



For Immediate Release

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'A Million Dreams and Counting: The Junior Leagues of Georgia Million Minute Read.'
First Lady Perdue kicks off initiative by reading to children at the Governor's Mansion

DECATUR, Ga. (August 26, 2009) – The Junior League of DeKalb County proudly announces a partnership between the twelve Junior Leagues of Georgia as they launch a new initiative called “The Million Minute Read” to promote literacy and school readiness in Georgia

Through a shared commitment to children and their success in school, the Junior Leagues of Georgia have partnered to read one million minutes to Georgia’s children from September 2009 to April 2010. Reading aloud to children is one of the best ways to facilitate their oral language and vocabulary development. Studies have proven that children who are exposed to a rich vocabulary have a greater chance of success in school. By third grade, children must be reading to learn, not learning to read. It’s a critical component of early childhood education, and a great opportunity for Junior League volunteers to make a lasting impact in the lives of children.

“The Junior League has observed a long tradition of commitment to literacy efforts on behalf of Georgia’s children,” said Mindy Pillow, VP of Community for Junior League of DeKalb County. “Because of our strong desire to see more children become avid readers, Georgia’s twelve Junior Leagues are joining efforts as one voice to raise awareness about the need to further encourage our children to read, to excel in school and to thrive as imaginative individuals as they grow.”

The Million Minute Read is being conducted in partnership with Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning and its “A Million Dreams and Counting” program, which celebrates the one millionth child passing through the doors of the Georgia Pre-K program this fall. Established in 1993, Bright from the Start provides the state’s four year-old children with high quality preschool experiences.

League members from across the state will be able to log-in their hours spent reading to children (age birth to elementary school) at daycares, schools, hospitals, and other locations to track the number of minutes read, including how many children were present.

The ‘*Reading Under the Stars*’ kick-off event was hosted by the Governor and First Lady at the Governor’s Mansion on August 25 where First Lady Perdue read to seventy-five of Georgia’s pre-school aged children from the Atlanta area. Junior League volunteers hosted crafts, face-painting and other fun activities for the children who were presented with books to take home, along with other donated items such as a backpack, Pre-K school supplies, a blanket and other items.

(more)



**JUNIOR LEAGUE OF
DEKALB COUNTY**

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The Junior Leagues of Georgia will celebrate these efforts during the week of February 22, 2010 as part of 'The Junior Leagues of Georgia Million Minute Read' Week.

The Junior Leagues of Georgia include Leagues from Albany, Athens, Atlanta, Augusta, Cobb-Marietta, Columbus, DeKalb County, Douglas County, Gainesville-Hall County, Gwinnett-N. Fulton Counties, Macon and Savannah.

JLD was founded in 1934 and has since served the community with clothing distribution, trauma counseling through the DeKalb County Rape Crisis Center, establishing and supporting the International Women's House, a shelter for foreign-born battered women and many other excellent programs that have benefited DeKalb County. JLD's 75-year legacy of committed service lives on in its current projects such as A Space of My Own which provides bedding to foster children, and Mini-Grants for Excellence in Teaching which to date has awarded over \$180,000 to DeKalb County teachers to supplement and enrich their classroom projects. JLD will mark its 75th anniversary this year with a celebration in October followed by the 20th anniversary of their fundraiser, Bargain Bazaar

For more information about the Junior League of DeKalb County, please visit www.jldekalb.org or call (404) 378-4536.

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