

# UNITED WAY LITERACY KITS VOLUNTEER TOOLKIT

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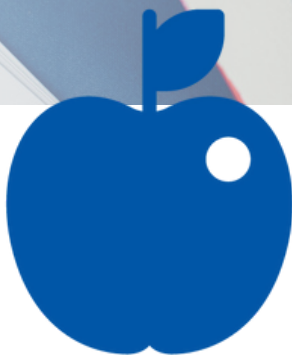
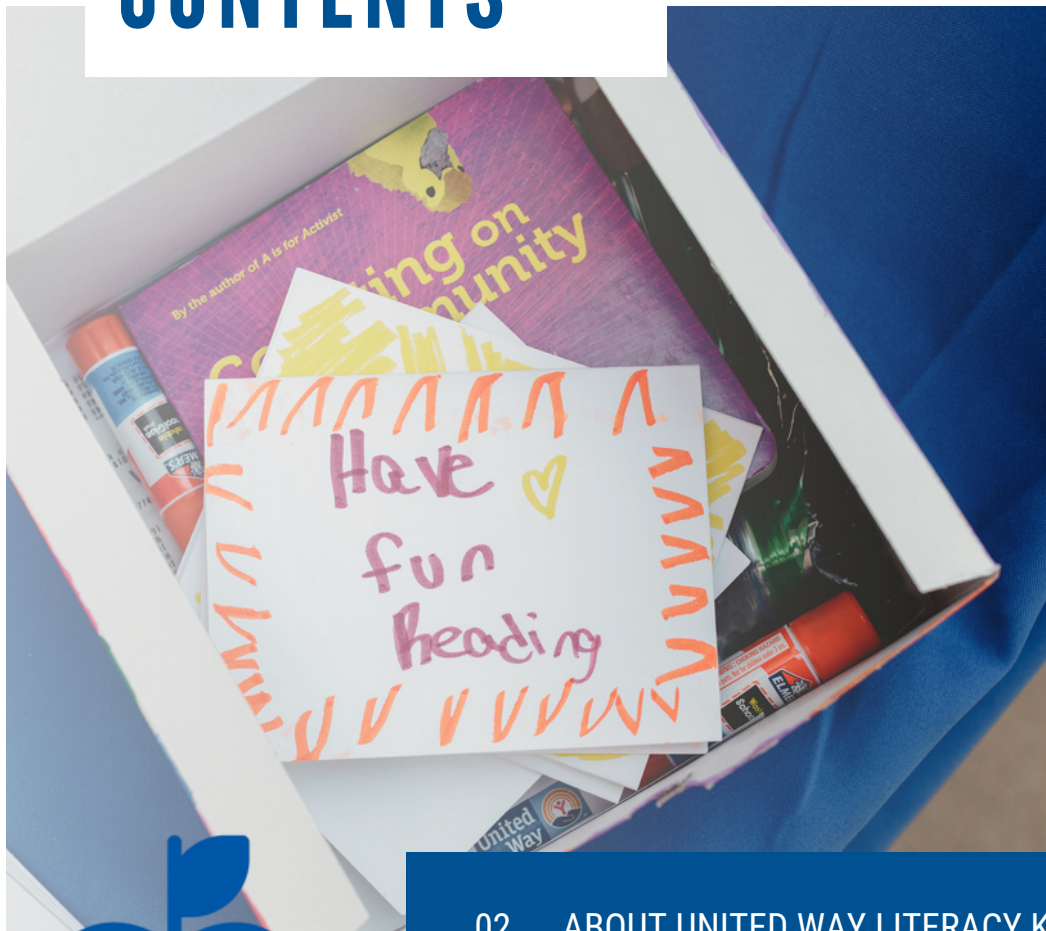
2023-2024



United Way of Greater  
Richmond & Petersburg



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# UNITED WAY LITERACY KITS OVERVIEW

Early learning resources are critical to ensuring children in the Greater Richmond and Petersburg region are ready for kindergarten and reading at grade-level by third grade.

## ABOUT UNITED WAY LITERACY KITS

### What's included in a United Way Literacy Kit?

A new, age-appropriate book or composition notebook, essential school supplies, and information to empower families around school readiness and literacy, inside of a backpack or colorfully decorated box.

