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## Literacy program goes beyond merely teaching

A Miami University literacy program is going beyond the fundamentals of passing on the skill and joy of reading. It's building the self-esteem of local middle school students and giving them a chance to share their social conscience with younger children.

Members of Teens for Literacy — a group made up of students from Garfield Junior High in Hamilton, Vail Middle School in Middletown, and Merry, Porter and Schwab middle schools in Cincinnati — go to elementary schools in the area and try to help younger children progress from being non-readers to being avid readers.

Each school's literacy team, composed of five student leaders, develops its own game plan to encourage other students to read. Teams have promoted book fairs, sent reading surveys home with students, and designed and paid for a billboard

encouraging literacy.

Not only does this program promote literacy, it instills a sense of empowerment in the teen-agers.

These teens also learn the importance of sharing themselves with those in need, and they pass on those values to another generation.

In this era of two-breadwinner families and dwindling public financial support, the efforts of volunteers are crucial to plugging the gaps in our children's education. If we accept that we are to be our brothers' keepers, we can't at the same time expect the government to do it for us.

When a child learns to read, the knowledge of the world is opened to him. When he reads for pleasure, a world of ideas is his to consider. When he teaches another to read, he's become a better person, and he's made the world a better place.