



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**STATE OF TENNESSEE AND VOLUNTEER USA PARTNER WITH DOLLAR
GENERAL LITERACY FOUNDATION TO LAUNCH LOVE.READ.LEARN!
PROGRAM FOR PARENTS OF
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN**

~Free workshops provide fun learning activities for families~

NASHVILLE– Tennessee educators, state leaders, parents and children today attended a kick-off event for LOVE.READ.LEARN! – a new program designed to guide parents in ways to help their children learn to read and put them on the road to becoming successful lifelong learners. The Dollar General Literacy Foundation is helping to make the program possible with a \$250,000 grant.

“We know that learning doesn’t just happen in the classroom and that parents have a great ability to impact the educational achievements of their children. That’s why we are so excited about launching LOVE.READ.LEARN!,” said Dr. Julie McCargar, director of federal programs for Tennessee. “The goal our of department and this program is to get more parents in Tennessee engaged with their kids through learning activities that can be shared at home.”

LOVE.READ.LEARN! training is based on research by the National Reading Panel. The 2000 report published by the National Reading Panel identified five key skills and methods that are critical to creating a successful reader: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension.

“During a workshop, trainers introduce parents to easy-to-understand activities that incorporate these five skills,” said Liza McFadden, president of Volunteer USA Foundation, which administers the LOVE.READ.LEARN! program. “Moms and dads experience hands-on methods they can use during everyday activities with their kids. It’s quick, it’s easy, and it’s fun. That’s why parents love the training.”

Studies have clearly demonstrated that parental involvement with their children, from birth throughout the school years, positively impacts a child’s academic achievement and self-esteem. For example:

- Having parents teach specific literacy skills to their children is twice as effective as just having parents listen to their children read, and

- Training parents to teach their children reading through specific exercises produces the greatest reading gain. (*Source: The Effect of Family Literacy Interventions on Children's Acquisition of Reading - 2006 publication of the National Institute of Literacy*)

In Tennessee, LOVE.READ.LEARN! is being launched statewide. In the first year, Tennessee leaders have a goal of training 10,000 parents and elementary school children.

The 75-minute LOVE.READ.LEARN! workshops are offered at no cost to parents, who will also be given materials based on the literacy activities they learn. The goal is to teach parents fun, age-appropriate lessons so they'll be enthusiastic about doing these activities with their kids.

The Dollar General Literacy Foundation grant will fund the program development, training fees and parent materials for Tennessee's initial year.

"We are proud to support this family-friendly approach which educates our children and improves the quality of life for families who call Tennessee home," said David Beré, president of Dollar General. "The Love.Read. Learn! Program has created an exciting and innovative way to engage parents in their child's education. Volunteer USA and the Tennessee Department of Education will be great partners in the development and implementation of this initiative."

Elementary schools and community organizations in Tennessee interested in hosting a LOVE.READ.LEARN! workshop should visit www.lovereadlearn.org and www.volunteerusafoundation.org for more information about training opportunities.

About Dollar General:

Dollar General is a leading discount retailer with more than 8,300 neighborhood stores. Dollar General stores provide convenience and value to customers by offering consumable basic items such as food, snacks, health and beauty aids and cleaning supplies, as well as basic apparel, house wares and seasonal items at everyday low prices. The company has a longstanding tradition of supporting literacy and education. Since its inception in 1993, the Dollar General Literacy Foundation has awarded more than \$25 million in grants to nonprofit organizations, helping more than 1 million individuals take their first steps toward literacy, a general education diploma or English proficiency. To learn more about Dollar General, visit www.dollargeneral.com.

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