

Letters are Characters Partners with Meriden Children First to Offer Help and Hope During Dyslexia Awareness Month

MERIDEN, CT, UNITED STATES, October 31, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- To commemorate the close of Dyslexia Awareness Month, Letters are Characters and Meriden Children First joined forces to offer a free play-based literacy event at Meriden Public Library on Tuesday, October 29. The event was attended by local families with emerging readers and Spanish translation services were provided.

The reading crisis in the United States is alarming, as evidenced by the Nation's report card (<https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/reading/>.) Currently 2/3rds of 4th graders are not reaching literacy benchmarks. In underserved communities, that number jumps to 80%. One in five children will struggle with reading acquisition, a challenge that Letters are Characters seeks to rectify.

Letters are Characters includes an adult curriculum that builds critical awareness about the science of reading and relevant brain research. The science is complemented with a play-based program, an application of the science, that is conducted by librarians, educators, and parents with kids that are learning to read. The programs are free to the public and funded by grants.

Meriden Children First's mission is to improve educational, social and health outcomes of the children in Meriden. Marissa Perez Cardona, who is married to Dr. Miguel Cardona, the twelfth United States Secretary of Education, spearheaded this program. Meriden Children First was one of the first Letters are Characters partners. Letters are Characters works with nonprofit organizations throughout Connecticut.

"Community organizations and libraries are natural partners, especially when it comes to



Marissa Perez Cardona, Lizbeth Acevedo and Caroline Wilcox celebrate National Dyslexia Awareness Month

reading. Learning to read is not automatic. The ability to read, and read well, is vital to success in school and life. By joining together, we are leading our community in finding parent- and child-based solutions to our nation's reading crisis," said Marissa Perez Cardona.

"Nearly every child can learn to read at an average or better level. Reading acquisition is often conflated with intelligence, when in fact there is no relationship," said Letters are Characters founder Caroline Wilcox, PhD. "We wire our brains to read by creating neural pathways. The first neural pathway forms over the left ear and enables us to attach sounds to the letter symbols. Some children need a few repetitions and others need 40 or more with explicit instruction and the use of multisensory methods which the Letters are Characters program provides."

If a child needs reading intervention, the cost spent on literacy acquisition doubles. If they get intervention early, it takes on average 100 days for successful remediation.

"If we wait until fourth grade, when most struggling readers are identified, the time and cost more than doubles and the child has felt embarrassment, shame and pain – all of which are unnecessary and can be prevented," said Wilcox.

About Letters are Characters

Letters are Characters™, LLC is a woman-owned small business based in Litchfield, CT. It was founded by Caroline Wilcox, PhD, WDW, and author of two books – "Letters are Characters" and "Letters are Builders." Letters are Characters builds networks of parents/caregivers, librarians, educators and community members/organizations that are empowered to work together to create literacy solutions that honor all learning styles to overcome the American Reading Crisis, one child, one community at a time. For more information, visit www.lettersarecharacters.com.

"Too often, we see otherwise bright, capable children's self-esteem and enthusiasm for learning plummet because they lag behind their peers in their acquisition of early reading skills. In Letters are Characters, Dr. Wilcox has brought her unique perspective as scientist, educator, and parent to create a playful, compassionate, and well-informed program for parents to help their children begin to build critical reading readiness skills." --Paul B. Yellin, MD, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, NYU School of Medicine, Director, The Yellin Center for Mind, Brain, and Education.

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