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Kids Celebrate Reading Success with a Party in the Park

Cincinnati (Aug. 11, 2010) Several dozen Hamilton County foster children who have accomplished reading goals this summer will be celebrated Friday, Aug. 13, with a party at Mt. Airy Park that will feature food, music, fun activities and rewards for their hard work.

The Department of Job and Family Services' Kids in School Rule! team will host an appreciation event for children who read at least one book each month of the summer. The kindergarten through 8th grade students – all participants in a Kids in School Rule! pilot program designed to promote academic success among foster children -- were challenged at the beginning of the summer to stay on track with their reading while on break from school. Many met the challenge!

The event, scheduled from noon to 2 p.m., will include pizza, drinks, balloon animals, face painting and a magic show. Gift bags will be awarded to the children. The bags include certificates for ice cream, candy, books and Cincinnati Reds tickets!

Kids in School Rule! is a collaborative effort at 22 participating Cincinnati Public schools to help foster children achieve academic success. The program is expected to result in lower truancy, fewer interruptions in school days for students, more promotions to higher grade levels, more graduates and – ultimately – less substance abuse, crime and other social problems associated with educational failure.

Foster children are at-risk of academic failure because they've been abused and neglected and face instability in their home and school life. They often must move to different schools as they await permanent placement and are faced with outside counseling and other obstacles that threaten academic success.

Kids in School Rule! is built upon a spirit of cooperation to maximize resources, implement best practice principles and develop innovative supports and programming that lead to school stability and success for youth in agency care.

A Job and Family Services caseworker and Cincinnati Public Schools liaison from each of the 22 schools monitor and attend to the educational needs of each student, lining up additional supports as needed. The two parties work together to provide a nurturing framework for the students and establish a structure for effective communication. The school district agrees to provide needed support and make reasonable efforts to keep students in school, and the child welfare agency agrees to minimize school disruptions so school attendance and achievement are top priorities for these students.

The members of the collaborative behind the pilot program are: the Job and Family Services Department, Cincinnati Public Schools, the Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati, Hamilton County Juvenile Court, the Guardian ad Litem Division of the Hamilton County Office of the Public Defender and ProKids.

The 22 participating schools are:

Aiken College & Career
John P. Parker
Rees E. Price Academy
Robert A. Taft High School
Silverton Paideia
Western Hills Design Tech
Western Hills University
Woodford Paideia
Woodward Career Tech
Bond Hill Academy
Carson
Covedale
Hughes Center
Hughes STEM High School
Oyler
Pleasant Hill Academy
Rockdale Academy
Roll Hill Academy
Roselawn Condon
Westwood
Withrow International
Withrow University

Thanks to the following sponsors for helping with the prizes, activities and refreshments: Papa Johns Pizza, bigg's, Half Price Books in Kenwood, United Dairy Farmers, Dairy Queen, the Cincinnati Reds, Kroger Co., Walmart, New York Life, Wireless Plus 1 and Scho-lan Entertainment.

About Hamilton County's Department of Job and Family Services

The Department of Job and Family Services administers federal, state and local programs for those in need. The Department helps with local child protection, elderly protection, child care, child support enforcement, workforce development, cash assistance, food assistance and Medicaid disbursement. Servicing Hamilton County since 1947, the Department helps hundreds of thousands each year and is accredited by the Council on Accreditation, an international, independent, not-for-profit child and family service accrediting organization.