



ReadUP is a registered charity. It is free to participants and completely volunteer-driven—no one gets paid. We fundraise and use all the proceeds to buy books and materials for the clubs.

March 1, 2018

Dear Duke of Connaught families,

My name is Sheilah Currie and I am the founder of ReadUP Reading Clubs. We have run an English ReadUP club at your school since November 2013 and will start a French ReadUP at Duke in the fall. Both clubs will run at the regular time, Thursdays from 3:15-4:15, in the library.

I'll give you a little background. I was a Reading Recovery teacher with the York Region and TDSB school boards and am the co-author of many books that are used in elementary classrooms to help children learn to read. I stopped teaching to focus on my publishing activities but found that I missed working with kids. In 2005, I was approached by board members at Eastview Community Centre in response to their newcomer community's request for help with their children's reading. I started a weekly reading club at that center, and soon there were many families attending with their children each week. The following year, a family resource centre on Gerrard Street asked for a club, so I started one there in late 2006. We now have 8 ReadUP clubs running in east-downtown Toronto. You can check out our website to see the locations: www.readup.ca Our latest club that we started a few weeks ago, at Greenwood high school to support teenaged refugee students, has not yet been listed on the site. (There are not enough hours in the day, I've discovered, but I'll get to it soon.)

Here's how ReadUP works. We use levelled books that are ordered from various educational publishers, the same kind of books that are used in schools, i.e., early readers with a high ratio of the sight words that children need to know. When a child first attends, the Teacher Leader does a quick check to establish the child's optimal reading level, then issues a bag of 3 books at that level. The child reads the books to a volunteer, who helps with any tricky words, then they are taken home to practise. When the child returns the following week, a new bag of books is issued and, as his/her skills increase, the child moves up the reading levels—that's why it's called ReadUP.

The children love attending. There is no stigma attached, as children of all skill levels are welcome to join. In addition to the levelled books that we use for children whose reading skills are emerging, we have commercially available chapter books for proficient readers, and picture books for parents to read to their babies and toddlers. It's casual. It's fun. It's a club. The children relish the one-on-one attention they receive from volunteers, and since they are each reading at their appropriate skill level, they experience the joy of reading books smoothly and fluently, and successfully.

Families can sign up any time during the school year. It's a drop-in format, so if you arrive within the first half-hour of the club, it will ensure we have time to read with your child. It is important that children attend with an adult, as we are busy at the club and cannot supervise individual children.

If you have any questions, feel free to get in touch with me. Also, if you or anyone you know would like to volunteer at the club, please get in touch. The commitment does not have to be every week—we appreciate any time you can spare to help out.

All the best.

Sheilah Currie

sheilahcurrie@bell.net