

TIMES-GEORGIAN

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2022 • \$2

CARROLL COUNTY'S TRUSTED INFORMATION LEADER SINCE 1871

Ferst Readers continue giving to local STAR kids

Group has donated 500K books since 2005

BY DAN MINISH
THE TIMES-GEORGIAN

Other than having the top SAT scores in their respective senior classes, six of the seven STAR students recognized recently at a breakfast hosted by the local chapter of the Professional Association of Georgia Educators also had something else in common.

With the exception of one student who was not a Carroll County resident at the time, all of them received one book each month from birth until they were five years old through the Ferst Readers of Carroll County.

"Since the program was started locally in 2005, we have distributed more than 500,000 books to children

in Carroll County from the time they were born through five years of age," Karen Hartley, chair of the board of directors of Ferst Readers of Carroll County, Inc., explained.

"We mail about 2,500 book out each month," she said.

Ferst Readers was founded in 1999 in Madison, Ga. to address the growing

problem of children, many from low-income communities, entering kindergarten without basic early literacy skills and school readiness, a preventable problem that has far-reaching impacts throughout the students' lives. The organization currently has partners in more than half of Georgia's 159 counties and has spread to Alabama, Florida,

SEE FERST/PAGE A3

Morning crash leaves all lanes closed

BY KENNAE HUNTER
KHUNTER@TIMES-GEORGIAN.COM

At 6:40 a.m. on Monday morning, there was a collision on Highway 27 and Oak Grove Road near Ringer Road involving a Freightliner and Chrysler Town and Country minivan.

The preliminary investigative findings showed that the freightliner was making a right turn into a private driveway on the west side of the roadway. The Chrysler minivan attempted to steer into the left lane to avoid hitting the Freightlin-



Ferst Readers of Carroll County provides books free of charge to local parents and their children. For information, go to www.carrollferst.org.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

FERST

FROM PAGE A1

Mississippi, Montana, South Carolina and Texas.

Local funding for the books, according to Hartley is derived from private donations, Belk Charity Days, Change for Children donations at area high school football games, and the Fashion Ferst Luncheon.

"We also receive grants from such organizations as the Community Foundation of West Georgia, the Alice Richards Foundation, and Carroll EMC," she noted.

Hartley explained that Ferst Readers of Carroll County work with local hospitals and the health department to acquire the names and addresses of newborns. Contact is made with parents to inform them about the availability of the books and the registration process.

Parents can register for the free books for their children by going to www.carrollferst.org and clicking on the online registration link or by picking up a registration form that is available at all local libraries.

"Once the registration process is completed, it takes about two months before the books start going out," Hartley said.

"The books are free of charge and there are no qualifications to receive them," she emphasized.

Initially, cardboard picture books are sent, and as the child gets older soft-cover books are mailed. Subjects include fiction, nature, animals, weather, and a variety of other featured topics. Books are available in English and Spanish.

"Members of our board include representatives from both the Carroll County and Carrollton City Schools systems," Hartley noted.

"We also work closely with Ph.D experts, specialists, and publishers in procuring an informative, age appropriate and diverse selection of books," she said, "and an updated book list is pulled each month."

She said that an information list and suggestions to parents for other learning activities are included with every book mailing.

"We start the program at a very early age because we think it is extremely important for parents to read to their children and then encourage them to read on their own as they are able," Hartley noted.

The following notation is included on the Ferst Readers of Carroll County website:

"Regular reading with your children during their preschool years gives them the biggest boost toward a successful education they will ever receive. And, a successful education will increase their likelihood of having solid future employment opportunities. The gift of reading to your children is a gift that will support them throughout their lives."