

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Read-a-Thon at Emmeline Cook centers on literacy enrichment activities**

Celebrate Education, an annual event that honors the educators, administrators and volunteers in our schools, is set for March 23.

Last week's Read-a-Thon at Emmeline Cook Elementary School served as both a fundraiser for the school and a literacy enrichment program. Students had the opportunity to collect pledges and donations for reading, participate in literacy trivia, listen to special guest readers from the community and enjoy family reading nights. The school's goal was to read a combined 100,000 minutes from the start of the Read-a-Thon on Monday, March 2, till the end of the day on Friday, March 6.



The week-long program was made possible by a grant from the Mildred M. and Edward W. Baar Youth and Education Fund that was awarded at last year's Celebrate Education event. Ed Baar, a long-time supporter of education and literacy in the Oshkosh community, has always had a passion for providing opportunities for students to learn.

"My wife, Mildred, and I just had a passion for education," Mr. Baar simply stated. "Literacy and books are very important."

Approximately 60 percent of Emmeline Cook's students are at the free or reduced lunch status. This affects families' ability to help financially support programs such as the Read-a-Thon, which makes the grant from the Baar Fund that much more significant.

"For many students in our school, access to books can be a challenge," said Tania Harrison, Emmeline Cook's PTO Community Liason. "Mr. Baar's gift gave every student at least one book of their own, allowing them to participate in a project that betters both themselves and their school."

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The Read-a-Thon combines a basic need, literacy, with a project that builds pride in the school and its surrounding community. This event was positioned to act as a springboard to more ongoing programs for literacy and as an inspiration for students to read for their own personal benefit.

“Literacy strength has and always will be a core goal of our school,” said Harrison. “Mr. Baar’s generosity is a catalyst for greatness in our school and our community, and for that we are very thankful.”

Last week’s Read-a-Thon brought hundreds of students and family members together to participate in literacy activities. Combined reading (school & home) minutes totaled over 135,000 minutes—exceeding the school’s goal of 100,000 minutes. Close to \$9,000 was raised in support of student’s literacy and the ECook Beautification project.

Honor the exceptional educators that bring programs like the Read-a-Thon to your community by attending Celebrate Education, an annual event hosted by the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation in partnership with the Oshkosh Area School District, Mid-Morning Kiwanis Club of Oshkosh, Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce and Wisconsin Public Service Foundation. This year’s Celebrate Education will begin at 4:30 p.m. Monday, March 23, at the Oshkosh Convention Center.

Register online at [oshkoshareacf.org](http://oshkoshareacf.org) or call (920) 426-3993 by March 18. Join us in recognizing our educators, administrators and volunteers who enrich the lives of students in our community.

The Oshkosh Area Community Foundation is a nonprofit charitable organization created by and for the people of Winnebago County, Waushara County, Green Lake County and Ripon. Through charitable giving, the Community Foundation strives to make our communities thrive. For more information, please call (920) 426-3993.

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