The Summer Literacy Initiative

The Worcester Summer Literacy Initiative is a collaborative effort to prevent summer learning loss among children in grades kindergarten through 4th grade. The program emphasizes practice of literacy skills through fun and engaging summer recreational activities and curriculum. Summer program staff and camp counselors are supported by literacy coaches to embed reading, writing, listening and speaking into the children’s daily routines. Program results since summer of 2010 show that 85 – 90% of children participating in the program avoid summer learning loss.

Shelley joined the Summer Literacy Initiative as a literacy coach in the summer 2013. For the past couple of years, during the school year, Shelley has taught first grade at the Canterbury School in Worcester. She loves working with urban, at risk children and is exceptionally gifted in teaching and motivating them. For the past couple of summers, her summer placement has been at Worcester Comprehensive Education and Care. This program has one of the highest percentages of DCF (Dept. of Children and Families) custody children in the city. Shelley helps them feel loved, secure and hopeful. She helps them use and improve their reading and writing skills so that they can dream and hope for a better future. Though our program is never able to take pictures at her sight, we see the deep investment of time, energy and love that she brings to this program.

Shelley recently told us that she feels so invested in the city that she grew up in. When she was in elementary and middle school in Worcester in the 1970s, she decided she wanted to be a teacher. Shelley saw something promising in the city that made her want to give back. She had so many teachers that were very encouraging and promoted the love of reading and writing. As a kid playing games and singing songs, literacy was so important in those activities and she believes that is how kids learn best. Shelley has raised her children in Worcester as well. She is so invested because of the wonderful childhood she and her children experienced in the city. She truly believes that there is so much goodness that can come out of these sites where children congregate to learn and grow and become confident readers and learners.

Your gift to the United Way of Central Massachusetts helps to fund the Summer Literacy Initiative and many more programs serving our youth. This collaborative literacy program is only one example of how your donation is invested in our community. Please consider making a gift today to the United Way of Central Massachusetts. You will be helping the children in our community succeed in reading and in life!