### How many kits will United Way distribute?

United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg hopes to distribute more than 1,000 Literacy Kits to rising kindergartners and their families on Kindergarten Registration Day and throughout the year to early elementary students.

### What is the deadline for turning in Literacy Kits?

There will be three donation deadlines:

- **October 2, 2023** – Fall Distribution
- **February 26, 2024** – Spring Distribution
- **May 20, 2024** – Kindergarten Countdown Camp Distribution

Contact [volunteer@yourunitedway.org](mailto:volunteer@yourunitedway.org) to schedule a donation drop-off.

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

- **Host a Literacy Kit Drive.** Bring together friends, neighbors or colleagues to raise supplies and books and assemble them into Literacy Kits. Each kit will take about an hour to assemble and decorate.
- **Become a Literacy Kit Leader.** Any group donating \$1,500 or 100 completed kits will be recognized as a [Literacy Kit Leader](#) on our website, in our volunteer newsletter, on social media and in the Literacy Kits.
- **Donate completed kits.** Contributing United Way Literacy Kits is fun, easy and can be done from home. Use our [supply list](#) to collect and assemble the necessary supplies.
- **Volunteer with us.** United Way Literacy Kits are a year-round effort. We are always recruiting volunteers to help with upcoming phases. Email [volunteer@yourunitedway.org](mailto:volunteer@yourunitedway.org) to learn more.



# 2023-24 TIMELINE

AUGUST

## Literacy Kit Kick-Off

United Way begins another year of raising and distributing kits for young learners throughout our region.

AUGUST

## Literacy Kit Drive Meet-Up

Volunteers join United Way to learn more about raising supplies for Literacy Kits.

OCTOBER

## Fall Donation Deadline

Completed Literacy Kits must be dropped off to United Way by **October 2, 2023**. Delivery will occur in October.

MARCH

## Spring Donation Deadline

Completed Literacy Kits must be dropped off to United Way by **February 26, 2024**. Delivery will occur in March.

JUNE

## Kindergarten Countdown Camp (KCC) Donation Deadline

Completed Literacy Kits must be dropped off to United Way by **May 20, 2024**. Delivery will occur in June.

## Literacy Kit Drives

Volunteers collect books and school supplies for their own drives, which are then assembled into Literacy Kits.

ONGOING

## Literacy Kit Assembly

United Way coordinates and facilitates groups of volunteers on-site and off-site to assemble more than 1,000 Literacy Kits.

ONGOING



# SUPPLY LIST

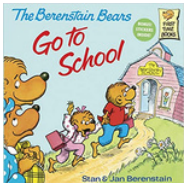
Every United Way Literacy Kit includes information to empower families and supplies to empower students to succeed in school. Take a look at our [Amazon Wish List](#) to purchase these as part of a drive or an at-home project. Each kit should contain the supplies below.



- A COLORFULLY DECORATED BOX **OR** A BACKPACK
- ONE GLUE STICK
- ONE BOX OF CRAYONS
- ONE PENCIL
- FIVE SHEETS OF CONSTRUCTION PAPER
- ONE PAIR OF BLUNT-NOSED SCISSORS
- ONE MANUAL PENCIL SHARPENER
- ONE TUB OF PLAYDOH
- ONE NEW, AGE-APPROPRIATE BOOK **OR** COMPOSITION NOTEBOOK
- ONE CARD OF ENCOURAGEMENT

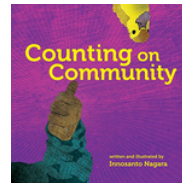


## SUGGESTED BOOKS TO DONATE



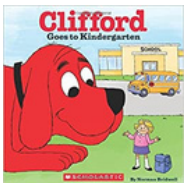
### THE BERENSTAIN BEARS GO TO SCHOOL

by Stan & Jan Berenstain



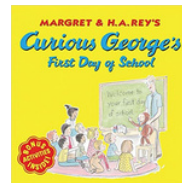
### COUNTING ON COMMUNITY

by Innosanto Nagara



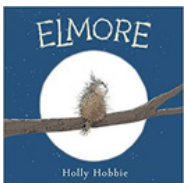
### CLIFFORD GOES TO KINDERGARTEN

by Norman Bridwell



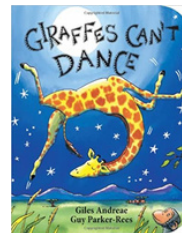
### CURIOUS GEORGE'S FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

