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Kiwanis Grant Helps At-Risk Children on the Road to Literacy Achievement

The Family Learning Institute, in partnership with the Children's Literacy Network, is pleased to announce the receipt of a generous \$20,500 grant from the Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor.

The Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor held its first Major Gift grant competition earlier this year, with 38 local nonprofits submitting ideas. Last week, Kiwanis announced the winner – a joint proposal by two local volunteer-based youth literacy organizations, the Family Learning Institute (FLI) and Children's Literacy Network (CLN). FLI and CLN, who began sharing space on S. Industrial last year, will deploy a unique “bookmobile” to serve economically disadvantaged youth throughout Washtenaw County.

For FLI, whose mission is to close the achievement gap, the bookmobile will enable its intensive, one-on-one literacy and academic development services for economically disadvantaged elementary students to be offered on-site at schools and community centers throughout the school year. Travelling to students overcomes access barriers such as parents' work schedules and lack of transportation. Serving as an “FLI on wheels,” the van will carry students' individual lesson plan binders, instructional workbooks, books, and more. With programs at Northside and Erickson elementary schools today, FLI will use the van to expand to additional schools in an organized way. Says Daniel Rubenstein, FLI's Director of Development, “We would like to do more outreach in the future, including in Ypsilanti. In the first year of this project, we hope to expand our outreach program from 20 students to 60 or more.”

For CLN, whose mission is to give all children in Washtenaw County an equal opportunity to develop a love of reading and books, the van will expand their *Summer Book Giveaway* program currently offered at Mitchell elementary school. On a weekly basis, CLN volunteers will distribute free hi-low books at appropriate reading levels to children in their neighborhood setting. The hi-low approach targets the reader's *high interest* level, but starts at a *lower reading level* to draw in the struggling or reluctant reader. This summer, children without library access will have their own books in the home, impacting both siblings and parents. In addition, the community will experience a positive summer literacy effort right in their own neighborhood! According to Diane Saulter, Executive Director at CLN, “Studies show that children from low-income households are more likely to fall behind over the summer, due to lack of access to school and public libraries. Children on summer break gain the most from having books in the home.” CLN's use of the van thus complements FLI's in-house summer tutoring program, *Brain Boot Camp*, which is designed to arrest summer learning loss.

This unique Kiwanis grant will be critical in the expansion of both organizations' outreach programs to additional sites and students, and a small portion will help stock FLI's lending library with special books

featuring children of color. It will be matched by a challenge grant from the Harry A. and Margaret D. Towsley Foundation; FLI and CLN thank both organizations for leveraging each other's support to direct community charitable resources towards helping our least advantaged youth and families help themselves through literacy and education.

This award was presented on Monday, May 12 at the Kiwanis of Ann Arbor meeting by John Goff, the Committee Chair for Major Gifts. The \$20,500 is a combination of a Major Gift award and the Children and Youth Committee funding. The committee reviewed 38 community applications. FLI and CLN are pleased to be the 2014 Kiwanis Major Gift recipients, and excited to navigate the road to improved literacy within Washtenaw County together.

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(Recommend first photo, but crop and use either as you see fit)



Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor President Elect and Chair, Committee for Major Gifts, John Goff, presents a check for \$20,500 to the Family Learning Institute (FLI) and Children's Literacy Network (CLN) at the Kiwanis weekly meeting on Monday, May 12, 2014. L-R: Daniel Rubenstein, Development Director, FLI; Gary Maynard, Board Vice Chair, FLI; Julie Walden, Board Chair, CLN; Diane Saulter, Executive Director, CLN; Charmin Archer, Acting Executive Director, FLI; and, Mr. Goff. The 2014 Kiwanis Major Grant will fund the

purchase and outfitting of a van to carry books and teaching materials to facilitate both organizations' outreach programs, overcoming access barriers to literacy services for economically disadvantaged youth throughout Washtenaw County.



Daniel Rubenstein of the Family Learning Institute (FLI) explains how FLI and Children's Literacy Network (CLN) will use a van funded by the Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor's 2014 Major Gift of \$20,500 at the Kiwanis weekly meeting on Monday, May 12, 2014. L-R: John Dahl, President, Kiwanis; Gary Maynard, Board Vice Chair, FLI; Julie Walden, Board Chair, CLN; Diane Saulter, Executive Director, CLN; Charmin Archer, Executive Director, FLI; John Goff, President Elect and Chair, Committee for Major Gifts, Kiwanis; and Mr. Rubenstein. FLI and CLN will share the van to carry books and teaching materials to facilitate both organizations' outreach programs, overcoming access barriers to literacy services for economically disadvantaged youth throughout Washtenaw County.

For more information on the Family Learning Institute, please visit <http://www.familylearninginstitute.org/>
For more information on Children's Literacy Network, please visit www.childrensliteracynetwork.org/
For more information on the Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor, please visit <http://a2kiwanisfoundation.org/>