

Executive Summary

The WNY Writing Project (WNYWP) and its partners request a grant of \$443,000 from the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo to launch “Buffalo Book Buddies,” a program offering individualized reading and writing instruction, peer mentoring and new experiences to about 75 of Buffalo’s most poorly performing pupils in grades 3-8.

Since 1986, WNYWP’s “teachers teaching teachers” philosophy has engendered exemplary instruction of writing in all classrooms across all disciplines. WNYWP is one of more than 200 sites of the National Writing Project, and also offers programs for young writers including summer writing camps, an annual published anthology and a young writers’ festival.

Recent data from the State Education Department shows that 70 percent of economically disadvantaged pupils in the Buffalo Public Schools do not meet the state standard for English/Language Arts. If something isn’t done, these low-performing pupils will grow into low-performing adults: According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 12 percent of Erie County residents age 16 and older lack “*basic* prose literacy skills.”

“Buffalo Book Buddies” will partner a low-performing pupil with a high-performing peer in reading and writing instruction and activities. A dedicated Teacher in Residence will provide individualized attention and instruction, and will work regular classroom teachers to enhance their skills. Programming will include writing activities, reading contents, writing festivals, field trips and more – all geared toward boosting pupils’ skills and confidence.

According to the National Institute for Literacy, “Adolescents entering the adult world in the 21st century will read and write more than at any other time in human history. They will need advanced levels of literacy to perform their jobs... and conduct their personal lives.” “Buffalo Book Buddies” will enable them to succeed in school and into the next chapter of their lives.

Problem Statement

“Everybody makes fun of me because I don’t read good.”

“I’m dropping out next year anyway so what do I care?”

“Books is stupid.”

The above quotations are from pupils in grades 3-8 in the Buffalo Public Schools who struggle with reading and writing and who score poorly on standardized tests consistently.

Nationally, the outlook is bleak according to data gathered by Reading is Fundamental:

- Nearly two-thirds of low-income families in the U.S. own no books.
- Thirty-three percent of fourth-graders and 26 percent of eighth-graders in public school are at or below the “Basic” level on the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress reading tests. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009).
- Forty-nine percent of fourth-graders and 40 percent of eighth-graders eligible for free and reduced-price meals finished below “Basic” on the NAEP reading test. (NCES, 2009).

In the Buffalo Public Schools the situation is similar:

Example of Outcome Indicator Data Broken Out by Population Characteristics				
	4 th Grade ELA assessment		8 th Grade (ELA) assessment	
	Not Meeting Standard	Not Meeting Standard	Not Meeting Standard	Not Meeting Standard
Total	66%	61%	74%	74%
Race/Ethnicity	60%	63%	74%	55%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	72%	68%	81%	82%
Black	66%	55%	75%	77%
Hispanic	37%	39%	57%	53%
Asian/Pacific Islander	51%	45%	60%	56%
White				
Gender	68%	66%	78%	77%
Male	63%	56%	70%	71%
Female				
Income Level	70%	70%	79%	80%
Economically Disadvantaged	48%	48%	58%	57%
Not Disadvantaged				

Source: New York State Department of Education Annual Report Card – “Overview Analysis.”

If something isn't done, these low-performing pupils will grow into low-performing adults: According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 12 percent of Erie County residents age 16 and older lack "basic prose literacy skills." That describes nearly 90,000 individuals!

These pupils need access to books and writing materials: Research shows that if children can get their hands on printed materials, their reading will improve. ("Children's Access to Print Materials and Education-Related Outcomes," RIF 2010)

These pupils need a literacy-rich environment, where reading, writing and discussion about same are valued: According to research by the National Council of Teachers of English, "In effective schools, classroom conversations about how, why, and what we read are important parts of the literacy curriculum.

"Adolescents entering the adult world in the 21st century will read and write more than at any other time in human history."

- National Institute for Literacy

In fact, discussion-based approaches to academic literacy content are strongly linked to student achievement." (Applebee, 1996: Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko & Hurwitz, 1999)

Teachers working with these pupils don't have the time or perhaps even the skill set to address the pupils' needs: In nine independent studies run by the National Writing Project, "in every measured attribute of writing, the improvement of students whose teachers participated in NWP professional development exceeded that of students whose teachers were not participants."

