

Address Social Determinants of Health & Health Disparities

Literacy Initiatives

Literacy Initiatives are also part of the Adopt a School Model, focusing efforts at Union Terrace Elementary School. “Reading Rocks!” is an innovative reading mentoring program designed to boost literacy among elementary age students. The program was held in the fall and spring as an 8 week after-school reading program held at Union Terrace Elementary Schools for 16 at-risk students. The same 16 students participated in both sessions. The students were identified by the school as needing extra reading assistance. The after-school program paired volunteers with students in a one-on-one mentorship relationship. Reading mentors read for 30 minutes with their assigned student, assisting students with difficult words. Students were allowed to take one book home each week to build their own reading library. St. Luke’s partners with Union Terrace Elementary School to monitor DIEBEL scores of the 16 students enrolled in the Reading Rocks! program to measure improvement. DIEBEL tests measure oral reading fluency and are done four times throughout the school year. All of the Reading Rocks students increased their DIEBEL score by 10%. 9 out of the 16 students had an increase of 20% or higher.

A six week second grade reading challenge was also held at Union Terrace Elementary School in the fall and spring. Students were challenged to read 20 minutes per night at least five days per week. The classroom which logged the most minutes read received a classroom party. There was also a grand prize winner from each second grade classroom. The students who logged the most minutes read from each class received a donated prize. Donated prizes included family passes to the Da Vince Science Center and the America on Wheels Museum.

St. Luke’s Allentown participated in the Read Across America events at Union Terrace Elementary School. A total of 33 reading volunteers from St. Luke’s Hospital and community partner agencies read a Dr. Seuss book to each classroom. The book was then donated to the classroom library for the children to continue to enjoy throughout the year.

Maternal and Child Health Initiatives

A St. Luke’s representative from the Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) sits on the Allentown Promise Neighborhood (APN) Early Learning Network. This committee focuses efforts on increasing the number of children living in the APN who have access to early childhood education to be well-prepared for kindergarten. Also, NFP provides services to 11 families living in the APN. This is a community health program that helps transform the lives of women who are pregnant with their first child. Each mother served is partnered with a registered nurse early in her pregnancy and receives ongoing nurse home visits throughout pregnancy that continue through her child's second birthday.