

Accomplishing our Literacy Goals at Hilltop

With the 2025-2026 school year well underway, the teachers and students at the Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center are concentrating on improving student reading skills.

Center Youth Services Coordinator, Teresa Allen, says that many different materials are being used and an expanding number of children are participating.

“We have added a 4th group, which consists of children in grades 6th through 8th. We believe 4 groups will allow us to better support and serve the children academically. We are creating a Hilltop store where our children can purchase prizes using ‘Hilltop dollars’ they’ve earned by completing an academic assignment or by demonstrating outstanding behavior. Each child would earn points each day, and those points would be calculated into dollars at the end of the week.”



Teresa says the teachers try to make the project fun. “Youth made career posters to hang above their (coat)hooks and monster plates to decorate a wall, as well as a chance to vote on their favorite football team. All in all, it was a good month....”

Finally, Center Deputy Director, Brandon Furrowh, reports on the Hilltop inaugural Heroes Gala on Saturday, September 20, 2025.



“We honored County Councilman (and former long time Hilltop Executive Director) Jea P. Street, (longtime friend of Hilltop) Heidi Beck, and (philanthropists) Gordon and Fran Fisher. The event was held at the Hyatt’s Riverfront Events location, where all who attended enjoyed great speeches, food, and fellowship. Current Executive Director, Dr. Michelle



Williams, kept the evening flowing with short but sentimental speeches, tying one section of the evening into another.” According to Brandon, “the 120-plus attendees of the event were a mix of long-time supporters, current staff members, board members, former board members, presenters, Hilltop partners, and members of the surrounding community.” The event raised a profit of nearly \$5,000! Thanks to all who participated and contributed to this gala event.



Eric F. Mease
Member, Board of Directors
Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center