

Literary group provides books for young readers

MIFFLINBURG — The Keystone State Literacy Association Susquehanna Valley (KSLA SV) hopes that visions of reading and books dance through the heads of youngsters in the Susquehanna Valley.

During the holiday season, KSLA SV sponsors a Books for Babes program for young readers in an effort to spread the love of reading. Children who receive these books are enrolled in Early Head Start, Northumberland Area Head Start, Pre K Counts, and Early Intervention Preschool Programs in Columbia, Northumberland, Montour, Snyder and Union counties. The Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU) assists by distributing books to the various classes.

Teenage parents also benefit from Project Elect, a CSIU program that supports young parents with their path to a high school diploma or GED, by providing education and information about health care, nutrition, child development, career readiness and goal setting.

“Our Books for Babes program is a gift from the heart! Those of us who participate



PROVIDED BY KAY POETH

KSLA Susquehanna Valley member Sarah Hynick was joined by retired Shikellamy School District teachers to wrap books. Susan Morrone, Verlaine Shaw, Sarah Hynick, Becky Swank, Robin Bogler and Fran Davis recently wrapped 100 books for the Books for Babes project that distributes books to children during the holiday season.

in this program ‘love’ to read and ‘love’ children. We hope to spread the love of reading to these young children across our region. We know that needs to begin in the formative years,” said Ang Marcinek, KSLA Susquehanna Valley chairperson of the project.

Each year a different book is given to the children. The project helps to instill a love of reading at an early age and gives a child a ‘head start’ on expanding their vocabulary and comprehension. This year KSLA SV chose two books written by Mercer Mayer an American author and illustrator, who has published over 300 children’s books. Among

them are his “Little Critters” series. The books chosen are from this series.

In one, “Just Critters Who Care, Little Critter,” the main character, organizes a group of friends and parents to help the old, sick bunny who needs help with yard work and maintenance on her house. This book combines the fun text and illustrations of all the “Little Critters” series, with an important message about caring for others.

The other book choice, *Going to the Sea Park*, is a book about Little Critter and his friends who are on a class trip to a Sea Park where they get to see fish and other sea creatures of all kinds of

shapes and sizes, they even get to feed and touch some of them. This is great for kids who love animals, especially aquatic ones.

“With the books we include tips for reading with children. Sharing tips and strategies with families is a way for us to share our ideas for encouraging more reading at home than just the book we give them each year” adds Marcinek.

The Books for Babes Project is a KSLA SV community outreach program with participation from the IU 16, Stayman Park Apartments, Susquehanna University Chapter of Kappa Delta Pi, retired teachers, and local book clubs and organiza-

tions. With holiday paper, scissors, and tape in hand, the Book Wrapping Party got underway in individual members’ homes. Volunteers collectively wrapped and labeled 940 books for the 2023 Books for Babes Project.

This year the Charles B. Degenstein Foundation provided a grant to support the worthwhile goal of a book in the hands of these early literacy learners. In addition, The Soroptimists of Montour County and Danville Rotary Club held fundraisers and KSLA SV hosted fundraisers at Wendy’s and at the Boscov’s Friends and Family event. All donations are appreciated and go toward the purchase of nearly 1,000 books annually. KSLA SV is grateful to be the recipient of these generous donations.

“Our organization continues to promote the joy of reading to children and their parents in our community. We are very proud of our Books for Babes program.” noted Lisa Mertz, co-president of KSLA Susquehanna Valley. “What better Christmas present is there than a book.”

Keystone State Literacy Association Susquehanna Valley is a local non-profit, volunteer organization whose goals are to develop literacy, provide instructional leadership, support professional development, and advocate literacy issues. Donations are being accepted for the Books for Babes project. Checks should be made payable to KSLA Susquehanna Valley and mailed to: Mary Keiser at 414 Green St., Mifflinburg, PA 17844.