by H.A. Rey, illustrated by  
Anna Grossnickle



### ELMORE

by Holly Hobbie



### GIRAFFES CAN'T DANCE

by Giles Andreae, illustrated by  
Guy Parker-Rees



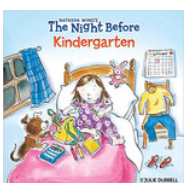
### KINDERGARTEN, HERE I COME!

by D.J. Steinberg, illustrated by  
Mark Chambers



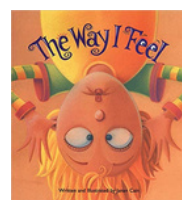
### A KISSING HAND FOR CHESTER RACCOON

by Audrey Penn, illustrated by  
Barbara L. Gibson



### THE NIGHT BEFORE KINDERGARTEN

by Natasha Wing, illustrated by  
Julie Durrell



### THE WAY I FEEL

by Janan Cain



# HOSTING A DRIVE

United Way volunteers from around the region who host Literacy Kit Drives are instrumental in ensuring thousands of young learners receive kits each year. We invite you to support this initiative by tapping into your personal and/or professional networks for donations.

## STEPS FOR HOSTING A SUCCESSFUL DRIVE

**1. Communicate with United Way.** Let us know about your drive by emailing [volunteer@yourunitedway.org](mailto:volunteer@yourunitedway.org). This will help us ensure we reach our committed number of kits. Count each supply item to ensure you can make enough Kits.

**2. Promote your drive.** Use our [social media posts](#), [customizable flyer](#) and [email template](#) to spread the word about your drive. Customize these to your audience and be specific about why you are collecting these materials.

**3. Stay organized.** Use online tools like our [Amazon Wish List](#) or SignUpGenius to keep your drive organized.

**4. Find a partner.** Consider partnering with Barnes & Noble on a [book fair](#). It's an easy way to direct your supporters, online and in-person, to preferred books and a percentage of the sale will go to United Way.

**5. Spread the word.** Start with your own personal or professional networks. Empower other advocates to share information about the drive and the importance of school readiness and literacy with others.

**6. Deliver supplies.** After your drive is complete, contact [volunteer@yourunitedway.org](mailto:volunteer@yourunitedway.org) to set up a time to drop off your donation. Donations are due to United Way by:

- **October 2, 2023** – Fall Distribution
- **February 26, 2024** – Spring Distribution
- **May 20, 2024** – Kindergarten Countdown Camp (KCC) Distribution



# PROMOTING YOUR DRIVE

We've created these communications templates to help you promote your United Way Literacy Kit Drive. Whether you are planning to request donations through your personal or professional networks, these templates are available for you to use, including a customizable flyer on page 8 of this toolkit.

## SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS



Kindergarten readiness is a critical step on the path to success for everyone. To help more children get ready for kindergarten, I am hosting a Literacy Kit Drive for @UnitedWayGRP. Support my drive with a donation of books or supplies today!  
[www.yourunitedway.org/literacykits](http://www.yourunitedway.org/literacykits)



We are partnering with @UnitedWayGRP to help prepare rising kindergarten students for school. Join us by donating supplies or books and sharing this post to help spread the word!  
[www.yourunitedway.org/literacykits](http://www.yourunitedway.org/literacykits)



United Way Literacy Kits empower families with information and empower children with the tools needed for a successful start to kindergarten. I am collecting supplies and books for this initiative in partnership with @UnitedWayGRP. Join me with a donation!  
[www.yourunitedway.org/literacykits](http://www.yourunitedway.org/literacykits)

## SAMPLE EMAIL TO SUPPORTERS

Dear [NAME],

I am excited to announce that we will be participating in a Literacy Kit Drive in partnership with **United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg**. We are collecting books and school supplies for United Way Literacy Kits which are distributed to thousands of young learners in our region each year. Each kit will include information to empower families and supplies to empower children to be ready for school and read on grade-level by third grade.

