

Syracuse officials, North Side neighbors gather to stress importance of reading—"Literacy is essential"

by Nina Wegner / The Post-Standard

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Grassroots organizations, North Side neighbors and Syracuse officials came together for a bite to eat and a bit to read on Tuesday in observance of International Literacy Day.

"Literacy is elemental, is so essential to the quality of life," said Dominic Robinson, Director of the North Side Collaboratory, a neighborhood development branch of the Franciscan Collaborative Ministries, which helped host the event. Achieving better literacy as a community revitalizes the community on every level, he said. Increasing literacy is one way of achieving a more empowered North Side, both economically and culturally, officials said. Among the roughly 30 people gathered at the Assisi Center on North Salina Street were several participants in the Green Train Program, a vocational program that trains underemployed North Side residents for jobs in the "green" sector, such as sustainable construction and weatherization.

The event offered a free lunch and urged everyone to take five minutes out of their day to read, increasing literacy in their lives and leading by example to encourage others to read. County Executive Joanie Mahoney read aloud for five minutes from "March," a novel by Geraldine Brooks. The Literacy Coalition of Onondaga County handed out free copies of the book for attendees to take home. Ursula Rozum, an AmeriCorps volunteer working with Syracuse's Cooperative Federal credit union, said she stopped by on her lunch break because she heard about the event and wanted to support grassroots community events. She and her co-workers are also thinking of starting a reading group for fun, she said.

Source:

http://www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2009/09/syracuse_officials_north_side.html#comments