



### Ferst Foundation Reaches all Kinds of Families

*By Sheila Reed*

“My kids have always been voracious readers, and Ferst Foundation had much to do with that,” declared Rev. Jeff Jackson as we sat in his very comfortable office at St. Margaret’s Episcopal Church. “We

are vacationing in Virginia for Spring Break this year, and all four of them are collecting books to take along on the trip.” His oldest son Tai (14) prefers science fiction, daughter Bronwyn (12) adores fantasy books about Warrior Cats, Liam (10) devours books based on mythology and a character named Percy Jackson, and Grey (8) loves books about basketball and basketball players. Their story is a testament to the influence that the Ferst Foundation can have on families.

Jackson, who has been at St. Margaret’s since November of 2017, “is passionate about youth and children’s ministry as well as ministry to the marginalized—the poor, the prisoner, the hungry, the outcast” according to the church’s website. When he and his wife Molly lived near Pine Mountain, GA, friends suggested that they register their two children (then 2 and 4 years old) to receive the books Ferst Foundation offers. Memories of the little ones’ excitement when they received mail in the form of new books brought a smile to his face. “This program sets kids up for school success and encourages new parents to foster literacy in the home.” He pointed out the variety of subjects and genres of books selected by the Foundation. Children witness their parents reading for pleasure without the pressure of tests they often feel with school assignments. I was happy to receive this assignment for the Ferst Foundation newsletter. How often does one get the opportunity to spend a few quiet moments discussing the importance of young reading experiences with a fellow reading enthusiast and supporter of inspiring young people to dream and create through literacy?

Thank you, Father Jeff.



### Conversations Count

The Early Childhood Literacy grant program, Conversations Count, is in full swing in our communities. The final curriculum materials were produced in December and we have begun holding sessions for new parents in multiple venues.

First, Communities in Schools under the leadership of Cynthia Langley has provided this curriculum to all the students in their program at all area high schools. The number of presenters is six and the number of participants is 15.

Second, Karen Wild of Carrollton City Schools and teams from their school district have shared the program in multiple locations with plans for more sessions. The new parents who receive this curriculum learn the importance of engaging with babies from newborn through early childhood.

The importance of talking with babies can not be overstated. Read more about this work in Karen Wild’s article. >>



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\$160,099.19

TOTAL MONEY  
RAISED

\$113,967.83

TOTAL SPENT  
ON BOOKS

\$42,739

TOTAL BOOKS  
MAILED

4,498

TOTAL CHILDREN  
SERVED



# More Than \$27,000 for Childhood Literacy

More than 240 women attended the fourth annual *Fashion FERST Luncheon and Fashion Show* at Sunset Hills Country Club in Carrollton where Dillard's of Douglasville presented the latest fall fashion trends modeled by local community members.

The fashion show held annually each October is the primary fundraiser for Carroll FERST Readers. Thanks to the contribution of donors, the event raised \$27,000 that will go toward providing free books every month for children from birth to age five.

The event featured a time-limited auction where attendees bid on 24 birdhouse centerpieces. The first 24 to raise their bid numbers won the birdhouses! There was also a live auction of a painting by Lisa Upchurch Moore.

The presenting sponsors for 2018 were Susan Stone and Steve Adams. The show's models were Wanda Calhoun, Sally Carden, Anna Clifton, Melissa Cole, Melina Douthit, Ali Garrett, Cason Hightower, Rosa Kinard, Cherri LeBlanc, Charlotte Lewis and Paula Waters. The co-chairs were Susan Fleck and Michelle Morgan.

save the date

FASHION  
**Ferst**

10.16.19 / NOON



For more information, including sponsorships, contact: Paige Colpini at 770-315-5334 or Leanna Schulenburg at 404-423-2508.

## Literacy Today

"Literacy is the foundation of progress and success in society, yet 32 million people in the United States struggle with literacy skills," Karen Wild, director of School Improvement said. "The ability to read and write provides limitless opportunities, but lacking those skills greatly hinders a person's potential and prospects. Low literacy has individual consequences such as lower quality of life and societal consequences such as slow economic growth. Knowing this, we are determined to do something about it here in our hometown."

Wild said community partnerships are essential in this effort. The Ferst Readers Conversations Count Program is used to support parent and community understanding of both the need for literacy development and the strategies to be used by parents, caregivers and others who partner with children birth to five. Each of the programs are led by school literacy specialists and teachers in the Aspiring Leaders program, and receive support from appropriate community partners for particular programs:

**PreK Parent University** - Carrollton City Schools Teaching and Learning Team developed curriculum for incorporating literacy within and outside of the home. During the six-session program, Carrollton Elementary teachers and paraprofessional held workshops where parents and children were shown strategies to use at home to develop literacy skills and language. All materials, supplies and books were given to the families to use at home following each weekly session. The district provided transportation and meals for the program.

**Wash, Dry and READ:** In a partnership between St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, Coin Laundry, and Carrollton City Schools, targeted families are offered free laundry services and supplies,

snack lunches, and literacy support. Carrollton Elementary and CMS teachers and paraprofessionals are providing three sessions of support for families using Conversations Count presentations as teaching points January through March.

The focus of the support is to guide parents and caregivers in talking with and reading to children. Children are provided games and activities by paraprofessionals that support literacy growth. Books and materials are distributed to participants.

**Barbers, Beauticians and BOOKS!:** CES and CMS teachers and paraprofessionals are providing three sessions of support for families over three months, meeting at a unique venue - barber and beauty shops. The focus of the support is to guide parents and caregivers in talking with and reading to children. Children are provided free haircuts and styling as well as support from paraprofessionals with literacy games and activities that promote literacy growth.

**Fourth Trimester Literacy Partnership:** Carrollton City Schools is partnering with Tanner Health System's Fourth Trimester program for parents of newborns. A CCS literacy specialist will provide parents of newborn babies with sessions that support parents in the medical, health and literacy needs in a two-hour session.

Other city school programs include Mobile Literacy Van, Tiny Trojan Book Project, and Connections Through Conferences. **Read more about these and future programs at [carrollferst.org](http://carrollferst.org).**





## Support Ferst. Help Children Succeed.

Your support will go a long way in helping develop literacy among young children in Carroll County. Early reading experiences enhance children's chances of becoming successful students, and ultimately, educable members of the area work force. Funds raised are used to provide FREE, new, quality, age appropriate books for registered children in our county between the ages of 0-5. These books are for ALL children in Carroll County regardless of race, religion, or financial need. Books are mailed to children each month. Currently, we are providing books for over 3,500 children monthly and our registrant base is still growing.

### Ways to help support Ferst Readers:

1. Make a one-time donation online.
2. Setup recurring weekly, monthly, or annual donations online

While the books we provide are FREE, the cost is \$40 per child, per year!  
For questions, please visit us online at [www.carrollferst.org](http://www.carrollferst.org)