### We are asking for donations of the following supplies:

- A colorfully decorated box OR a backpack
- One glue stick
- One box of crayons
- One pencil
- Five sheets of construction paper
- One pair of blunt-nosed scissors
- One manual pencil sharpener
- One tub of playdoh
- One age-appropriate book in new condition OR composition notebook
- One card of encouragement

[Insert instructions specific to your group's assembly layout. Be as specific as possible.] I will coordinate bringing the completed kits to United Way.

I hope you will join me in this effort to help children succeed in school. Please let me know if you have any questions.

[SIGNATURE]





# SUPPORT YOUNG LEARNERS IN OUR COMMUNITY

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EARLY LEARNING RESOURCES ARE CRITICAL  
IN ENSURING CHILDREN ARE READY FOR  
KINDERGARTEN AND READING AT  
GRADE-LEVEL BY THIRD GRADE.

You can help young learners meet these critical steps to success with your support of **United Way Literacy Kits**. With your support, thousands of kits will be distributed to young learners in our region, each of which will contain information to empower families and supplies to empower children to be prepared for school.

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

## REQUESTED DONATIONS

## CONTACT

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# ORGANIZING AN ASSEMBLY PROJECT

If you are hosting a United Way Literacy Kit Drive, you can also coordinate a volunteer opportunity to put kits together. You can assemble books and school supplies into Ziploc bags or decorated boxes with a group or at home with family.

## PLANNING

1. Reach out to United Way at [volunteer@yourunitedway.org](mailto:volunteer@yourunitedway.org). Let us know how many kits you plan to raise so we can plan for distribution. We are here to assist you!
2. Ensure you have all the needed supplies for your project by holding a drive or purchasing items. Count each supply item to ensure you can make enough Kits!
3. Plan a date, time and space to hold your assembly project. Below are the deadlines for dropping off kits to United Way:
  - **October 2, 2023 – Fall Distribution**
  - **February 26, 2024 – Spring Distribution**
  - **May 20, 2024 - KCC Distribution**
4. Buy gallon Ziploc bags and/or boxes to decorate for each kit and refreshments for volunteers.
5. Send a reminder to your group the day before to represent your group or wear a United Way t-shirt.

## SETTING UP

1. Set up a table for sign-in sheets, refreshments and information about United Way.
2. Set up a long table or set of tables with all sorted supplies. Put gallon Ziploc bags and/or decorated boxes at one end. Make sure the supplies are accessible from both sides of the table(s) to allow for two assembly lines. If supplies are unsorted, designate a separate area for sorting the items into separate boxes.
3. Set out a box for unusable items. People may drop off supplies that were not requested for the kits. You can still donate these items to United Way, but please do not include them in the kits.
4. Use our [templates](#) to label all boxes and tables at your drive.



## DURING THE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

### 1. Welcome and share the impact.

- Thank you for sharing your time to improve lives in our community. United Way empowers individuals and addresses systemic problems to provide everyone with a clear path to success.
- Being prepared for kindergarten and reading on grade-level by third grade are key *Steps to Success* for everyone in our community.
- Today, we will be assembling Literacy Kits, which will be distributed to students in the 11 cities and counties United Way serves. Each kit gets one backpack or colorfully decorated box, one glue stick, one box of crayons, five sheets of construction paper, one pair of blunt-nosed scissors, one pencil sharpener, one pencil, one tub of Play-Doh, one book and one Card of Encouragement.



### 2. Provide instructions.

- (If applicable) First, we will sort the supplies. We have all the unsorted supplies in this area. You will see boxes labeled with each item for the kits. Sort through the supplies and put them in the appropriate box. If there are supplies that we are not using in our kits, or are not the correct item, you can put them in the box labeled "Unusable Supplies".
- Once that is complete, we will assemble the kits.
  - Take a Ziploc bag or box and go down the full line, putting supplies in your bag as you go.
  - Each kit gets one backpack or colorfully decorated box, one glue stick, one box of crayons, five sheets of construction paper, one pair of blunt-nosed scissors, one pencil sharpener, one pencil, one tub of Play-Doh, one book and one Card of Encouragement.
  - There are signs on the boxes/tables to help.
  - You can put the completed kits in a particular box or bin at the end of the line. (Having someone count as you go is helpful in knowing how many you all did.)
  - We will have two lines, one on each side of the table(s).
  - Once we're done, we will clean up and move the boxes together so they are ready to be delivered to United Way.

