

The Leahys' STAIRway to Student Success

Eileen and Tim Leahy have been dedicated STAIR tutors since 2014 and 2017 respectively. Eileen first learned about STAIR shortly before her planned retirement. She was intrigued and decided to jump in and give tutoring a try one day a week at Germantown Elementary. What struck her then - and still does, she said - is that "STAIR's very well organized and volunteers are trained, supported, and appreciated. And I'm doing something very important for children!"

Tim began volunteering at the Stanton Center in 2017 before moving to Germantown in 2022. "I had some extra time and was looking for something meaningful to do with that time." Eileen and Tim were well aware of the critical importance of reading for short and long-term student success and both were determined to do what they could to help.

The STAIR curriculum, which aligns with Anne Arundel Public Schools and is based on the science of reading, provides a clear plan for building and reinforcing reading skills during the 2 1/2 hours they're with their students each week. "The unique one-on-one relationship that gets built is key to creating a learning experience that not only results in significant skill development but also fosters a special bond between tutor and student," they noted.

Eileen described her experience a few years ago with a student who sometimes found it hard to concentrate and often didn't want to complete the activities Eileen had prepared for that day. "I often wondered about how much impact I was really having but the reading assessments confirmed her progress and she kept coming back to visit me for several years after she graduated from the program!"

Both Tim and Eileen expressed their appreciation for the commitment of parents in making sure their children attend STAIR regularly. They spoke of their admiration for the support coming from home that speaks volumes to the child and translates into students coming to STAIR ready to participate

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and learn. "The graduation ceremonies at the end of the school year and the obvious pride of students, families, and tutors make for a fun and joyful occasion," according to Tim.

The Leahys encourage others to learn more about STAIR and give it a try!