



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 25, 2024

Over 700 guest readers to share their love of reading with 13,775

Pre-K - 5th-grade students during Better Basics Reads

The leading education nonprofit will host read-alouds in 39 partner schools

In its most significant annual volunteer engagement event, local children's literacy nonprofit Better Basics will mobilize 717 volunteer guest readers in classrooms across our community to elevate the importance of reading. During these powerful, synchronous reading events, volunteers read a pre-selected, age-appropriate book in every pre-kindergarten through fifth-grade classroom of the 39 participating partner schools. Every student receives a copy of the book for their home libraries.

This year's celebrity guest readers include Mayor Randall Woodfin, Birmingham Poet Laureate Salaam Green, Birmingham Police Chief Scott Thurmond, US District Attorney Prim Escalona, Miss Black Alabama USA DeAysia Thomas, and Tuggle graduates Judge Houston Brown and Jefferson Drew. They will read at the designated media school, Tuggle Elementary School, on Thursday, May 2. **We invite the media to join us.**

Where: Tuggle Elementary School at 412 12th Ct N, Birmingham, AL 35204

When: Thursday, May 2, 12:00 - 1:15 pm

Details: Celebrity guest readers arrive at 12:15 pm; select readers will be available for interview at 12:40 pm.

Better Basics Reads, formerly known as Birmingham Reads, will reach the most students in its 10-year history as the series of in-school, community-wide reading events expands its reach. The renamed event impacts schools beyond Birmingham as additional districts and independent schools participate. This year, Birmingham City Schools (May 2), Fairfield City Schools (May 7), Bessemer City Schools (May 9), i3 Academy (May 14), and Restoration Academy (May 21) will host Better Basics Reads.

"For thirty years, Better Basics has been a driving force in advancing children's literacy in our community," says Catherine Goudreau, Executive Director of Better Basics. "We appreciate the partnership of school leaders and involvement of our volunteers, many of whom return year after year, to ensure every classroom enjoys a special guest reader."

Volunteers give an hour (**12:15 - 1:15 p.m.**) to model the importance of reading for students. Guest readers share about themselves and engage in a book discussion. While students benefit from exposure to various readers, volunteers enjoy directly impacting local students and being a part of this community-wide literacy movement.

More than 20 organizations will provide guest readers, including The Junior League of Birmingham, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama, Alabama Power, AmFirst, Birmingham Public Library, KPMG, and O'Neal Industries.

Guest reader Carrie Self leads a team from Tacala Companies and says, "The experience of being a guest reader for Better Basics Reads is so rewarding! My favorite year was when I was assigned to read only a couple of chapters of a 5th-grade mystery book – we were all left on a cliffhanger at the end of the time - but the kids were so engaged that the teacher let them finish the whole book that day after I left!"

Tuggle Elementary School serves as the featured school partner for Better Basics Reads 2024. The school was selected for its commitment to improving literacy and its rich historical significance in our community. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the death of Carrie A. Tuggle, a social worker and voting rights advocate who opened the Tuggle Institute and School in 1903. The school served children from Dynamite Hill during our city's darkest days of segregation. Today, Tuggle Elementary School carries on the proud tradition of Carrie A. Tuggle and the residents of this historic area of Birmingham, where academic excellence is upheld and strong leadership qualities are instilled.

To learn more about Better Basics, visit www.BetterBasics.org/reads-media.

Better Basics is a Birmingham, Alabama non-profit organization promoting children's reading and mathematics literacy. Better Basics delivers a comprehensive range of research-based intervention and enrichment programs to children from birth to 18 years in Central Alabama through collaboration with public schools, partners, and community organizations in underserved areas. We also provide books directly to Birmingham communities. Better Basics is an agency of the United Way of Central Alabama.

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