

SUPER READERS UNITE IS A HUGE SUCCESS



Above: Maury City's ambassador Tammy Womack, fighting off the sinking sun, was helping students at the Play-Doh table.



Above: This Superhero sign greeted everyone who came to the BCBS Healthy Place park.

By Ron Barry

If readers are indeed Superheroes, then the youngest generation of Crockett County elementary students may soon outshine the Avengers and the Justice League.

Thursday evening at the Blue Cross Blue Shield Healthy Place park next to the high school, the Save The Children organization hosted its first-ever event for Crockett students, a superhero-themed game night designed to promote character development in the kids and literacy in their homes.

Titled "Super Readers Unite!," the program featured crafts, games, a photo booth, and a book giveaway for all the children and families that attended. Headed by Save The Children's lead associate Sandy Arnold, the event featured the leadership of STC's three reading ambassadors in the Crockett school district: Friendship's Ashlee Hall, Gadsden's Cassie Pearson, and Maury City's Tammy Womack, who were all wearing superhero capes as they made the rounds.

As families entered the park, each was directed to a ticket station where children were given a superhero mask, a glow bracelet, and a game punch card ticket. They all then went to the various stations throughout the facility until their ticket tasks were completed, at which time they received a snack and a free book. Several high school students were assisting at the different tables.

"This entire program is about using reading to build positive character traits in our students and to increase the involvement of parents in the home, so that literacy is encouraged throughout the whole family," said Hall, in between helping students at various stations. "Save The Children has been very generous to us with book donations in all of our schools, and we'll even be giving books away for free during the high school's homecoming parade next week."

Womack was mostly helping kids at the Play-Doh table, where they would draw a slip of paper, read the word it contained, and then try to make whatever the word was with the Play-Doh.

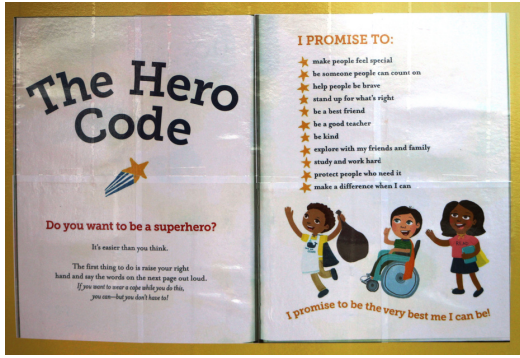
Pearson was spreading her usual joy around the entire park while taking pictures on her phone camera to preserve the memories for as many kids as she could. The three reading ambassadors have been instrumental in helping large numbers of children get more involved in obtaining books and encouraging them to read outside of school hours as well.

"We had families getting here even before we were set up," Hall said, excited about the success of the event. "This is a great turnout, and it's something we hope will continue as we try to keep the students interested in reading as much as they can."



Above: The best part of the night was watching the kids, like these two (above) in the photo booth area. Below, here are a bunch of other fun-loving Super Readers...

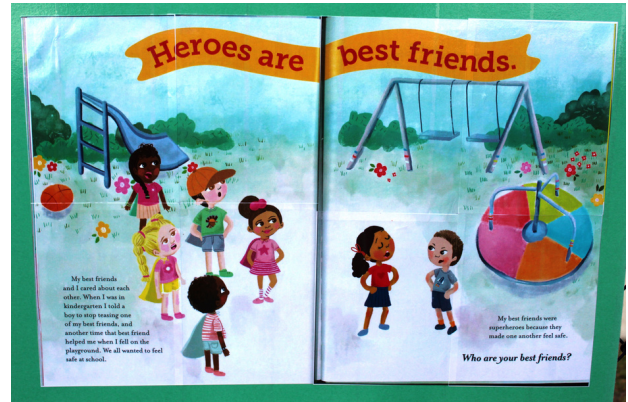
Below: The Hero Code was on display as the final task for students to complete.



Above: Superman made a special guest appearance.



Below: Emily White helped students with literacy games.



Above: Here's a sample page from the free book given away at the end of the evening.



Left: Friendship Elementary's Save the Children reading ambassador Ashlee Hall helps a child with a craft project.



Above: Gadsden Elementary's ambassador Cassie Pearson shows her joy as a student completes one of the games played.