



Savannah - Chatham County  
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# L.O.V.E. MENTORS

Helping  
Children  
Learn

[www.lovementors.org](http://www.lovementors.org)

Spring, 2021

## MESSAGE FROM THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

**O**ne year ago, when schools shut down with everything else, L.O.V.E. Mentors didn't even have time to say good-bye to the students they had come to know. While mentoring stopped, the L.O.V.E. Leadership Team stayed in contact with the Board of Education and individual schools to see how we could continue to help our students. Because plans for schools changed frequently, and regulations about who could enter schools were so strict, L.O.V.E. was not able to continue mentoring individual students, however, there are three main ways we have stayed involved:

- We were encouraged by SCCPSS to try a pilot program of **virtual mentoring**.
- We continue to provide funds for students to attend **summer camp**.
- We **donated books** to schools as we have done in the past.

We look forward to fall with the intention to resume mentoring. SCCPSS recognizes how much work there will be to help kids get back on track after this lost year, and they count on L.O.V.E. Mentors to help.



## VIRTUAL MENTORING PILOT PROGRAM

**W**orking with SCCPSS, L.O.V.E. began a pilot program of virtual mentoring. In this format, the mentor joined the classroom teacher via ZOOM. Sometimes the students were at home and other times they were in the classroom. The teacher then was able to move the mentor and the student into a Breakout Room where they could communicate one-on-one. The student was then able to "share the screen" with the mentor and bring up the reading or lesson for the day so they could both see the material. Sometimes the session was reading a book and other times math lessons, reading comprehension exercises, or test prep. The Pilot Program is currently in effect in three schools. Haven is planning to expand the pilot. Gadsden is very active, and L.O.V.E. has provided some students with headphones in an effort to help the students stay focused with the mentor. William's mentors work with fourth grade students and has strong support by the principal and classroom teacher. The Pilot Program has its ups and downs. There were some very funny interactions with the kids, and some very frustrating situations with the students and the technology.



We learned a great deal and tried to adapt to the circumstances. We certainly gained enormous respect for the teachers faced with a year of virtual learning.

Since we are now so close to the end of the school year, we do not plan to expand the virtual mentoring program. We trust that by fall, students will be back in school and the mentors will be with them. However, if something unexpected develops, we believe that we have learned the lessons and have the tools to go forward with virtual mentoring.

**M**any, many thanks to the dedicated mentors who worked so hard to establish the Virtual Mentoring Pilot Program. We learned so much and many students benefited from their on-line efforts.

# Thank You

## GADSDEN

Peggy Hilleary  
Fran Stanley  
Beverly Oliver  
Carol Abercrombie

## HAVEN

Kevin Dutton  
Emily Miller  
Renate Jacobs  
Roy Samras  
(started at Pulaski)  
Teresa Stovall (  
started at Pulaski)

## PULASKI

Tim Andrews - also L.O.V.E.  
technical interface  
with the BOE  
Eric Gilster  
Lana Gilster

## WILLIAMS

Marianne Claysmith  
Carol Fallon  
Tom Rood  
Mary Sommer

## SUMMER CAMP

By: Carol Black

**E**very summer L.O.V.E. offers summer camp scholarships for students that we mentor. This school year we haven't had the access to our kids like past years, but we recognize the need is still there.



Frank Callen Boys and Girls Club and West Broad Street YMCA will be open this summer. Both camps run full day programs all summer.

Campers enjoy fun activities as

well as academic help. Camp also provides lunch to the campers.



L.O.V.E. has partnered with them for many years sending numerous students to camp.

This summer L.O.V.E. has donated money to both camps to be used for scholarships to campers that are in need.

We have given West Broad YMCA money for ten scholarships and Frank Callen money for 40 scholarships as well as a contribution for them to hire a junior counselor.

# BOOK PROGRAM CONTINUES IN A NEW WAY

By: Bill Monroe

As a long time L.O.V.E. mentor I must admit that one of the times I enjoy most



with the children is having them sign the L.O.V.E. sticker inside the book that identifies it as their own. As we all know, there is something special about having your own book, especially when you have earned it by reading it proficiently. The L.O.V.E. Book program was developed to help children further their love of reading while hopefully sharing their talent with family members.

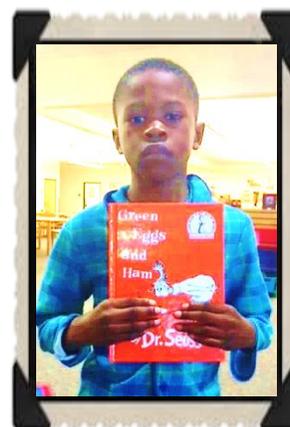
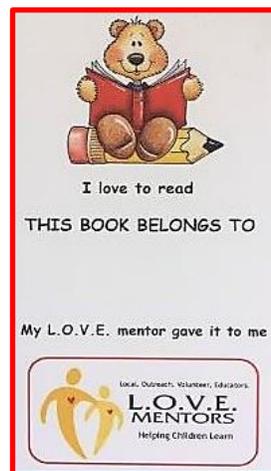
Since much of learning has been virtual this year and mentors have not been able to mentor in the schools, the children are missing out on the pleasure and excitement that comes with mastering and then owning a book. We are trying to mitigate the impact of this by providing our schools with a supply of books that can be given to children or shared with them to help in a creative way.