(NWP, 2008)

These pupils are getting lost in the shuffle of overcrowded classrooms, overworked teachers and standardized testing. They lack support at home and in school and don't understand the consequences of educational failure.

About the Organization

The Western New York Writing Project (WNYWP) (<http://www.canisius.edu/wnywp>) was founded more than 20 years ago. It is one of more than 200 sites of the National Writing Project (www.writingproject.org), an organization devoted to using writing to improve student performance and motivation. Writing Project teachers come from all subject areas and grade levels. Sites are housed at colleges or universities – Canisius College in the Buffalo-Niagara region. WNYWP’s service area encompasses Erie, Chautauqua, Niagara and Orleans counties.

The Summer Institute is the cornerstone of WNYWP’s activities, and is the starting point for all Writing Project participants. For four weeks in July, participating teachers (usually about 16) take part in writing groups, inquiry groups and more on the Canisius College campus. Each participant is required to present a demonstration lesson, which is then critiqued by WNYWP staff and fellow participants. After completing the SI, “Fellows,” as they are then called, take what they’ve learned back to their own schools to share with colleagues and students.

Fellows present their SI demonstration lessons for WNYWP’s Professional Development Program, which provides in-service workshops in school districts in WNYWP’s service area. Other professional development opportunities include “Saturdays at 10” seminars, and the chance to attend and present at local, state and national conferences. Fellows keep in touch and share ideas via WNYWP’s Ning and blog, and meet informally for book club discussions. Many have posted personal creations on the National Gallery of Writing (www.galleryofwriting.org), co-sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE).

WNYWP also offers a variety of programs for student writers in grades K-12, including a yearly published anthology of juried submissions, a young writers’ festival and summer writing camps at Canisius College.

Goal, Objectives and Tasks

- ❖ **Goal:** By pairing a low-performing pupil with a high-performing pupil, and through intensive, personalized education and related special programming, “Buffalo Book Buddies” will improve reading and writing skills of low-performing pupils in grades 3-8, as well as engender in them a love of the written word and a newfound sense of what is possible for them with continued academic success.

- ❖ **Objective No. 1:** Increase participating pupils’ scores on standardized state English/Language Arts (ELA) tests by 15 points on the Scale Score and by one level by the end of the third year of the program. (Note: Students receive a specific scale score on the tests which falls into one of four levels:
 - Level 4 – Exceeds the learning standards
 - Level 3 – Meets the learning standards
 - Level 2 – Partially meets the learning standards or meets part of the learning standards
 - Level 1 – Shows serious academic problems)
 - **Task:** Hire program coordinator and assistant to oversee all aspects of “Buffalo Book Buddies” implementation
 - **Task:** Hire Teachers in Residence to provide individualized attention and instruction for poor-performing pupils
 - **Task:** Celebrate and build upon pupils’ successes as they occur

- ❖ **Objective No. 2:** Increase amount of time pupils spend on individual, sustained reading by at least 30 minutes per day
 - **Task:** Arrange field trip to local library to enable each pupil to receive his/her library card, and to tour library facilities
 - **Task:** Establish writing/reading lab that is staffed during evenings, weekends and school holidays, and has available plenty of books, notebooks, computers, etc.
 - **Task:** Demonstrate proper learning and study habits (e.g. ensure that each pupil has a designated homework/learning area at home)
 - **Task:** Reinforce modeling behavior by high-performing buddies to benefit low-performing partners
 - **Task:** Empower low-performing pupils to make good choices about what they do in their spare time (e.g. read a book instead of play the same video game for the umpteenth time)

- ❖ **Objective No. 3:** At the start of the program, participating pupils are expected to spend at least 30 minutes each school day – the equivalent of 2.5 hours per week – on their own time, writing their own stories, plays, etc. By the time the program comes to an end, participating pupils are expected to spend an equivalent of five hours per week on their own time, writing their own stories, etc.
 - **Task:** Hire Webmaster to implement online writing activities, story starters, prompts, etc.
 - **Task:** Provide all pupils with writing materials (i.e. journal)
 - **Task:** Encourage pupils to visit the writing/reading lab to use the computers, books and their resources available
 - **Task:** Provide ways for pupils to share what they’ve written with peers (e.g. publishing an anthology, hosting a writers’ festival)

- **Task:** Provide pupils opportunities to critique each other's work and offer positive feedback

❖ **Objective No. 4:** Increase pupils' comfort level with reading and writing by at least one increment i.e. When they start the program, they will be asked to rate their comfort level on scale of 1-10. At the end of the school year, they will be asked the same question. The hope is that their comfort level will have increased measurably.

