



FOCUSED ON THE NEEDS OF CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND SENIOR SUPPORT IN LOUDON AND MONROE COUNTIES

Tellico Community Foundation and Tellico Prime Time Players Bring Stories to Life for Loudon and Monroe Students

[Loudon County, Tennessee, August 19, 2024] – The Tellico Community Foundation (TCF), an affiliate fund of the East Tennessee Foundation, has awarded a \$1,300 grant to the Tellico Community Playhouse (TCP) Prime Time Players to continue their reading literacy program for third and fourth graders in Loudon and Monroe County schools.

This grant will fund books to be used for the Players' 35-minute themed play which is intended to spark a love of reading among students. In 2023, these performances reached 1,480 children across 12 schools, offering a creative and entertaining way to enhance literacy.

Founded in 2010 by the TCP's Director of Theatre Development and Outreach Debbie Mayberry, the Prime Time Players aim to give back to the community by making reading fun and accessible. The Prime Time Players fulfill the outreach portion of the Tellico Community Playhouse mission.

"By introducing children to the arts in a fun way through our performances, we're not just telling stories – we're opening doors to new worlds and encouraging children to explore them," explained Joe Marlette, Board Member of TCF and TCP. "We hope to inspire these third and fourth graders to read, learn, and ultimately develop an appreciation for words that keeps them engaged in the classroom and in our society. As in all grants we will closely monitor and assess measurable metrics of success."

The program's impact is profound, especially in a region where nearly 70 percent of students in grades three through eight are struggling to read at grade level. The Tellico Community Foundation is dedicated to addressing this literacy crisis, understanding that early reading proficiency is critical for long-term success.

Sharon Smith, a Prime Time Players director, also shared her excitement about the outreach program. "The performers receive so much gratification when they see the children's smiles and hear their laughter," Smith said. "Each children's book, which provides the inspiration for the performance, is given to the school library to support its collection."

Gail Link, Logistical Director of the Prime Time Players, stated, "the PTP school tour focuses on stories for 3rd and 4th grade children. Bringing books to life is one important way to interest children in picking up books and improving their reading skills." The stories also awaken innovative new ideas for the children. For example, the players chose a book about the Three Little Pigs, as told by the Wolf. The children experienced this familiar story from a different Point of View.

About Tellico Community Foundation



Since 2017, the Tellico Community Foundation has contributed nearly \$300,000 to nonprofits serving Loudon and Monroe Counties, with a focus on support for seniors and childhood development. With over \$350,000 in a long-term endowment fund, the Tellico Community Foundation is committed to building a sustainable future for its community. The Tellico Community Foundation is an affiliate fund of the East Tennessee Foundation. The East Tennessee Foundation receives and manages contributions on behalf of the Tellico Community Foundation fund and facilitates the awarding of grants in support of its mission.

For more information about how to be involved with Tellico Community Foundation, please contact Ken Thoreson by phone at 612-839-2706 , by email at Ken@Acumenmgmt.com or visit www.tellicolife.org/tellico-community-foundation. To donate, visit www.etf.org/Tellico.