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## WATERFRONT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL WINS DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. "LEADERS ARE READERS" SCHOOL AWARD FOR LITERACY

### MEDIA INVITED – MEDIA RELEASE

For Release: Thursday, February 7, 2019

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### Waterfront Elementary School Wins Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "Leaders Are Readers" School Award for Literacy

#### **WHAT:**

Ceremony honoring Buffalo's Waterfront Elementary School, winner of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "Leaders Are Readers" School Award for Literacy. The school will receive recognition and each student will receive a book.

**WHEN:** Thursday, February 7 at 9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

**WHERE:** Buffalo Public School #95 Waterfront Elementary School,

95 Fourth Street, Buffalo, 14202

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*The Governor's Office, Project Flight, State Agencies and the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library To Honor the Waterfront School on Thursday, February 7 @ 9 a.m.*

To promote literacy for children living in New York State, the local organization Project Flight founded the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Literacy Initiative entitled "Leaders Are Readers" in 2014 in partnership with the Governor's Office, the Office of Children and Family Services, the Office of MWBE and Community Relations of the New York State Office of General Services. In 2014, Project Flight added a new partner, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, to help promote children's literacy in this region.

For 24 years Project Flight, a not-for-profit literacy organization, has worked to promote literacy throughout the Western New York area and the world through school and family literacy initiatives. Buffalo & Erie County Public Libraries have historically been the purveyors of literacy for all who walk through their doors.

The winner of this year's MLK initiative is Buffalo Public School #95 - Waterfront Elementary. The school will receive 2,050 books and materials. Along with the promise to promote literacy in school and at home, Waterfront will provide programming that promotes Dr. King's vision of equality and justice through literacy. The school will also develop a relationship with its local public library.

Project Flight works to ensure every child has a book of their own and can read at grade level. They believe that, whether at home or at school, children should live in a literate environment and that literacy is an entree out of poverty. This is a special concern in Buffalo, which is ranked as having the fourth highest youth poverty rate among all of the nation's major cities. To date, more than **146,000** books, worth approximately **\$1,211,055.06**, have been donated to **31 schools** through this program.

"There is no doubt that education uplifts the power to fulfill dreams. We believe the legacy of literacy is democracy and freedom," said Project Flight Co-Director, Dr. Elizabeth Cappella.

"Our vision at Project Flight is to make sure all children will increase their aptitude in literacy to gain a wealth of knowledge that will spread throughout their lives and families," added Project Flight Co-Director, Dr. Geraldine Bard.

"Children should be given opportunities and encouragement to read. Having access to books can open a child's imagination, expand creativity and promote exploration of interests. 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," said Library Director Mary Jean Jakubowski.

This year the selection committee was made up of Chair, Ms. Jakubowski, Dr. Cappella and Dr. Bard.

#### **The 2019 Selected Recipient:**

BPS #95 – Waterfront Elementary

Principal: Terence Jenkins and Assistant Principal: Kate Paolini

Waterfront Elementary was the first Pre-K through 8th grade magnet school established in the City of Buffalo. The school was created to generate and encourage an understanding of the diverse racial, ethnic and religious groups in the area. The learning process at the school encourages students to develop critical thinking, problem solving and communication skills essential to success in all aspects of life. To strengthen the school's degree of success Waterfront has partnered with several Western New York organizations that support academic achievement and creativity such as Young Audiences of Western NY, Buffalo State College and the Niagara Region Science Olympiad.

Waterfront Elementary implements the "Positive Behavior Intervention Systems" (PBIS). PBIS encourages students to exhibit positive behavior in all areas of their school day, including hallway walking, cafeteria behaviors and dismissal behaviors. As a reward for positive behavior, students earn a "Super Surfer Ticket." The student whose ticket is selected wins a prize. The school does a weekly drawing and at times will do a large drawing, where students turn in multiple tickets. The ultimate prize is won when students fill a large cylinder in the school's main corridor. If they fill the cylinder, they succeed in winning a school-wide celebration. However, PBIS does not stop at school; the students are encouraged to exhibit positive behavior at home too (**H**: Help Out, **O**: Own Your Behavior, **M**: Manners Count and **E**: Everyday). As a result, students are able to win Super Surfer Tickets at home. Applying PBIS in the learning environment is a great way to ensure children succeed socially as well as academically.

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**Tags:**

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