



MEDIA RELEASE

OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR GLENN JACOBS

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Mayor Jacobs' One Million Hour Reading Goal Achieved

Top Readers to be celebrated at a Polar Express event on Wednesday, Dec. 20

Knoxville, Tenn. -- December 9 marked the end of Mayor Glenn Jacobs's 2023 one million hour reading challenge through his Read City initiative. Together with the help of the Knox County Public Library, Knox County Schools, Knoxville Education Foundation and many other groups, more than 40,000 people read and logged for a combined 1.3 million hours, exceeding the goal by one-third for a second year.

To celebrate this year's achievement, Mayor Jacobs and Knoxville Dream Center have invited the top readers in first through third grades to join them on the Polar Express for Reader's Theater performed by the Oakes Family. The event will take place at 1:00 p.m. on December 20 in the Barnes and Noble parking lot in Suburban Shopping Center (8029 Kingston Pike). This is the third year that the Knoxville Dream Center has celebrated Read City's top readers with a trip to the North Pole.

The 2023 Read City: All Together Now! was divided into four parts:

- Find Your Voice (Jan 24 - May 1)
- One Book Read City (May 1-19)
- Feel the Beat (May 20-August 5)
- Let's Play (September 30-December 9)

Participants logged as individuals or as part of a group and earned prizes for reaching reading goals.

Mayor Jacobs started the Read City program with the Library in 2018 to encourage families to make reading a priority and to support Knox County Schools in raising the third-grade reading rate. Knox County Schools recently reported a rise in the reading rate to 43.5%, an increase over last year's rate of 38.4%.

"I'm pleased to see improvement in the third-grade reading rate," Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs said. "There are a lot of factors that go into that important increase, and I believe the community's support of literacy through programs like Read City is one of the positive contributors. It's exciting to see these gains for our children."

The 2024 Read City Challenge will be announced at 4:00 on January 30 in the Bijou Theatre. The public is invited to attend this free event.

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