

WALDORF, MD -Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) participated in *Read Across America* today serving as a guest reader at Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary School in Waldorf. In its 11th

year,

[Read Across America](#)

is a national reading awareness effort held on or around Dr. Seuss's birthday that focuses the country's attention on the importance of motivating children to read. During his visit, Rep. Hoyer read Dr. Seuss's

The Foot Book

to a roomful of kindergarten students and discussed why it is critical for young readers to take every opportunity to practice their reading skills.

"It cannot be overstated just how critical it is for young people to develop and practice their reading skills, not just in school, but every opportunity that presents itself," **stated Rep.**

Hoyer.

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hildren who read more frequently, and those who are read to at home, develop stronger reading skills and have a higher success rate in school. That is why it is important for all of us - teachers, parents, community leaders, all of us

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to encourage our young readers and work with them to develop an appreciation for the great and many benefits that reading has to offer."

Rep. Hoyer also received an update on the County's early childhood education programs and the success of its Judy Centers. Judy Centers, named in tribute to Rep. Hoyer's late wife Judith Hoyer, are extensions of local school systems that promote school readiness through comprehensive community-based childhood and family services. State evaluations of the Judy Centers have shown increased access to high-quality services for low-income and special needs children, and that they improve school readiness and minimize the "achievement gap" at the start of first grade.

"My wife Judy was a strong believer in the value of early childhood care and had a vision of full-service early childhood and family learning centers - known today in Maryland as Judy Centers," stated Rep. Hoyer. "These centers encourage collaboration among the entire community to provide the educational support, health care, adult education services, family literacy, and programs that help ensure the health and well-being of our young people. I am proud - and I know Judy would be as well - of the great success Judy Centers have had in helping ensure that more Maryland children enter school ready to learn and achieve."

Last year, Rep. Hoyer was successful in securing \$5 million for a national Full-Service Community Schools initiative to promote school readiness through greater coordination between public schools, community-based organizations, and public/private partnerships. The funding will be made available as competitive grants to assist public elementary or secondary schools across the country in developing these crucial partnerships and providing improved services to children and families.

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