



LITERACY INITIATIVES

SUMMARY

St Luke's in partnership with Cops N Kids, Lehigh University, Muhlenberg College, and several local businesses provides the *Reading Rocks!* and *Read Across America* Program. The programs started in the Bethlehem and Allentown School Districts but have grown to include Panther Valley, Quakertown and Bangor School Districts.

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 for at-risk students. The same 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. The Reading Rocks Literacy programs targets improved outcomes in reading levels for students, monitored by reading assessments conducted at district levels.

HIGHLIGHTS & SUCCESSES

- St. Luke's partners with Union Terrace Elementary School in Allentown School District to monitor DIBEL scores of the 16 students enrolled in the *Reading Rocks!* program to measure improvement. DIBEL tests measure oral reading fluency and are done four times throughout the score year. All of the *Reading Rocks!* students increased their DIBELS score by 10%. 9 out of the 16 students had an increase of 20% or higher.
- We are now in the 7th year of the Reading Rocks! program at Donegan Elementary Community School in Bethlehem School District.
- We are currently in a book drive to fill book carts at Kids Care as well as the carts on the Dental and Medical Vans AND the shelves here at Community Health for the Maternal/Child Health (MCH) programs. All books are distributed to kids in the community to encourage reading.

CHALLENGES & NEXT STEPS

As the program grows and is duplicated across school districts, many logistical, financial and personnel issues arise, however is very exciting to see literacy initiatives becoming more wide spread across our school systems.



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