



United Way of
Cumberland County



PRESS RELEASE

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United Way of Cumberland County Launches Cumberland County Literacy Council to Tackle Literacy Crisis

Fayetteville, N.C. (June 6, 2025) – United Way of Cumberland County is proud to announce the launch of the Cumberland County Literacy Council, a collaborative effort uniting public and private partners to address one of the community's most critical challenges: literacy.

The mission of the Literacy Council is to foster literacy and learning across generations by meeting families where they are and embracing their diverse needs. Through meaningful partnerships, the Council is committed to creating opportunities that transform lives and strengthen our community.

"Illiteracy is an economic development issue," said Fayetteville Mayor Mitch Colvin. "When we improve literacy rates, we empower individuals, strengthen our workforce, and improve the overall well-being of our region."

Literacy is a foundational skill that directly impacts a person's future. A study from The Ohio State University found that children who are read to daily hear about 78,000 more words per year than their peers. Over five years, that adds up to more than 1.4 million words, significantly influencing language development and long-term academic success.

First Initiative: Imagination Library StoryTime

The Council's first program, Imagination Library StoryTime, launched in March 2025 in partnership with Cumberland County Public Libraries, Fort Bragg Library and Partnership for Children of Cumberland County. This weekly program is open to families with children ages 0–5 and is designed to spark a love of reading through engaging and interactive story sessions.

“Our goal is to foster a lifelong passion for reading that empowers children to dream big and reach their full potential,” said Scott Embry, Executive Director of United Way of Cumberland County. “Strong readers become strong students. By investing in literacy today, we’re building a stronger future for our community.”

“Literacy is our problem,” said Dr. Stanley Wearden, President of Methodist University. “When we work together as a community, we can make lasting change.”

Get Involved

The Literacy Council is currently seeking a core group of volunteers with experience in education, including educators, retired educators, librarians, retired librarians, and education students. This founding group will play a vital role in shaping the Council's future by helping to establish best practices and onboarding processes for future volunteers.

If you're passionate about early literacy and want to help lay the foundation for long-term community impact, we invite you to join us.

Additionally, if your organization is hosting a literacy-related event, we'd love to help promote it. Community partners can submit events for inclusion on our Literacy Council Events Calendar. We are also welcoming new donor partners to support and grow this vital work.

To learn more, sign up to volunteer, or submit an event, visit www.cc-literacycouncil.org.

United Way of Cumberland County

Our mission is to improve lives across Cumberland County by strategically raising and investing resources that successfully impact prioritized human service and health needs while working in effective and innovative partnerships with direct provider agencies. To learn more visit <https://www.unitedway-cc.org/>

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