

Enjoy Reading? Share The Love!

Agencies to Use Social Media for Book Drive for Terry Children's Center

Wilmington – The Children's Department is hoping the power of social media can be harnessed to give young people at its Terry Children's Center Facility an opportunity to further support their treatment efforts through the use of books and family-focused DVDs. Beginning Friday, February 1st, Department staff, in coordination with the Governor's Office, the Department of Health and Social Services and the Delaware Libraries will begin using Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Flickr to launch a month-long donation effort to the children at the Terry Center.

"The many benefits of reading to children, including how it sets them up for academic and life-long success, cannot be underestimated," said Governor Jack Markell. "We saw a great response during the Week of Service last month, as it relates to the goodwill and supportive nature of Delawareans. We also saw an increased level of engagement from the online community with the health-focused social media campaign. Harnessing the power of both efforts is a simple way we can support the boys and girls of the Terry Center."

During the month of February, the public is encouraged to donate new or gently used children's books that are appropriate for ages 6 – 12, as well as family-friendly DVD's that can be used at the Terry Center. Six Delaware libraries have offered to serve as designated drop-off spots for the items. They are the **Wilmington, Hockessin, Newark, Dover, Bridgeville, and Millsboro** Public Libraries. The books will be picked up by AmeriCorps members and delivered to the

Children's Department, where they will be screened for appropriateness. The agencies involved will use #helpDE and #KidsDE to engage the public through social media and facilitate online discussions regarding the many benefits of reading to children.

The Terry Children's Center (TCC) is a Residential Treatment Center serving children ages 6 – 12, who may be experiencing one or more of a variety of mental health challenges. Both residential and day treatment services are available. The TCC serves up to 42 children at any given time. TCC Director Tom Olson said donations of books will especially benefit the children they serve, because books and other reading materials are often not readily available in their homes.

"This book drive will help us address this discrepancy. Reading can open up new worlds to children, especially for those who may be developmentally or emotionally lagging behind others in their age group," said Olson. "Also, the one on one focused interaction of parents and staff reading to a child can give the child self confidence and a sense of being valued."

Throughout the month of February, follow the Children's Department on Twitter @DelKIDS for updates on the progress of the campaign. Photos will be available throughout the month on Flickr at www.flickr.com/photos/delchildrensdept.

"We're very excited to use social media in a way that allows citizens to become partners in helping the vulnerable children we serve. In many ways, this affirms our belief that children in residential treatment are children that have the same needs hopes and goals shared by all of us," said Karryl McManus, Acting Secretary for the Children's Department.

The Children's Department provides a range of services to children who have been abused, neglected, are dependent, have mental health or substance problems, and/or have been

adjudicated delinquent by the Courts. For more information,
please visit www.kids.delaware.gov.