



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Grant from Consumers Energy Foundation Helps Provide Reading Opportunities for Thousands of Michigan Children** *Michigan Reads! Promotes Literacy to 580,000 Youngsters*

(LANSING, Michigan) Thousands of Michigan children will be inspired to read thanks to a \$32,000 contribution from the Consumers Energy Foundation that supports the Michigan Reads! One State, One Children's Book Program. The Consumers Energy Foundation grant was given to State Librarian Randy Riley today at Riddle Elementary School at an event hosted by Lansing School District superintendent Yvonne Caamal Canul.

The support from the Consumers Energy Foundation will help the Library of Michigan Foundation to continue providing books and reading kits to some 580,000 children in kindergarten through second-grade classrooms throughout the state. The effort promotes an early connection to books and reading for Michigan's next generation.

"We are committed to creating educational opportunities for children in the Michigan communities we serve, and Michigan Reads! is an excellent way to promote literacy," said David Mengebier, president of the Consumers Energy Foundation. "As we finish National Reading Month, we can think of no better time to highlight the importance of parents, grandparents, teachers and caregivers reading to young children."

"The Michigan Reads! program prompts Michigan residents of all ages to read aloud to children, inspiring a love of reading in both readers and listeners," said State Librarian Randy Riley. "We are so pleased that the Consumers Energy Foundation is supporting our efforts to bring children, parents and caregivers together, reading and learning."

The Michigan Reads! early literacy program is designed to highlight the importance of reading with children for literacy development. Each year a book is selected based on literary merit, readability and appeal to children. The Library of Michigan designs and sends a programming kit based on the book to all schools with a K-2 classroom, public libraries, Head Start programs, Great Start Readiness programs and child care resource centers in the state.

For the 2015-2016 program, the Library of Michigan selected "Do Unto Otters" by Michigan author and illustrator Laurie Keller as the featured book. Keller is from southwest Michigan and has published a number of award winning children's books, including "The Scrambled States of America" and "Arnie the Doughnut." The Library of Michigan selected her book "Do Unto Otters" which she read to Riddle Elementary students today, to encourage early literacy and also cooperation and kindness as readers learn about Mr. Rabbit and his new neighbors, the Otters.

The Consumers Energy Foundation is the philanthropic arm of Consumers Energy. It provides funding for a variety of areas including education, community, civic and cultural development, social services, the environment, and emerging issues.

Consumers Energy, its foundation, parent company CMS Energy, employees and retirees last year contributed over \$6.5 million to Michigan nonprofits. That included over \$535,000 for early-childhood programs.

For more information about Consumers Energy, go to [www.ConsumersEnergy.com](http://www.ConsumersEnergy.com).

For more information about Michigan Reads! and the Library of Michigan Foundation, go online to: [michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan.com](http://michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan.com)

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