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United Way Launches Born Learning in Prophetstown Free Incentive-Laden Program for the Entire Family

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PROPHETSTOWN, IL – United Way of Whiteside County has openings for its incentive-laden signature education program, Born Learning Academy, to be held at Prophetstown Elementary School on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from November 5 through 20, 2019.

Born Learning is a series of six classes for parents (or other caregivers) of children ages birth to 5, and provides practical, user-friendly ideas that help parents and caregivers become their child's best first teacher. Sessions, designed for the entire family, include free childcare (during sessions), giveaways — such as first aid kits, books, child-friendly tablets, and gift cards — and free supper. Sessions focus on showing how “everyday experiences” are valuable learning opportunities that help prepare children for kindergarten, concentrating on relationship-building, language skills, nutrition and health, and how children learn.

United Way of Whiteside County's Prophetstown sessions are Nov. 5, 6, 12, 13, 19, and 20 from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Class times are structured to ensure families are home in time for evening routines. Born Learning launched locally last fall in Fulton.

“We are ecstatic to kick off yet another important initiative for children in Prophetstown, Lyndon and Tampico,” said Diana Verhulst, CEO of United Way of Whiteside County. “This initiative will strengthen our relationship with local elementary school parents and children who are already benefiting from existing United Way educational offerings such as our long-standing book giveaway program, L.I.F.E., and our free summer lunch program, “Let's Feed Our Children,” Verhulst said.

Prophetstown preschool teachers Kelly Ottens and Chrstine Hanson will lead the classes. United Way directors will facilitate the classes, provide the curriculum and incentives, and give classroom support.

Other nonprofits in the region are collaborating, including the Regional Office of Education.

If you would like to register, volunteer, donate, or need more information about Born Learning, call United Way of Whiteside County at (815) 625-7973, sign up online at www.uwwhiteside.org, or stop by Prophetstown Elementary School, 301 W. 3rd St., Prophetstown, for a registration form. Signup deadline is Oct. 25, 2019. Class size is limited to 20 families, so sign up now.

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More about Born Learning

United Way of Whiteside County's Born Learning program began in 2018, and is funded in large part by Fulton resident Rosemary Huisingh, who previously partnered with television station WQPT in the Quad Cities to bring Scratch Jr. Coding classes to Riverbend Elementary School. In 2018, Ms. Huisingh entered a partnership with United Way of Whiteside County to help bring the signature Born Learning Academies to all of Whiteside County. Twenty families may enroll in each academy. Space is limited to ensure ease of participation.

United Way strives to meet parents where they are. That is the philosophy of the United Way Born Learning initiative, which has helped more than 15 million parents understand how to use everyday moments as learning moments. Founded in 2005 on an evidence-based curriculum established by early childhood faculty at Northern Kentucky University, the workshops are led by trained professionals — usually teachers, principals or other education staff — and are geared to adults, focusing on building relationships, children's language skills, nutrition and health, and how children learn.

More than 600 United Ways and partner organizations have used Born Learning's materials to help parents, families, and caregivers promote school readiness and literacy, and enlist business leaders and decision-makers in the cause.

Data shows that children whose families attend Born Learning academies are more likely to graduate from high school and go on for additional education. The Born Learning Academy can do more than strengthen your community's school readiness efforts. It can also help your school partners engage families before children start kindergarten.

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