



of Susquehanna County

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*Helping Children Do Well*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **United Way of Susquehanna County Gears Up for 2nd Year of Real Men Read**

“I like you the way you are.” Those are words we all need to hear, and they were heard through the halls of Elk Lake and Blue Ridge Elementary School as the book *Corduroy* was shared with kindergarten students during United Way of Susquehanna County’s (UWSC), **Real Men Read** program’s first reading visit of the school year. The program originally launched during the 2017-18 school year at Elk Lake Elementary School. This year the program will serve kindergarten students at Elk Lake and Blue Ridge Elementary Schools and is welcomed by teachers, parents and children alike.

**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 reading success. **MENTors** make a commitment to read to the class for an hour once a month. At the end of each reading visit each kindergarten student receives a copy of the book read to add to their home library. The readers have been trained to interact with and lead the children in discovery. (Each reader must undergo a security clearance to work with the children.)

Why **MENTors**? 81% of children under the age of 5 are living in economically at-risk situations coupled with an increase in female led single parent households in Susquehanna County. Experience has shown this to be a worthwhile program. Teachers are typically female so many children do not have a male mentor/positive influencer in their lives promoting the importance of literacy. **Real Men Read** 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 children for a lifetime of success in reading and learning simply by sharing books, encouraging literacy skills, and modeling the importance of reading.

It is UWSC’s goal to bring **Real Men Read** to all Susquehanna County school districts, but this will depend on funding and volunteer support.

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

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Jamie Orlandini reads Corduroy to kindergarten students at Elk Lake Elementary.



Back Row: Rich Mackey, Tony Price, Dahmel Griffin Middle Row: Matt Markarian, Bob Welch, Dave Palmer, Cpl. Jeffrey Burman, Tpr. Tim Walker, Tpr. Brandon Cortazar, Stephen English, Bryce Powers, Jamie Orlandini, Front Row: Sue DiCola, Kim Smith, Megan Shupp, and Theresa Allen.

Missing: Thomas Chamberlain, Sgt. Michael Joyce, Brian Lione, Brian Manzer, Zachary Morahan, and Timothy Oakley.

