicated Principal and together a staff of over 150 employees. The school is located in a suburban setting of Amherst on fifteen acres of land. The school's motto is called the 3C's (Caring, Courteous, Careful) – which coincides with their care code and school-wide rules to establish a fostering school community. The school has a weekly television program that focuses on a character trait of the month – such as – December: Empathy, January: Respect, & February: Self-Control. The show involves students sharing books, songs and creative skits and other creative projects that focus on the character trait for that month. This book donation will allow the diverse student population to explore opportunities to practice being caring, courteous and careful during their learning experience.

Source: <http://amherstschools.org/windermere.cfm?subpage=21850>

Winner of Achievement: Maryvale Intermediate School

Maryvale Intermediate School serves third through fifth grades. The school is located in the central northern section of Erie County. Each grade has a distinct description of what is expected of the student in mathematics, reading, writing, science and social studies. Their literacy focus starts with a concentration on topics including, but not limited to: vocabulary, word decoding skill and comprehension in the third grade to reading strategies, oral reading and independent reading in the fifth grade. Maryvale also participates in the “Response to Intervention” program teaching on classroom, group and individual levels. They also stress a strong connection to continuing their learning at home. Parents are expected to play a vital role in their child's education. The school upholds the need for a safe and nurturing learning environment that commands respect, a sense of values and a reward and consequence system based on the student's behavior. The donation of books will help the students' progression of learning in their literacy endeavors, and help instill a lifelong love of reading.

Source: <http://www.maryvaleufsd.org/intermediate.cfm?subpage=8%7c>

Winner of Achievement: A. J. Schmidt Elementary School A. J. Schmidt Elementary School is located in the Lakeshore School District in Southern Erie County. The school serves Kindergarten through fifth grade. The message of the school indicates a strong emphasis on literacy as expressed by the principal, Mrs. Clark, on their website. Included on the school's website are recommended reading lists for each grade. Each of the recommended reading files encourages parents to read with their child and provides a simple measure to indicate if the child should pick an easier book to read (five fingers for a count of five words that the child does not know). The school has even established a free library outside of the front doors for students and parents to use at any time. Project Flight's donation of books will help the school supplement books for its free library and help nurture the love of literacy throughout the school.

Source: <http://www.lakeshore.wnyric.org/Page/13 ###>

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