

New literacy program aims at preschoolers

BY MARK RICE
Staff Writer

The Preschool Literate Community, a collaboration of Muscogee County agencies, will start its "Ready, Set, Read!" campaign with a free event from 5:00 - 7:30 p.m. April 11 in Peachtree Mall.

The main performer will be singer/actress/educator Wendy Bennett, the featured vocalist for the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's "Symphony Street" concerts for children. The event's other activities designed for children ages up to 5 will include storytelling, bookmaking, puppet shows and face-painting.

"Ready, Set, Read!" will provide educational materials and host informative events aimed at increasing literacy among young children in Muscogee County. Organizers hope the campaign will help Muscogee County become the first Certified Preschool Literate Community in Georgia.

First-year initiatives of the Preschool Literate Community include educating the public on the importance of spoken language and early literacy skills, recording data on the literacy skills of 4-year-olds entering kindergarten, and gathering information on home literacy environments.

Literacy packets will be available at local businesses and agencies. Each packet will explain how parents and caregivers can determine the level of literacy of young children. Those who complete the home environment checklist found in the packet and return it to the Preschool Literate Community will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win prizes.

The following agencies are involved in the Preschool Literate Community: Muscogee County Smart Start, Learning Together, Muscogee County School District, The Literacy Alliance, United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley, Head Start, Columbus State University, Columbus Technical College, Department of Early Care and Learning, Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, Columbus Public Library and local childcare centers.

For more, call Li Massey, director of early childhood and staff development for the Muscogee County School District, at (706) 748-2118.

Columbus Ledger Enquirer, March 31, 2006