



## LiGHT Grant Application 2023

### 2023 LiGHT Grant Cover Form and Guidelines



Name of individual, group or organization: United Way of Wells County

Contact name(s): Ben Renkenberger

Address: 122 Lamar St. Suite 118, Bluffton, IN 46714

Phone number: 260-824-5589 Email Address: uwdirector@unitedwaywells.org

Name of the program as it would appear on the grant award: Bright Beginnings Presents  
Bookends Program

Describe who the grant award will serve and approximate number affected: Children in Kindergarten  
identified as needing numeracy & literacy skills development assistance w/in Wells County  
Elementary Schools.

Dollar amount requested: \$ 3,000

Would the program be offered if only a partial grant from LiGHT is made? Yes

Summary paragraph of the grant award requested: The Bookends Program supports up to 20 students

➤ May be utilized for part of the presentation.

for all 4 County Elementary schools. for 2 teachers support these students weekly for 9 weeks,  
twice a week. This enhances their numeracy & literacy proficiency. The students will receive weekly  
books and homework supply boxes - All paid for by the United Way of Wells County. Pre/post assessments are conducted  
by the schools to prove efficacy.

Complete all requested items below:

1) This Cover Form

2) Project Narrative, 1-5 pages typed, including:

- What need in the Community will this program address? Give evidence to substantiate your request. (i.e., data, letters of recommendation, etc.)
- What do you want to do?
- What is your timeline?
- What results do you expect?
- If partnering with other organizations, please list.
- Describe the program and tell how the funds from the grant will be used based on your budget
- Signature page: To include endorsement of the project or program by the requesting agency's Board of Directors. This page must include a signature of the Board president.

3) Detailed budget

8/31/23

## ***Project Narrative Concerning our Bookends Program:***

### **Overview:**

Bookends (Building On Our Kindergarten Experience with New Daily Skills) is a program UW provides in the schools during the school day. Children are identified by the kindergarten teachers (up to 20) who need the most one on one help.

Retired kindergarten teachers (when available) are paid for by UW Bookends at the rate of \$37.50 an hour through United Way payroll to work with students once or twice each week for 9 weeks. Numeracy or literacy skills are identified as the needs. Principals will identify teachers for Bookends.

United Way Staff tries to meet with all the new teachers prior to them starting so they understand the importance of teaching the kids about the homework boxes and books.

Pre-assessments on letter recognition, letter sounds, sight words – post assessment at the end of the program of the same.

Children are given “homework boxes” that are put together and funded completely by the United Way and its community partners.

- Homework Boxes Defined
  - Pencil boxes containing items a child will need at home to complete homework including:
    - Two pencils
    - Pencil grip
    - Scissors
    - Triangle crayons
    - Small play-doh container
    - Markers
    - Children are also given 1 NEW BOOK each week of the program

Once some students are identified that could use the intervention services, a letter outlining the program will be sent to parents of potential participants. The letter will be from United Way and the individual school and teachers.

To prove and measure efficacy, most schools give aggregate NWEA or iReady scores for all kindergarten students and then with Bookends students separately. This will give us data to use for development and improvements to the program as well as proof of concept data for coming years efforts.

**Community Needs Addressed:**

The Wells County Community Foundation has identified four critical areas of need. The main area that this program addresses is the critical need for further support concerning Early Childhood Education. We directly address this need with organizing, facilitating, providing materials, and providing salaries for the elementary schools' recruited teachers that provide educational interventions. The students identified as those struggling to keep up or catch up with the standard educational goals and expectations are then addressed in an engaging, fun, and personal level. With the help of the principals of all four area elementary school as well as the teachers they recruit, we get to make a significant impact for these little ones together in a familiar environment that costs nothing to the family. This is significant as statistically more than 10% of children live in homes in Wells County that the household income is to be considered to be below the poverty line. A significant amount of the students that receive these services might not be able to afford these services without the current offerings of this program.

**Timeline:**

Projected start dates range from September of the school year through the end of the year depending on the availability of the funding as well as the availability of the teachers to be appointed as well as their availability to assist the children.