- **Task:** Offer plenty of opportunities for pupils to read aloud with their buddies, with their teacher and with their entire class
- **Task:** Offer plenty of opportunities for pupils to "publish" their written work and to read it aloud to their buddy, their teacher and their entire class
- **Task:** Plan activities to engender a love of books and writing (e.g. field trip to a Theatre of Youth performance based on a classic children's book)
- **Task:** Encourage high-performing pupils to model good reading and writing habits for their low-performing buddy – encourage them to share favorite books and to exert positive "peer pressure"

❖ **Objective No. 5:** Increase participating pupils' overall academic average by at least one letter grade or five points from the start of the program to the end of the third year of participation

- **Task:** Assign activities and assignments based on grade level and interest
- **Task:** Maintain flexibility in program implementation i.e. adapt as needed to societal changes, lifestyle changes, school concerns, etc.
- **Task:** Enlist parents' continued support as pupils grow up and move into middle or high school, and impress upon them the importance of their role in keeping their son or daughter on task and on track:
 - Show pupils (and their parents) the opportunities that open up to them as they improve their reading and writing skills
 - Impress upon parents that while their son or daughter needs a part-time job, he or she must keep up with his/her schoolwork

Organization: Western New York Writing Project (WNYWP) (www.canisius.edu/wnywp) – one of nearly 200 sites of the National Writing Project (NWP) (www.writingproject.org)

Organization's Mission: Since 1986, WNYWP has improved the teaching of writing and improve learning in Western New York's schools. Through its practice and philosophy of "teachers teaching teachers," WNYWP seeks to promote exemplary instruction of writing in every classroom in Erie, Niagara, Chautauqua and Orleans counties. WNYWP provides opportunities for K-12 students to improve their writing skills, increase their confidence when reading and writing and instill in them a lifelong love of learning.

Needs Assessment/Problem Statement

Problems or Symptoms in the Community:

- 30 percent of adults in Buffalo – 65,000 people – read at/below 5th grade level
- 40 percent of children entering kindergarten do not meet minimum benchmarks for language and literacy skills; some do not even know their own given name

- 60 percent of 4th graders are not meeting State learning standards
- 58 percent of children in grades 3-8 are not proficient in reading, as measured by the state's English Language Arts (ELA) standardized assessment
- 39 percent of ninth-graders in the Buffalo Public Schools do not graduate

Source: Read to Succeed Buffalo

“Literacy is the ability to read, write, compute, and use technology at a level that enables an individual to reach his or her full potential as a parent, employee and community member.”

Source: Literacy New York

According to the New York State Department of Education, 489 elementary, middle and high schools and 35 districts statewide have been identified for improvement under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The Buffalo Public Schools have been identified as a “district in need of improvement” in English/Language Arts scores for seven years, and various schools within the district are at various stages of improvement.

Source: New York State Department of Education

Root Cause of Problem:

- Poverty – reading and writing are not priorities; little if any time spent on recreational reading at home; lack of positive role models at home
- Single-parent household; mother often has less than a high school education
- Teachers spending more time “teaching to the test,” with diminishing time for one-on-one instruction when needed

Similar or Complementing Program(s):

- Just Buffalo Literary Center (JBLC)’s “Writers in Residence” (<http://www.justbuffalo.org>)
- “Read to Succeed” Buffalo (www.readtosucceedbuffalo.org)
- University at Buffalo’s Center for Literacy and Reading Instruction (CLaRI) (www.clari.buffalo.edu)

Program Design

Name of Program: Buffalo Book Buddies (BBB)

Description: Working with JBLC and UB's CLaRI, WNYWP will expand its current educational programming to target pupils in grades 3-8 who fall below the State Education Department's competency levels for English Language Arts (ELA).

