



NEWS

Northern New Jersey Business Volunteer Council

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Business Volunteers Kick Off Literacy Initiative

North Jersey: More than 50 employee volunteers from Northern New Jersey Business Volunteer Council (BVC) member companies kicked off a literacy initiative on Tuesday, March 2, 2010 by reading to children enrolled in Head Start, the YMCA and other pre-school programs. The campaign kickoff coincided with “Read Across America”, a program sponsored by the National Education Association designed to get kids excited about reading. March 2 is also Theodore “Dr. Seuss” Geisel’s birthday.

The event marked the beginning of **Books in a Bag**, an annual campaign sponsored by the BVC. Books in a Bag is a family literacy initiative created by the BVC ten years ago in response to a need identified by Bergen County Head Start, a federally-funded early childhood education program for very low-income families. Because these families are struggling to pay for rent, utilities and food, books are far down on the list of must-have items. Consequently, most children in the program have never owned a book of their own and very few read or are read to at home. To address the problem, employee

volunteers at participating companies organize a collection of new children's books, then deliver bags filled with five books, a bookmark and a reading list to children in Head Start programs throughout the state. In just ten years, more than 68,000 books have been distributed to 13,000 children.

The BVC is sponsored by the Volunteer Center of Bergen County. For further information on membership, call Tess Tomasi at 201-489-9454 Ext. 114 or visit www.njibvc.org.

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