

The Greenville News

Love of reading led Green to Lapsits program

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CONTRIBUTING WRITER

A book drive at her church and her acquaintance with Sara Mansbach, founder of Lapsits, led Linda Green to volunteer with the organization that focuses on the literacy needs of the very young.

"I couldn't think of anything better to spend my time on than sharing my love of reading and books," Green said. "When I was a principal at Sara Collins Elementary School, we had many children who were ready to read, but we also had children who didn't have the background to learn. So I knew this was an important area to focus on."

Green said that not having those "ready-to-learn" skills resulted in some students struggling and getting behind their classmates. "Very young children can learn to track words across a page, learn to turn the pages of a book and recognize that these symbols on a page mean something," Green said.

Green said that one aspect that particularly appealed to her about the Lapsits approach was the modeling of behavior for the parents. Working with the Early Head Start programs and reading to children in health clinic waiting rooms is especially helpful, Green said.

"If you don't know you should read to and talk to your child, then you won't do it."

Green has helped get donated books ready to distribute to children, and she's helped with book parties, including one recently held at the Fountain Inn Library. And she's helping to plan for an awareness event to be held in October for community leaders.

Green said she's found that whatever a volunteer's particular skills are, Lapsits can make use of them. "I'm good at organization, so that's where I can best help," Green said.

Additional volunteers are needed for reading in childcare centers and waiting rooms of health clinics and as committee members who plan special events and work to publicize the work of Lapsits.



Linda Green at home. Staff/Alan DeVorsey

More details

PROFILE Name: Linda Green **Occupation:** Retired from her position as assistant principal of Sara Collins Elementary
Hometown: Greenville **Education:** B.A. and M.A. from Furman in elementary education **Family:** Husband, Wofford, employed by the S.C. Department of Transportation; a son, Bryan Howard of Simpsonville; and a daughter, Leeann, a student at Greenville Tech.
Church: First Baptist of Greenville **Hobby:** Reading

"Businesses and churches could hold book drives. We need books to give to the children and to help parents begin to start their own home libraries."

Green said that newborns through 3-year-olds, the group targeted by Lapsits, are more capable of learning at that age than at any other. "Children develop so quickly and learn so many skills in those early years," Green said.

"If parents can spend 10 minutes a day with their child on their lap, the positive bonds between parent and child will grow. The child will learn the sounds and the cadence of the language."

Green serves on the program committee of Lapsits and sees the collaborative nature of the organization as a plus. Board members include representatives of a number of different agencies in the Greenville area, all concerned about early literacy.

"The teaching component of this program is what makes it really distinctive," Green said. "We're targeting parents in economically disadvantaged communities and teaching them how to instill a love of language in their children. We're teaching parents that reading can be fun — both for them and their children."