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## Book-a-Rama Initiative Planned in Honor of President Comstock's Inauguration

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# Book-a-Rama Initiative Planned in Honor of President Comstock's Inauguration

## Quick Facts

- The books will be distributed to high-need elementary schools in Rock Hill and eight additional school districts: York, Clover, Fort Mill, Chester, Lancaster, Fairfield, Cherokee and Union.
- The Book-a-Rama will be from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. on March 27.



ROCK HILL, S.C. -- Winthrop University and **Rock Hill Reads**, together with **Rock Hill Schools** and the **Early Learning Partnership of York County**, today announced **Book-a-Rama**, a community book drive and reading celebration in honor of Jamie Comstock's Inauguration as Winthrop's 10th president.

The goal for Book-a-Rama is to collect 5,000 new or gently loved children's books to be distributed to high-need elementary schools within Rock Hill School District 3 and eight additional school districts (York, Clover, Fort Mill, Chester, Lancaster, Fairfield, Cherokee, and Union) for current and summer reading initiatives.

**Mayor Doug Echols**, convener of Rock Hill Reads, announced the inaugural week event at the March 6 Rock Hill Reads meeting. "Reading on grade level by third grade is essential to success. Children who have access to books will simply achieve more in life. As Mayor, that is important to me, and to Rock Hill."

Comstock is widely known for her focus on access to quality higher education and attainment of a degree as the best way to create an educated workforce, prepare individuals for democratic citizenship, and promote upward mobility. "But the path to college starts with successful early learning strategies. That is why I am proud to have our day of service during Inauguration week designed around Book-a-Rama," Comstock said. "This broad community effort to benefit children is consistent with Winthrop's core values and my own commitment to education the blends liberal arts, professional programs, and civic engagement."

This project will result in greater access to print materials in children's homes and provide supplemental reading material for upcoming programs to prevent reading loss during the summer months. There are currently 46 book donation locations to support Book-a-Rama.

"I am eager to serve as chairperson of this community-university event because I know that learning to read is critical to a child's success – in school and in life. Students who don't read well by third grade often struggle to complete high school," said Sylvia Echols, community chairperson for Book-a-Rama. "Book-a-Rama addresses that key factor of success."

Winthrop students, faculty and staff, alumni, retirees, business and community partners will collect book contributions through the end of March. On Thursday, March 27, from 11 a.m.-3 p.m., volunteers will sort and pack books according to reading level for distribution to community children in

need and celebrate the value of reading with local children.

Mayor Echols added that the outcome of so many community partners coming together to support literacy was the intention of launching a group like Rock Hill Reads.

“This collaboration represents exactly why we take time to come together to discuss what is important in our community. We appreciate Dr. Comstock’s commitment to ensuring that at such a special time in Winthrop’s campus life, she is reinforcing the core value of service during her inaugural week.” Mayor Echols added.

According to 2009 SC Kids Count data, South Carolina ranked in the bottom 10 states on fourth grade reading. In low-income communities, there is only one age-appropriate book per 300 children. Research shows that children without access to books are well on their way to becoming one of the 33 percent of fourth graders who cannot read at the basic level.

“Our summer reading programs need books to replenish their supply so that our children do not lose valuable reading skills over the summer break. Book-a-Rama is a way for everyone to support the value that reading brings to our quality of life,” added Teresa Creech, executive director for [Early Learning Partnership of York County](#).

Participate in this important community service project by donating books; donating money to buy new books; volunteering to sort books at Winthrop’s West Center on March 27 from 11 a.m.-3 p.m.; volunteering to read to children at a local Pre-K, Boys & Girls Clubs or after school program; volunteering your business, school, or organization as a “Book-a-Rama” Community Book Drive; and sharing the event on social media.

Book donations may be made at the following locations:

- City of Rock Hill – 10 locations**
- City of Rock Hill Council on Neighborhoods**
- Comporium - all York & Lancaster offices**
- Allen Tate Realtors - Rock Hill office**
- Bella Cole Salon – Ebenezer Road**
- Family Trust Federal Credit Union- all York County locations**
- First Citizens Bank - all York County branches**
- Williams & Fudge Corporation**
- York County Library – Rock Hill branch**

For more information, please contact Kim Keel 803/323-1451 [keelk@winthrop.edu](mailto:keelk@winthrop.edu) or Ellin McDonough 803/323-2141 [mcdonoughe@winthrop.edu](mailto:mcdonoughe@winthrop.edu).

### **About Winthrop and the Inauguration of 10th President Jayne Marie Comstock**

The March 24-29 Inauguration of Jayne Marie (Jamie) Comstock as Winthrop’s 10th president signals a new era in the history of this top-ranked regional public comprehensive university. Comstock has charted a bold course for Winthrop’s future, redefining public higher education by prioritizing both quality and access in a single institution. Serving more than 6,000 students, Winthrop blends liberal arts, professional programs, global understanding, and civic engagement in a diverse community of learners. Students leave Winthrop prepared for successful careers, engaged in a democratic society, responsive to local and global concerns, and grounded in values that give meaning to their lives. Comstock’s vision for Winthrop will ensure that all students - regardless of demographic category or life experience - have access to an exceptional public higher education. Comporium is the proud presenting sponsor of Inauguration activities.

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