Both WNYWP and JBLC have established relationships with these schools, so that is where the program will be offered during its first year:

- PS 17 Early Childhood Center (550 pupils in grades K-4)
(<http://www.buffaloschools.org/EarlyChildhoodCenter17.cfm>)
- PS 95 Waterfront Elementary School (grades Pre-K-8)
(www.buffaloschools.org/WaterfrontElementary95.cfm)
- PS 79 PFC William J. Grabiarz School of Excellence (650 pupils in grades 5-8)
(<http://www.buffaloschools.org/School79.cfm>)

After being identified by their teachers, about 75 pupils will be invited to join the program – plus the same number of “buddies.” “Teachers in Residence” - WNYWP Fellows, JBLC Writers in Residence, Canisius College education graduate students, UB education graduate students and other educational professionals – will “set up shop” in the three schools to offer intensive instruction to these pupils and enhancing the classroom experience for all. Plus, the “Buffalo Book Buddies Writing Lab/Workshop” will be open after school, in the evening and during weekends.

“Buffalo Book Buddies” is unique because of its intensive, long-term commitment with select pupils in select schools. Pupils will benefit from the long-term, one-on-one education and programming, while teachers will benefit from having “help” from extra educational professionals in their classroom. BBB uses a classroom-based approach, beginning with educating the teachers and providing them with lesson plans and instructional materials geared toward pupils who are resistant to reading and writing.

Pupils will be assigned a “buddy” – a peer who reads and writes at grade level or above. Pupils are encouraged name their duos and participate in BBB activities together.

The program coordinator and program partners will launch “Buffalo Book Buddies” during the WNYWP Summer Institute 2012. Current Fellows, interested Fellows from past years and JBLC educational personnel will exchange lesson plans and ideas.

In September, teachers in the three target schools will be asked to identify about 75 pupils who could benefit from BBB involvement – as well as 75 pupils to be their partners. Teachers will be asked to identify which pupils do not have a library card (one would assume most do not). Field trips will be arranged to take those youngsters to their local library to get them a card and to introduce them to library resources.

“Writers in Residence” will be invited to a kick-off celebration in late August at the new “Buffalo Book Buddies Writing Lab/Workshop.” They will receive program materials and lesson plans; have a “tour” of the BBB Website; and share ideas for the coming year.

Participating youngsters will be invited to a kick-off celebration in early October at Canisius College (which is on several bus routes), at which time they will receive their individual “Buffalo Book Buddies Reading & Writing Journal” and a few surprises. Also that month, pupils will go on a field trip to their local library. Those who do not have a library card will sign up for one, and all will learn what resources the library offers.

In November, WNYWP and JBLC will present a seminar/workshop for the general public entitled “Write Yourself into WNY’s History,” highlighting famous Buffalo writers past and present. As adults listen to the lecture, their children will be in the next room taking part in writing activities designed around the famous authors. For example, they may write a newspaper article like Mark Twain or a play like A.R. Gurney. Informational displays on BBB, WNYWP programs and JBLC offerings will be arranged in the lobby to generate interest in and support for those endeavors. BBB youngsters, their parents and Writers in Residence will be special guests that evening.

BBB participants will attend a Theatre of Youth performance based on a book, hopefully during the holiday season. Details will be announced when TOY’s schedule is released. Two sessions (one for grades 3-5, one for grades 6-8) of “Make Your Own Book” will take place in February 2013 at the Western New York Book Arts Collaborative. Pupils will tour the facility – which focuses on the written word, bookmaking, printing, literature as art – and be inspired to make their own books from various materials (nothing expensive, just common items such as cereal boxes for covers and recycled paper for the insides). They will receive writing prompts, story ideas, reading suggestions and more to help them fill in the books with their own creations.

A reading/writing festival will take place in April 2013 at Canisius College, featuring workshops and time for youngsters to read aloud what they have written.

The program will come to close for pupils in early June with an end-of-the-year party. Pupils will be encouraged to read their writings aloud and talk about books they read during the year. Prizes will be awarded for most books read, best short story, etc. Every pupil will receive a commemorative item and certificate of achievement.

Writes in Residence will join participants in the 2013 Summer Institute to review the year’s programming, the results and the various evaluations. Teachers will receive materials to use in their own classrooms.

Target Population:

About 75 poorly performing pupils in grades 3-8 in the three identified schools within the Buffalo Public Schools, plus 75 corresponding “buddies” – about 150 pupils total

Geographic Area:

City of Buffalo in Erie County, N.Y.