We are working with the schools to develop a plan to distribute up to 100 books per school. All the books will have the friendly L.O.V.E. label inside and are targeted at a specific purpose chosen by that school.

For example, Low Elementary has chosen to have 50 titles for their library so that a child can read the book there and then receive a copy. Haven has targeted a specific 4<sup>th</sup> grade class to receive 40 books and Hodge has targeted first grade students. Some schools are still developing plans for the books, but all are excited by the prospects of this added opportunity.

The first supply of books has been ordered and should arrive shortly. We will be asking for some volunteer help to open boxes, place stickers on front page and mark contents so keep an eye out for an email on the subject.

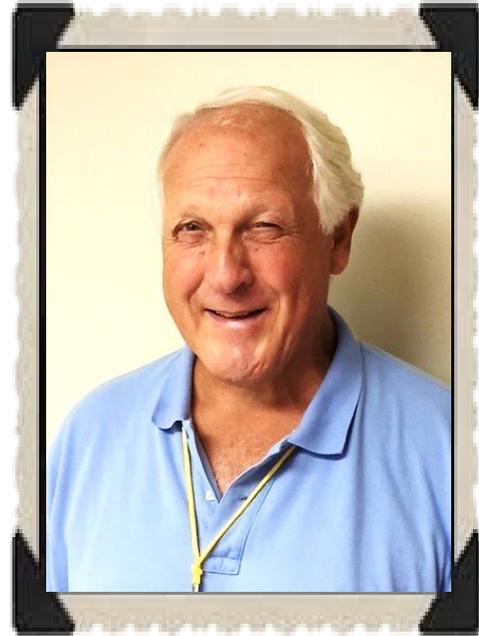
“I sure look forward to seeing that smile when we give a book to a child next year”.



# THE WAY FORWARD: NOW MORE THAN EVER

By: Dan Malachuck

**B**efore the schools shut down, L.O.V.E. Mentors were working one-on-one with nearly 300 children each week. Student selection varies among teachers, counselors and schools, but these children shared a common attribute: they needed extra help. Now, after many months of virtual class experience that is especially challenging for the students we work with, it is not difficult to understand that the need for help will be even greater than before.



Returning to our work in the schools in a few months is beginning to look promising. The Administration is planning to open the schools, with most or almost all students returning to the classrooms. L.O.V.E. will plan to be there soon thereafter.

- Vaccination of teachers and staff is likely to be universal and most share a current confidence that the vaccinations work! Vaccinated people are not getting sick and, so far, it seems that they do not transmit sickness to others.
- The overwhelming majority of young children do not seem to be impacted by the virus; hence, most private and parochial schools, including in this area, and many public schools elsewhere in the US and abroad have already been open with few health difficulties. In Savannah, particularly among the schools we serve, many students live in multi-generational households or rely on older (and more virus vulnerable) family for after-school care. This probably made the go/no go decision complicated, but these conditions are now somewhat mitigated. A large portion of these older populations will have been vaccinated. And, before this year's end, many elementary age students may be vaccinated as well.
- All (or nearly all) of our L.O.V.E. Mentors and the population that will yield new mentor recruits have likely been vaccinated. By this Summer or Summer's end, perhaps sooner, many medical experts predict that masks may no longer be needed.

L.O.V.E. Mentors work with already challenged children. Given the additional challenges these children now face, we expect many teachers will have candidates for L.O.V.E. Mentor support. But, even in pre-covid days, it has always taken several weeks after opening day for classes to be stabilized and then for L.O.V.E. assignments to be made. This year is likely to be even more complicated as virtual schooling has yielded uneven outcomes and the need for good initial assessments.

Accordingly, as we take our cues from the school system, it is difficult to predict a L.O.V.E. starting date, except to expect that it may take a week or two more (e.g., late September) before we begin. Site Directors at each of our schools will begin to check with the Mentors on our roster as we gain more certainty about each school's schedules, protocols and readiness.



L.O.V.E. believes that improving a child's education is the foundation for improving quality of life. Classroom teachers have little opportunity to work one-on-one with students. L.O.V.E. provides this benefit to students.



## L.O.V.E. Leadership Team

School Liaison-SCCPS..... Open Position  
Mentor Recruiting and Assimilation .....Dan Malachuk, Officer  
Reporting Secretary ..... Sam Lambert, Officer  
Treasurer.....Kevin Dutton, Officer  
Mentor Resources and Training ..... Ginny Pierce  
Publicity and Events ..... Carol Fallon and Denis Healy  
Camp Coordinator ..... Carol Black  
Training Co-Chair .....Catherine Ruhl  
At Large ..... Bill Monroe  
Administrative Support .....Mike O'Neill and Roy Samras  
Publication Design .....M. Louise Walters, The Leadership Center



**Thank You For  
Helping Children Learn**