### 3. Ask if there are any questions.

### 4. Take pictures and guide volunteers who may need assistance.

## AFTERWARDS

Contact United Way at [volunteer@yourunitedway.org](mailto:volunteer@yourunitedway.org) to set up a time to drop off donations and share pictures from the event. Literacy Kit donations are due to United Way by: **October 2, 2023** – Fall Distribution, **February 26, 2024** – Spring Distribution, or **May 20, 2024** – KCC Distribution.

# DECORATING LITERACY KITS

Once you've collected the necessary supplies for your United Way Literacy Kit, you can assemble them in gallon Ziploc bags or in decorated boxes. Decorated Literacy Kits are exciting for students to receive and fun for you to create!

*A reader lives a  
the person who never reads*

"Many people, myself included, have never seen the sight of a book." – J.K. Rowling

"Once you have read a book you care about, some part of it is always with you." – Louis L'Amour

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR DECORATING YOUR LITERACY KITS

### 1. Obtain one box for each kit you plan to create.

We recommend this option:

- [50 pack](#)

2. **Gather decorating supplies.** We recommend paint, brushes, markers, construction paper, scissors, stickers, tape and glue to start.

3. **Assemble the flattened boxes.** Doing this before you start will make it easier to decorate.

4. **Decorate all four sides and the top.** Make sure your word choices are age-appropriate for a young reader, avoid political and religious messaging and make the boxes colorful, motivational and exciting!

### 5. Once your box dries, fill each Literacy Kit with the following items:

- Five sheets of construction paper (folded or rolled – it'll be a tight fit and that's okay!)
  - \*Putting the construction paper and book at the bottom will ensure the rest of the items are visible when the box is opened.
- One glue stick
- One box of crayons
- One pencil
- One pair of blunt-nosed scissors
- One manual pencil sharpener
- One tub of playdoh
- One card of encouragement
- One new, age-appropriate book OR composition notebook

### 6. Gather your finished kits into one area and take a photo with your group!

You can send photos to [volunteer@yourunitedway.org](mailto:volunteer@yourunitedway.org).

### 7. Contact United Way (or your group's Literacy Kit

Drive coordinator) to ensure kits are donated to United Way by

**October 2, 2023** – Fall Distribution, **February 26, 2024** – Spring Distribution, or **May 20, 2024** - KCC Distribution.



# BECOMING A LITERACY KIT LEADER

We need the support of volunteer groups to distribute thousands of kits to young learners in our region. Any group donating 100 completed kits or donating \$1,500 will be recognized as a United Way Literacy Kit Leader.

## RECOGNITION

As a United Way Literacy Kit Leader, you will receive:

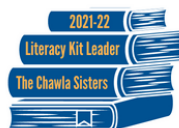
- Your group name and organization logo included on printed materials inside United Way Literacy Kits
- Your group name and organization logo featured on our [website](#)
- A shout out in our Monthly Newsletter which reaches more than 20,000 community members
- A shout-out on one of United Way's social media pages.

## 2023-24 PROCESS

If your donation is received between September 2023 and June 2024, your name/logo recognition will be in Kits that are distributed between September 2024 and June 2025. If your group anticipates reaching Literacy Kit Leader recognition level after the last donation deadline, please inform the Volunteer Coordinator in advance to ensure inclusion of your logo in Literacy Kit materials. To see our current timeline, visit [www.yourunitedway.org/earlyliteracy/](http://www.yourunitedway.org/earlyliteracy/).

Contact us at [volunteer@yourunitedway.org](mailto:volunteer@yourunitedway.org) to get started.

## A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR 2022-23 LITERACY KIT LEADERS





# SUPPORT LITERACY IN OUR COMMUNITY

## ACCESS TO LITERACY RESOURCES IS CRITICAL FOR LEARNERS OF ALL AGES.

You can help increase equitable access to books with your support of **United Way's Little Free Libraries**. These libraries help empower families and children while helping fill the gaps of virtual learning.

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

## REQUESTED DONATIONS

## CONTACT