



Local Partners Continue Summer Slide Reading Program

April 28, 2020 - United Way of Aroostook and Katahdin Trust Company have partnered for the fifth year to bring first graders summer reading materials. The program was started out to give children reading materials so they could maintain reading skills and avoid the “summer slide” that often comes with summer vacation. The program has been made possible by the support of Katahdin Trust Company.

"We are so proud to partner with United Way of Aroostook again this year on their Summer Slide Reading Program to provide hundreds of new books for students across The County," said Krista Putnam, Senior Vice President of Marketing at Katahdin Trust. "The program may look a little different during this challenging time, but the Bank is committed to helping children maintain their reading skills and keeping them engaged while being home."

Although COVID 19 has disrupted normal routines for businesses and schools, the Summer Slide Backpack Reading program will continue with a few changes. Books and bags will be distributed to each school, which will then get to the roughly 650 first-grade students through the schools' "work pick up/drop off" or lunch delivery programs rather than UWA and Katahdin personnel visiting each classroom to meet students and teachers.



In May of 2019, students from MSAD #24 in Van Buren enjoyed receiving their Summer Slide bags from United Way of Aroostook and Katahdin Trust.

When asked why the program is important to children, Karen DuBois, Principal at MSAD 24 in Van Buren, had this to say.

"The presentation of new, on level books to many students who feel the effects of a low socioeconomic status not only reinforces to these students the importance of reading, but also allows them access to books that they can take ownership of, instead of borrowing them from the school or library."

Education is a basic building block for a successful life. United Way of Aroostook is dedicated to improving the education and future of Aroostook County's youngest citizens through the Summer Slide Program as well as several other United Way programs like the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and Stuff the Bus.

"At United Way of Aroostook, we are committed to ending the cycle of generational poverty through better educational outcomes for our children," said Sarah Ennis, Executive Director of UWA. "The Summer Slide program helps to achieve that goal by helping to ensure children are reading at grade level when they enter the second grade. It also is a wonderful way to connect families and make reading a priority in the home."

For more information about United Way of Aroostook, please contact Sarah Ennis at sarah@unitedwayofarostook.org.

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