



# Let's talk about...

## Back to School and Literacy programs

**Submitted by Mandi Wilton Davis,  
Executive Director  
United Way of the Bradford Area, Inc.**

The United Way of the Bradford Area will soon be celebrating one year of its early childhood literacy program, First Chapter.

“First Chapter is a free program designed for children ages birth to five, and their parents/guardians, with the mission of implementing early learning and literacy as part of a child’s daily routine,” said Executive Director Mandi Wilton Davis. “It is in alignment with our organization’s community impact model for education, and we’re very pleased with the impact it’s made in a short period for area youth.”

For the local United Way, another motivating factor in implementing this type of program was to provide families with an at-home library to encourage language development and a love of reading. Each session includes reading and craft time, and program participants receive an age-appropriate book once per quarter. Programs are held the second Wednesday of each month at 10:30 am at the Bradford Area Public Library. Mobile sessions have also been held at The Learning Center, Rainbow Corner Preschool, the Bradford YMCA and the YWCA.

Books, bags and materials were initially provided through a generous sponsorship from American Refining Group, and the program was also a beneficiary of a grant from International Paper.



*Cara Costik, Community Relations Specialist, of the United Way of the Bradford Area, showing a book to St. Bernard School students as part of the childhood literacy program, First Chapter.*