

The **County Wide Reading Buddy Initiative** came at the request of school district leadership. They sought support for a program across the county in ten elementary schools. C4C leadership worked with the director of elementary education to develop the program and process. School counselors and lead staff in each of the elementary schools were provided with evidence-based mentor/volunteer training. Church and school partnership training was provided jointly with school counselors, school leadership, and lay leadership from local UMC's. Each of the ten partnerships developed a plan of services with emphasis on the Reading Buddy program. The development of volunteer training followed, including a component on proper reading techniques and child safety.

Once the reading program was initiated a C4C Council was formed to provide continued support to strengthen and deepen the work, while avoiding duplication. This council has begun to recruit additional denominations to participate.

Program expansion has included a summer neighborhood lunch program and broad events throughout the year. Churches provide providing clothing, school supplies, haircuts, and medical care for children. Weekend backpacks and other support are ongoing through this council.

The council initiated Networx this year which provides support to individuals and families who seek help in getting out of poverty.

Services

#### Poverty Awareness

A community-wide poverty seminar was provided as a "call to action."

C4C provided a poverty seminar for the entire school system on a teacher workday.

#### K-3 Literacy

A Reading Buddy program has been developed and initiated in each of the 10 elementary schools, with ongoing recruitment, training, and placement of volunteers. Over ninety students receive support with outcomes tracked.

#### Basic Needs

Large back-to-school events have been initiated to start each school year, by providing new clothing, shoes, haircuts, medical care, and a fun day for students and families.