

Changing the Future “One Book at a Time”

Celebration Engages Community in a Focus on Literacy

As the 2016-17 school year opened, the Niswonger Foundation joined in partnership with Greene County Schools to introduce a pilot literacy program with the goal of increasing the likelihood that children are reading and comprehending on grade level by third grade. The LIFE program (*Literacy Initiative Focused on Effectiveness*) was initiated in seventeen classrooms, in three schools - Chuckey Elementary, Glenwood Elementary and Ottway Elementary.



Community and parental engagement activities are viewed as an essential element for the success of this program. In October, a “Day in the Life” brought families, in record numbers, to each school for an introduction to this new literacy initiative. As the second community involvement initiative, a *Charlotte’s Web Reading Celebration* was held, on November 12th, at the Greene County Fairgrounds. Co-sponsored by Greene County Schools and the Niswonger Foundation, the event was entitled “*Developing a Community of Readers: Changing our future one book at a time.*” While the focus of the fair was students from pre-K through 12th grades, there were activities to engage all ages. The overarching theme was building excitement about the power of books and reading.



Following the format and appearance of a county fair, schools from across the county, college representatives, and regional organizations and businesses engaged participants in activities and shared information and materials. Events included live music, read-alouds, skits, family pictures, and games. Free books were available, and door prizes were also given. All events shared a common literacy-promotion focus, and the night came to a close with a showing of the film “Charlotte’s Web.” The school with the highest number of students at the event was named the “Most Represented School.” Every child left the fair with a book of their own, with the goal of inspiring families regarding the importance of reading to children and having books in their homes.



The Niswonger Foundation and Greene County Schools share the philosophy that:

“With the right words, you can change the world.”