**Expected Results:**

We expect measurable growth during their 9-18 sessions in group and one-on-one tutoring. In the past, we have seen a significant increase in test scores. The students will become more confident and more capable in and outside of the classroom. The student is also afforded further positive reinforcement with the educational process as well as the teachers in their lives that build relationships that often last far beyond just their time in the Bookends Program. Long term expectations are a student that may have either stayed behind or fallen behind the average academic standard would receive the interventions that either catches the student up to be more in line with their peers or to be able to maintain a level of academic excellence that can potentially support a brighter future than a life that may not have had this intervention offered.

**Partnership:**

Every elementary school in Wells County and the school system as a whole is considered a partner. Julie Meitzler, Assistant Superintendent of BHS MSD, has agreed to not only continue to endorse this as a partner of the program but also answer any questions and give feedback to the efficacy of the program, its teachers, and the results. Additionally, all teachers and building principals are such an integral part of Bookends and the success of the program that we would encourage the committee to reach out for further information and feedback.

**Potential Budget:**

Below, you will find the maximum cost that United Way of Wells County could incur. We have raised some money through a matching grant with Indiana United Ways in partnership with the Lilly Endowment. That gets our organization to about 75% of the minimum costs (around \$12,000 minimum) for this year with a potential of only providing a total of around 33% of the maximum costs of almost \$25,000.

## Bookends Budget Details 2023/2024

### Teachers Pay Potential Max

4-8 teachers

160 hrs total shared per school X 4

640 total Hours Max

Paid @ \$37.50 Per Hr

\$24,000.00

### Homework Boxes

80 Total Student Boxes

--20 Students X 4 Schools

\$8 Per box

\$640

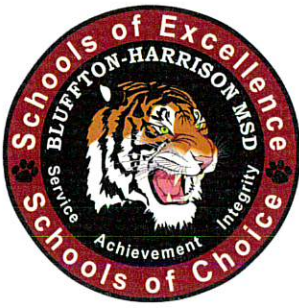
### Total Raised Funds for 2023/2024 School year:

IN-22 Indiana United Ways Lilly Matching Grant      -\$8,296.00

**Total Monies Left to be Raised:**

**\$16,344.00**





# BLUFFTON-HARRISON METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

*"A LEARNING COMMUNITY WHERE A QUALITY EDUCATION EMPOWERS  
ALL STUDENTS TO LEARN AND ACHIEVE TO THEIR FULL POTENTIAL."*

805 EAST HARRISON STREET  
BLUFFTON, IN 46714

PHONE 260.824.2620  
FAX 260.824.6011  
WWW.BHMSD.ORG

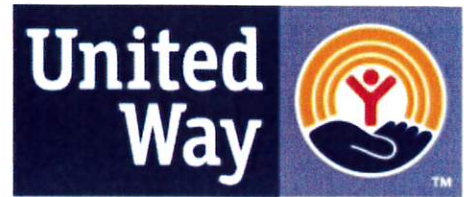
September 7, 2023

Dear LiGHT Members:

Being an educator in Wells County for 38 years, I've had the privilege of working with various community groups on various projects and activities. It is without hesitation that I write a letter to support the Bookends Program sponsored by the United Way of Wells County. The Bookends Program reinforces reading and phonemic skills for Kindergarteners who need the extra practice and support. Each year our elementary school enrolls approximately 130 new Kindergarten students. These students enter elementary school with varying experiences and needs. The Bookends program is one way we can support the foundation of our youngest learners. Bluffton-Harrison Elementary School is in its 4th year of utilizing the Bookends Program. We are hopeful to continue this program for years to come.

Sincerely,

Julie Meitzler, Assistant Superintendent



122 LaMar Street, Suite 118 Bluffton, IN 46714 260.824.5589 [UWdirector@unitedwaywells.org](mailto:UWdirector@unitedwaywells.org) [unitedwaywells.org](http://unitedwaywells.org)

The Board of Directors of United Way of Wells County endorses and budgets annually for the Bookends Program. This program has proven to be an effective and valuable program provided to the students in our Wells County Elementary schools as a supplemental resource to the elementary schools and thereby the children in our community that need early interventions.

This program intervenes in a cost-free way to the family and our county schools while providing one-on-one and group tutoring that helps the child catch up and/or stay on track to meet their individual goals in numeracy and literacy.

Please reach out with any questions, comments, or concerns!

Sincerely,

Jessica Bricker  
United Way of Wells County  
Board Chair

Ben Renkenberger  
United Way of Wells County  
Executive Director/CEO