

ST. CHARLES COUNTY

Libraries enlist parents in literacy effort

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The St. Charles City-County Library District is trying to give children a head start on reading.

The district earlier this month distributed 1,000 early literacy kits to children through United Services, Crisis Nursery and Sts. Joachim and Ann Care Service. The kits included three books geared toward pre-readers, plus information and resources for parents.

The books are designed to be read to children by parents, helping them build a foundation for literacy.

"The more reading interaction you do with your child before they are able to read, the easier it will be for them to learn, and they will begin reading at a higher level," said Kristin Williams, planning and development coordinator for the library district.

The early literacy kits are a program of the Library Foundation, a nonprofit organization that raises money to support the

library district's building projects and other initiatives.

This is the first program funded through the Library Foundation's Imagine Campaign, an annual fundraising drive that started in May. The drive, which has collected \$21,000 toward its \$25,000 goal this year, also finances Books to You, a program that delivers library materials to homebound people and sets up mini libraries in senior centers and nursing homes.

Though the first round of early literacy kits targeted children of low-income families, Williams said the kits are meant for everyone.

"Our goal is to get a kit in the hands of every parent or caregiver in St. Charles County," she said. "Ultimately, we'd like to work with hospitals to get them in the hands of every new mother."

The St. Charles Sunrise Rotary, Cotleville/Weldon Spring Rotary and Rotary International District 6060 donated about \$2,200 to the early literacy project. American UTE supported the project with a \$2,000 donation, Williams said.



Blanca Koch checks out a book in her early literacy kit given to her by Lisa Dunham from the St. Charles City-County Library District.

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