Expected Duration:

2012-2013 academic year

Possible Self-Sustaining Features:

- Sharing instructional materials with and encouraging suggestions from all Fellows past and present, as well as personnel from partner organizations

- Ongoing evaluation drawing in WNYWP Fellows and other professional educators to improve what's not working and build on what is working
- Sell advertising in the journal so it pays for itself
- Keep partners, funders and the general public informed of program's programming and progress via earned media and paid advertising – not to exploit students, but to encourage involvement and financial support from other sectors and groups
- Expand programming to include the parental component, e.g. GED classes

Justify Program Selection:

Is this program a System Change?

No for WNYWP and JBLC; yes for the three participating schools

Is this program a Social Change?

Possibly

Does this program address the root cause of the problem?

No. That is beyond this project's scope.

Our Experience:

WNYWP is one of nearly 200 sites of the National Writing Project, the only federally funded program focusing on the teaching of writing. For more than 20 years, WNYWP has offered professional development for teachers and programs such as writing festivals and summer writing camps for youngsters. Fellows are in the classroom every day, working with children of various skill levels and economic backgrounds.

Potential Collaborators:

- Literacy Volunteers of Buffalo & Erie County (www.literacybuffalo.org)
- Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System
- Western New York Book Arts Collaborative (www.wnybookarts.org)
- Talking Leaves, Buffalo's oldest independent bookseller, for book donations (even if only a few for door prizes at the festivals) (www.tleavesbooks.com)
- Children's book publishers such as Scholastic (www.Scholastic.com); Harper Collins (harpercollinschildrens.com); and Random House (www.randomhouse.com/category/juvenile_fiction/) for donations of books
- Office supply stores for donations of notebooks, pens, pencils and copying/printing
- As WNYWP's host location, Canisius College is an in-kind collaborator (www.canisius.edu)

Evaluation Plan

Overall program goal: By pairing a low-performing pupil with a high-performing pupil, and through intensive, personalized education and related special programming, “Buffalo Book Buddies” will improve the reading and writing skills of low-performing pupils in grades 3-8 in select schools in the Buffalo Public Schools, as well as engender in them a love of the written word and a newfound sense of what is possible for them with continued academic success.

Objective	Data to gather	Method	Time frame(s)	By whom
1.) Increase participating pupils’ scores on standardized tests by 15 points on the Scale Score and by one level by the <u>end of the third year of the program</u> (BBB begins in Sept. 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Test scores 2012 ▪ Test scores 2013 	Report from NYS Education Dept.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2012 test scores ▪ 2013 test scores ▪ 2014 test scores 	Program coordinator
2.) Pupils will spend at least 30 minutes daily in individual, sustained reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Time spent reading (self-reported by pupils) ▪ Confirmation of that self-reported data (i.e. are pupils able to talk about books they read?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pupils’ journal entries ▪ Buddies’ comments ▪ Teachers’ observations (i.e. Can the pupil talk intelligently about a book he says he read?) 	First program year	Teachers in Residence (TiRs)
3.) Pupils will spend at least 2.5 hours weekly writing on their own – increase to 5 hours weekly by end of school year		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pupils’ journal entries ▪ Buddies’ comments ▪ Teachers’ observations (i.e. Are writing skills improving? Is pupil providing samples to teacher for review?) 	First program year	Teachers in Residence (TiRs)
4.) Increase pupils’ comfort level with reading and writing by at least one increment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pupils’ rating at start of school year ▪ Pupils’ rating at end of school year (rate comfort level on scale of 1-10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questionnaire at start of school year ▪ Questionnaire at end of school year 	First program year	Teachers in Residence (TiRs)
5.) Increase overall academic averages of all participants by at least one letter grade or five points by the end of the third year.	Pupils’ grades	Provided by building principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2013 school year ▪ 2014 school year ▪ 2015 school year 	Program coordinator

Anticipated short-term outcomes: (1-3 years)

