

Every spring, SOAR! coordinates with the schools to carry out Put Your Nose In A Book (PYNIAB). This year the staff planned it around Children's+ Book Week (May 13-19). Volunteer readers from the community helped SOAR! in reading to every first grade classroom in the county.

Volunteers wore big red clown noses and read an age appropriate book to first graders at Bradie Shrum Lower Elementary, East Washington Elementary, and West Washington Elementary.

The mission of SOAR! is to increase literacy by promoting and providing educational resources for adults and families in our community. To help fulfill the mission, the SOAR! Director, Erica Schmidt and SOAR! volunteers passed out red clown noses to the students, reminding them to put their noses in a book over the summer. Following the reading, each student received a copy of the book to keep, along with a bookmark acknowledging the sponsors. This year, three hundred and fifteen students received a book, bookmark, and a nose.

"The students get so excited when they see us walk in with big red clown noses and books, especially when we tell them they get to keep the nose and take a book home," Schmidt said. "Parents of students who have previously participated in the program have indicated that his/her child still wears their nose when they read and talk about how much they loved the program."

Sponsors for PYNIAB this year were First Harrison Bank, Hoosier Hills PACT, Jeans' Extrusions, Jerry & Sherry Hammond, Roland & Anita Sturgeon, Salem Barber Shop, Salem Crossings, Salem Lions Club, Salem True Value, and Washington County Prevent Child Abuse Council.

Community volunteer readers at Bradie Shrum Lower Elementary were Eva Warren-Hill, Stephanie Martin, Kristy Purlee, Denise Newkirk, Debbi Hayes, Adrian Brown, and Anita Sturgeon.

East Washington Elementary readers were Shelby-Lain Brown, Holly Mauck, Rita Elliott, Cassie Corp, and Maurice Jones.

At West Washington Elementary readers included Jacqueline Brown, Kristy Purlee, and Stephanie Rockey.

PYNIAB is just one of SOAR's family and youth literacy programs. SOAR! recently formed a partnership with Read Aloud 15 Minutes, a non-profit organization that is working to make reading aloud every day for at least fifteen minutes the new standard in child care. PYNIAB is part of this initiative. "This is a great program that not only promotes literacy, but parent/child interaction as well.

We are excited to have the opportunity to be a partner," Schmidt stated.

To find out more about Read Aloud 15 Minutes, SOAR! or Put Your Nose In A Book, contact the SOAR! office at 896-1515 or by email at info@washingtoncountysoar.org.

