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Contact: Lauren Sproull  
850.562.5300  
[lauren.sproull@barbarabush.org](mailto:lauren.sproull@barbarabush.org)

## **Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy Commits to Three Years of Strategic Support for Struggling Elementary School Readers in Jackson**

*~ W.K. Kellogg Foundation supports the Foundation's Teen Trendsetters program in local public schools ~*

JACKSON, Miss. – The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy will provide its nationally recognized Teen Trendsetters™ reading mentoring program in Jackson Public Schools for an additional three years, thanks to a generous grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

Teen Trendsetters is a family literacy program that pairs middle or high school mentors with first or second grade students who are, on average, half a year behind in reading. This intensive reading program develops literacy skills through weekly sessions with trained teen mentors. Parents sign a contract agreeing to continue reading at home, and over the course of the program, children receive 15 books to add to their personal home libraries.

Now in its second year in Jackson Public Schools, the Teen Trendsetters program has already engaged nearly 300 pairs of teens (mentors) and elementary school students (mentees) in 10 elementary schools (see [list of programs](#) with advisor contact information). First Lady Deborah Bryant has been a strong supporter of the program since its launch in Mississippi, and shared her excitement about the Foundation's extended commitment to Jackson schools.

"I am beyond excited to learn that the Teen Trendsetters program will be ongoing in Mississippi," said First Lady Bryant. "We continue to have successful literacy gains through our combined efforts to help our families and schools address the needs of early elementary students. The proven results of this mentorship program is another win for our children."

"The Teen Trendsetters program is one of the best literacy initiatives we have in the Jackson Public School District. Last year, there was an increase in the overall academic achievement level among the students who participated in the program," said Dr. Michelle King, Chief Academic Officer of Elementary Education for Jackson Public Schools. "What I like most about the Teen Trendsetters program is that it promotes not only the academics, but the social confidence of our elementary students as well as the high and middle school tutors. It is so amazing to watch the interaction between the elementary students and their tutors. The Teen Trendsetters program is a valuable asset to our district."

Nationally, the Teen Trendsetters program has achieved impressive results. In 2015-16, a third-party comparison study revealed that mentees showed 61 percent more growth than their peers who did not take part in the program, gaining nearly half a year's worth of additional reading skills. Mentors benefited as well, reporting that the program helped them learn leadership skills (95 percent), helped their prospects for college admissions (82 percent), and kept them on track for graduation (79 percent).

"We're proud of the outstanding literacy gains that children nationwide have made through the Teen Trendsetters program," said Liza McFadden, president and CEO of the Barbara Bush Foundation. "We're grateful to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for supporting our efforts to continue providing this program to students in Jackson."

Ongoing support from Barbara Bush Foundation alumni author and Jackson native Jill Conner Browne (the Sweet Potato Queen) has also been critical for the launch and success of these programs.

*About the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy:* The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy is the nation's leading advocate for family literacy. The Foundation was established by Mrs. Barbara Bush in 1989, inspired by her vision of fostering the opportunity for every man, woman and child to secure a better life through literacy. Today, the Foundation is a public charity that remains committed to Mrs. Bush's vision, working to expand literacy access for the bookends of our education system: early literacy for young children and opportunities for low-literate parents to improve their skills. To learn more, visit [www.barbarabush.org](http://www.barbarabush.org) or join the conversation on Facebook or Twitter (@BarbaraBushFdn).

*About the W.K. Kellogg Foundation:* The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), founded in 1930 as an independent, private foundation by breakfast cereal pioneer, Will Keith Kellogg, is among the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to thrive, WKKF works with communities to create conditions for vulnerable children so they can realize their full potential in school, work and life.

The Kellogg Foundation is based in Battle Creek, Michigan, and works throughout the United States and internationally, as well as with sovereign tribes. Special emphasis is paid to priority places where there are high concentrations of poverty and where children face significant barriers to success. WKKF priority places in the U.S. are in Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico and New Orleans; and internationally, are in Mexico and Haiti. For more information, visit [www.wkkf.org](http://www.wkkf.org).

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