Questions	Data to collect
Are participating pupils spending more time every day reading on their own?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pupils’ journal entries ▪ TiRs’ observations ▪ Regular classroom teachers’ observations
Are participating pupils spending more time each day writing their own short stories, essays, etc.?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pupils’ journal entries ▪ TiRs’ observations ▪ Regular classroom teachers’ observations ▪ Tracking pupils’ postings on BBB Web site
Are participating pupils more comfortable with reading and writing activities at the end of the first program year than they were at the beginning?	Pupils’ evaluations (“rate your comfort level on a scale of 1-10...”)
Was the “buddy” approach successful? Did the positive “peer pressure” exerted by high-performing buddies benefit their low-performing peers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TiRs’ observations ▪ Regular classroom teachers’ observations ▪ Interviews with buddies and low-performing pupils
Do the regular classroom teachers see a difference in the participating pupils? (e.g. Do the youngsters participate more in class? Are their read-aloud skills improving? Do they seem more confident?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular classroom teachers’ observations ▪ Interviews with regular classroom teachers ▪ Interviews with low-performing pupils
Was there an increase in participating pupils’ overall academic averages by at least one letter grade or five points by the end of the third program year?	Report card data for participating pupils
Are program resources adequate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weekly reports from TiRs ▪ Monthly meetings with TiRs and program leaders ▪ Regular review of BBB Web site activity
How does BBB connect to WNYWP - to the organization as a whole?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluations by organization leadership ▪ Interviews with and surveys of members
How does BBB connect to Just Buffalo Literary Center – to the organization as a whole?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluations by organization leadership ▪ Interviews with and surveys of members
Have additional audiences/needs been identified? How can they be reached/met?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weekly reports from TiRs ▪ Monthly meetings with TiRs and program leaders ▪ Inquiries/interest from general community ▪ TiRs’ observations
What surprised us? How do we address it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular evaluation of all program components
What if pupils don’t progress as quickly or as thoroughly as we would have hoped?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Test scores ▪ TiRs’ notes and concerns ▪ Notes/concerns voiced by regular classroom teachers ▪ Low activity level on BBB website

Anticipated long-term outcomes: (4-6 years)

Questions	Data to collect
Did these pupils stay in school and graduate?	High school graduation rate among BBB pupils (Data from NYS Education Department)
Did their academic performance grow stronger by the end of their senior year? i.e. Did they continue to use skills they learned via BBB as they got older?	Overall academic average for BBB pupils (Data filed with NYS Education Department and NYS Board of Regents)
Are former BBB pupils furthering their education at college or trade school? If not, are they gainfully employed, or stuck in a dead-end job?	Post-graduation survey - What did they do? Did they go to college? Get a job?
Are regular classroom teachers developing new skills and lesson plans to help low-performing readers and writers? Are they expanding their repertoire?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews with regular classroom teachers ▪ Observations of regular classroom teachers
How can this program be replicated at other schools or for other audiences? (e.g. low-performing parents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Needs assessment of potential additional schools ▪ Consensus of all program stakeholders

Anticipated impact on the target population and the community:

Questions	Data to collect
Did parental involvement increase for BBB pupils? Did they spend more time reading to/with their children and helping them with their homework?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Observations by TiRs ▪ Observations by regular classroom teachers ▪ Interviews with BBB pupils ▪ Interviews with parents
Have low-performing parents of low-performing pupils been inspired to join literacy programs themselves? Or perhaps earn their GED?	Interviews with parents
Did public awareness of the problem increase? Are more organizations/businesses stepping forward to help BBB and similar programs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Media coverage ▪ Donations ▪ Inquiries about the program
Are businesses hiring former BBB pupils, whereas before the program they may not have (because the pupils lacked basic skills)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews with employers ▪ Input from chambers of commerce
Do all stakeholders feel connected to the project? Are their opinions sought along the way? Do they feel valued? Do they feel heard? Who else should be included?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weekly reports from TiRs ▪ Minutes of monthly project meetings ▪ Observations by program coordinator ▪ Observations by partners' leadership

Summary and Conclusion

By providing the \$443,000 needed to launch “Buffalo Book Buddies,” the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo will enable the WNY Writing Project and its partners to provide individualized reading and writing instruction, peer mentoring and new experiences to about 75 of Buffalo’s most in-need pupils.

For more than 20 years, WNYWP has improved writing instruction in the region’s classrooms through professional development for educators and programming for young writers. As scores on standardized tests plummet and high school dropout rates soar, WNYWP recognizes that now is the time to focus its efforts on pupils who need it the most, before the situation worsens.

Research proves that no matter what acronym is used – “DIRT: Daily Independent Reading Time” or “DEAR-Drop Everything and Read” – when children read daily they gain skills to become lifelong learners. According to research done by the Carnegie Corporation, “Writing well is not just an option for young people – it is a necessity.”

“Buffalo Book Buddies” will engender a love of reading, writing and the written word in all participants, and give them some necessary tools to prosper academically and for a lifetime.

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