



P.O. Box 365  
New Milford, PA 18834

Phone: (570) 465-3868  
Fax: (570) 465-7605

*Helping Children Do Well*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Robin Cobb

### United Way of Susquehanna County Launches Real Men Read

New Milford, PA, October 25, 2017- “Skit skat scoodle doot. Flip flop flee. Everybody running up the coconut tree” could be heard through the halls of Elk Lake Elementary School as the book Chicka Chicka Boom Boom was shared with Kindergarten students during the launch of United Way of Susquehanna County’s (UWSC) new signature program, **Real Men Read**. The program launched on October 10, 2017 and will take place four more times this school year.

**Real Men Read** connects volunteer male readers, **MENTors** from the community with Kindergarten classes in schools to encourage reading and learning in young children, and boost early grade reading success. **MENTors** make a commitment to read to the class for an hour once a month, are trained to interact and lead the children in discovery, and must undergo a security clearance to work with the children. At the end of each reading visit each Kindergarten students receives a copy of the book read to add to their home library.

Why **MENTors**? With 81% of children under the age of 5 living in economically at-risk situations coupled with an increase in female led single parent households in Susquehanna County UWSC determined that this was a worthwhile program. Typically, teachers are female and so many children do not have a male mentor/positive influencer in their lives promoting the importance of literacy. **Real Men Read** helps these children to see men valuing education and reading.

This is a great opportunity for students to have a positive role model who values education and encourages the love of reading. From K-3rd grade students are learning to read, and from 3rd grade on students need to be able to read to learn. According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation students who don’t read proficiently by third grade are four times more likely to leave high school without a diploma than proficient readers.

We can prepare our kids for a lifetime of success in reading and learning simply by sharing books, encouraging literacy skills, and model the importance of reading.

UWSC will be introducing **Real Men Read** to the Blue Ridge School District in the fall of 2018. It is UWSC’s goal to bring this program to all Susquehanna County school districts depending on funding and volunteer support.

The program is made possible through community donations and funding from Southwestern Energy.

To volunteer or learn more about **Real Men Read** please visit [www.UnitedWayofSusquehannaCounty.org](http://www.UnitedWayofSusquehannaCounty.org).

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Doug Sivers reads Chicka Chicka Boom Boom to Kindergarten class



Real Men Read Volunteers (left to right): Jamie Orlandini (P&G), Doug Sivers (Montrose Methodist Church), Terri Allen (Johnson,Lauder & Savidge), Patrick O'Brien (Retired), Zach Morahan (Coughlin & Gerhart), Dave Palmer (Retired), Rich Mackey (Retired), Kim Smith (NBT Bank), Duane Naugle (Student), Bryce Powers (Rain for Rent), Brian Lione (Lione Heritage Consulting), and Brian Manzer (Rain for Rent). Missing: Tammy Bonnice (Williams) and Louis Duarte (Rain for Rent). Missing from photo, Louis Duarte (Rain for Rent) and Christopher Stephens (P&G).