

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

United Way, Fishers Foods, Stark County Early Childhood Communications Collaborative, Stark County District Library kick off Shop & Learn summer session 8-week program kicks off July 17 at Massillon, Canton stores

*(Canton, OH) July 15, 2010--*United Way of Greater Stark County announces the summer session of Shop & Learn, a community initiative to help parents provide their children with the building blocks essential to foster learning as they grow.

United Way has partnered with Fishers Foods and Stark County Early Childhood Communications Collaborative to introduce an 8 week educational program designed for children ages 0-5 years old. Shop & Learn will begin Sat., July 17 and will end Sat., Sept. 11. The kickoff events will be held on July, 17 from 10-11:00 a.m. at Fishers Foods' and Lincoln Way E. location, from 12-1:00 p.m. at Fishers Foods' Cleveland and 44th location and from 2-3:00 p.m. at Fishers Foods' Cherry Avenue location.

The Bookmobile will be at the participating Fishers Foods' kickoff locations for each child to visit. Children will receive several goodies for taking part in the Shop & Learn kickoff including a new age-appropriate book given by Sisters of Charity and a bookmark from Stark County District Library.

Every two weeks a new activity will be posted for parents to complete with their children. The activities will focus on colors, letters, numbers and shapes. After finishing the activities for each two week time period, activity cards are presented to the cashier who will mark the finished activity card with a United Way sticker. The card can then be turned in to the customer service desk in exchange for a book from Stark County Early Childhood Communications Collaborative for your child.

"Furthering education is one of United Way's Building Blocks for a healthier Stark County. Our goal is to help youth succeed in school by providing parents with the tools necessary to teach their children new skills while completing everyday activities like going grocery shopping," said Maria Heege, United Way President and CEO.

Promoting learning from an early age has proven positive effects on children as they grow. Approximately 95% of a child's brain capacity is developed by age 3, says the Child Development Institute. While the child's brain is developing only synapses that are used will be retained. However, early education is left mainly in the hands of parents because the State of Ohio only allocates 1.3% of its budget to the development of young children, says Early Experiences Last A Lifetime.

For more information on Shop & Learn, please visit www.uwstark.org or www.earlyexperiences.org.

United Way of Greater Stark County is a not-for-profit organization that seeks to improve lives in measurable and lasting ways by mobilizing thousands of people around a common goal: advancing the common good. United Way funds programs that focus on Early Education & Care, Graduation & Training and Family Stability. United Way believes these are the building blocks for a good life and that a quality education leads to a stable job, enough income to support a family through retirement, a safe place to live and good health.

For more information about United Way visit www.uwstark.org. Headquarters are at 4825 Higbee Avenue NW, Suite 101, Canton, Ohio 44718. Dial (330) 491-0445 to reach the offices.

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