

United Way offers free books, reading event Saturday afternoon

By Judith Brown
Staff Writer

The United Way of Laurens County (UWLC) is looking for children this weekend as it hosts its first ever Interactive Story Time, an event planned for Saturday afternoon at Edmunds Hall on the campus of Presbyterian College.

"We have been posting this everywhere and flyers went out to the schools," said UWLC executive director Alesia Carter.

The Feb. 9 event is planned for 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday and it allows families with children of all ages to participate for either a portion or the entire Interactive Story Time.

"We are hoping for a lot of children to come and get a free book and tour the City of Clinton fire truck and get to participate in the different interactive readings, which will go on throughout the afternoon," Carter said. "We will have Paw Patrol characters here, and we are encouraging children to come dressed as their favorite book character. We'll have a costume contest for different age groups."

The importance of literacy and reading for young children has always been a priority for the United Way of Laurens County, Carter said, so when the Dolly Parton Imagination Library funding sources dried up, the board and staff decided to offer this Interactive Story Time to help show children of all ages how fun reading can be.

With the Imagination Library, the 0-4-year-old children who were signed up received free books in the mail from the Dolly Parton Imagination Library foundation, Carter said, but the program required Laurens County United Way to cover all the postage for each book sent to participating Laurens County children.

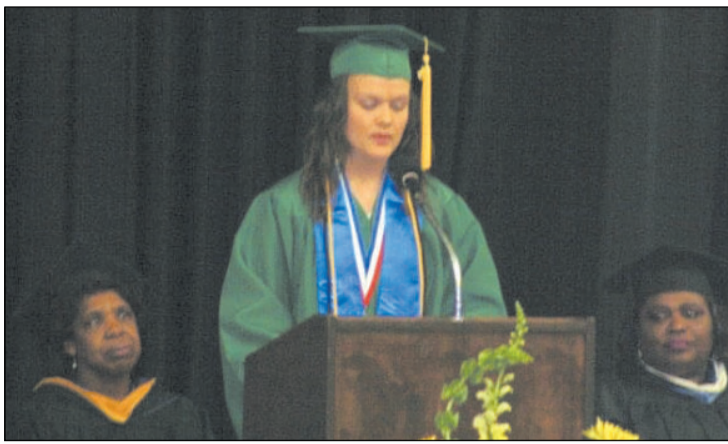
"We had someone who funded most of the postage and when we lost that funding source, we tried to keep it going for a year but it was costing our United Way from \$34,000 to \$36,000 a year," Carter said. "But literacy is so important

so we are trying this Interactive Story Time and we will be able to reach a much wider range of ages."

UWLC volunteer Aryele Redmond and PC student and UWLC intern Sage Hinkleman have put in most of the work, and they're bringing in other volunteer

narrators and readers from the community. The non-profit has also been collecting books hoping to have plenty of children's books to give away Saturday afternoon.

"We think this will be a lot of fun for the children," Carter said. "And it's a free event for the families."



Mary Kate Black

Alumni Spotlight: Mary Kate Black

The District invites you to meet some Laurens alumni who have joined us as teachers and faculty of Laurens County School District 55. Mary Kate Black has taken some time to look back on memories from high school, favorite teachers and faculty, and give us an opportunity to learn more about her and her accomplishments thus far.

The dedication and loyalty of Laurens alumni in our school district are legendary. Laurens alumni make extraordinary things happen in our classrooms and schools. The District is grateful to have them back with us impacting the future leaders of America.

What year did you graduate? I graduated in 2013

What is your overriding memory from high school? Being constantly involved with student council, doing service projects and attending conferences representing LDHS.

Who was your favorite teacher/faculty member at the high school? Brooke Yarbrough, she pushed me, listened to me, and challenged me. She is one of my good friends.

What activities were you involved in at the high school? Student Council, Marching Band, Beta Club, NHS, Soccer

Details of further/higher education: Presbyterian College '16 – BA Political Science; Teaching Certification '17; LSU- Expected Spring of '19, M. ED in Educational Leadership

Where do you teach? What subject and grade level do you teach?

Laurens District 55 High School — 9th grade World Geography and AVID 10th grade.

Tell us about yourself- family, where you live, etc. I married an LDHS alumnus, Collin Black '13, who went to Wofford College '17 and we live in Simpsonville.

What do you think your greatest accomplishment is thus far? I believe my greatest accomplishment so far is joining Teach for America in Baton Rouge, La. and serving as a teacher for two years in an inner city school.

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