



MEDIA RELEASE

Public Relations

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Date: June 20, 2007

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Jackson State and Progressive MB Church Unite Through Literature

More than 150 Georgetown community residents have joined Jackson State University's efforts to promote reading in west Jackson. A partnership with Progressive Missionary Baptist Church made possible "Families Uniting Through Literature," a program that encourages reading for the entire family.

Children from pre-kindergarten through high school and their parents will discuss topics from books for children and young adults. According to Dr. Buddy Fish, a JSU assistant professor of elementary and early childhood education, research shows that dialogue in the home plays an important part in students attaining proficient reading skills. The FUTL project will encourage positive dialogue between parents and children.

"We have had several family reading programs and found that the adults in the homes are not participating with the children in reading and talking about the books," says Fish. "This program will address the issues, whether they are reading skills or attitudes toward reading."

Through this pilot program, graduate students in JSU's Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education will visit families weekly to help with reading and social issues.

"Increased crime, school dropout rates and teen pregnancy made it apparent that there was a dire need for more academic assistance and social guidance in the Georgetown community," says Rosaline McCoy, youth program coordinator at Progressive. "The families of the Georgetown community and surrounding areas are benefiting significantly from this blossoming relationship that I am confident will become a trust mark for many of them for years to come."

The First Book Campus Advisory Board of Jackson State will contribute nearly \$4,000 to purchase new books so that participating children can begin their own home libraries. Sponsors hope the books will be a source of family discussion. The themes of all the books are emotional literacy – knowing about feelings, choosing appropriate behaviors and setting noble goals.

Summer sessions will include book discussions led by the graduate students and presentations by Dr. Rhythm, a fun character created by Fish to teach children. The graduate students also will provide door prizes and healthy snacks for the participants.

A complete summary of the program is available at <http://www.jsums.edu/~announcements/FUTL.pdf>. For more information, contact Fish at (601) 979 -3410, dfish@dr-rhythm.com or McCoy at (601) 331-9914, RMcCoy@mc.edu.