



All  
Ages  
Read  
Together

# NEWSLETTER

*"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,  
nothing is going to get better. It's not."*

Dr. Seuss, *The Lorax*

January 2018

## Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends of All Ages Read Together,

Did you know that each year 20% of children in Fairfax County and 18% of children in Loudoun County begin kindergarten without any exposure to preschool?

With YOUR support, AART is making inroads and helping to fill those gaps. AART is working with a number of community partners to identify those children who need school readiness programs and serve them close to home in their communities. A better tomorrow for all of them depends on our work today.

AART takes an individualized approach to school readiness by allowing students to work at their own pace. AART teachers build lessons around a theme based on the weekly featured book. Enriching playful learning activities such as music and movement keep the children engaged by incorporating concepts such as rhyming awareness, gross motor skills, introducing new vocabulary and retelling the story. As students are building on their skills, confidence grows putting them on a path towards success in kindergarten and beyond.

Our AART Read-A-Thon is right around the corner. By encouraging the love of reading, the Read-A-Thon will raise awareness and money for AART programs. Please consider being a sponsor or participating in the Read-A-Thon. Visit our website for more information or to make a donation. The impact you are making on these children's lives help prepare them for success in kindergarten and beyond!

With appreciation,

*Michelle Sullivan*



## Program Update

Exciting things are happening in our AART classroom! As part of reading *Goodnight Gorilla*, class meeting at the newly renovated Sterling Library were thrilled to meet Alex the armadillo who was visiting from Texas. What a treat to have a real preserved (after a visit to the taxidermist) armadillo to examine up-close. We celebrated the fall season and got cozy reading *Pancakes for Breakfast* in pajamas and enjoying pancakes made in class! Both of these books have minimal or no words but use

pictures to tell the story. An excellent introduction to reading for preschoolers, wordless books help children understand concepts such as book mechanics, plot and characters. They also help to develop vocabulary and language skills as well as literacy skills such as inferring and predicting.



## Horseshoe Hoedown

The 2017 Horseshoe Hoedown included 340 guests kicking up their heels in celebration of AART's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Over \$22,000 was raised at the annual event to help fund AART programs.

Supporters enjoyed a great band, BBQ, and mechanical bull rides. The addition of children's activities contributed to its resounding success and vibrancy. Many thanks to all of our sponsors, volunteers, and attendees who made this event possible. We look forward to seeing you at the 2018 Horseshoe Hoedown on Saturday, September 29<sup>th</sup> for another rootin' tootin' good time!



## Volunteer Spotlight

AART was privileged to have two interns help us with the Horseshoe Hoedown as part of their Principles of Fundraising and Resource Development class at George Mason University. Priscilla Eckert was the "Sherriff" at our Kiddie Corral and coordinated the children's activities and volunteers. Victoria Reed acted as our "Concierge" greeting guests as they arrived and guiding them to the wide variety of activities at the event. We are grateful for their help both at the hoedown and with the preparation leading up to the event.



*Priscilla Eckert on the left*

As an elementary education major, Priscilla is passionate about educating young learners. She states, "I feel it is important for children to have a strong and firm education foundation to be successful in their futures." Her goal is to join the education community in her hometown of Marshall, Virginia. Priscilla would like to keep volunteering with AART and says, "AART is a wonderful group of people who are very passionate in helping our youth in creating a fundamental solid beginning to their education."

Victoria, an Integrative Studies with a concentration in Advertising major, was inspired by her 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading teacher to volunteer at a nonprofit with a mission of early literacy. As a child who did not enjoy reading, with the help of this teacher Victoria learned "how you can escape to other places" by enjoying books. Victoria states, "It is not easy for some of these families to prepare their children for what they need to know, so having AART as that facilitator is giving the children the chance to be successful in their future education." Volunteering in one of our AART classes has shown Victoria that, "my time with these children has been eye-opening in that we do need to help them prepare for school because the next 12 years depend on it."



*Victoria on the left*

## Supporting AART When You Shop

Please take the time to download the iGive button and sign up for AmazonSmile to support AART (without any additional cost to you) when you shop. Downloading the iGive button is easy - click and a percentage of your purchase goes directly to AART. For AmazonSmile, simply go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and designate AART as the nonprofit beneficiary and Amazon Smile Foundation donates 0.5% of your purchase cost (without any additional cost to you). Thank you for your support!



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