

# New literacy program provides free books to Broome County kindergarteners

September 9, 2015

Broome County kindergarteners are getting a head start on their book collection, thanks to SUNY Broome's Center for Civic Engagement and the Family Reading Partnership.

The Center partnered with WSKG and the 4 County Library System to bring the Family Reading Partnership to Broome County. This fall, they launched a "Welcome to School" initiative that provided more than 2,000 children throughout Broome County with the book *How Rocket Learned to Read* when they registered for Kindergarten. Supporters for the project included the Binghamton Noon Rotary, the Hillcrest Rotary and several local PTA/PTOs, students from Vestal Middle School, and private donors.

Tad Hills' *How Rocket Learned to Read* features a dog named Rocket and his teacher, a bird. Kindergarten teachers will celebrate literacy by reading the book with their students this week.

"The ability to read, write and communicate effectively will define a child's future success in school and in life," said SUNY Broome Professor Lisa Strahley. "Studies show that literacy learning starts when a baby is born and therefore it is crucial for a child to be exposed to books early and often. Sadly, it is estimated that only 39% of parents nationally read to their children on a regular basis."

Participating school districts include Binghamton, Johnson City, Vestal, Maine-Endwell, Windsor, Whitney Point, Deposit, Chenango Valley, Chenango Forks, Susquehanna Valley and Harpursville.

A community-wide launch for the Family Reading Partnership will be held in October.

Interested in helping? Contact Lisa Strahley at [strahleyla@sunybroome.edu](mailto:strahleyla@sunybroome.edu). Donations to support this initiative can be sent to the Broome Community College Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 1017, Binghamton, NY 13902-1017, with the Family Reading Partnership specified as the fund.



**A page from “How Rocket Learned to Read,” a  
book being provided to Broome County children**

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