

Described as an “angel in disguise,” Mark Arey helped construct Books at a Steal, the bookstore created to encourage reading in Lee. Arey, AKA

“The Foreman,” built and painted shelves, supervised construction and even helped decorate. But he doesn’t want any attention. “When we try to

thank *him*,” says Carolyn Spivey, one of those responsible for the store, “he turns it around and thanks *us* for letting him be a part of it all.”



WINTER 11 :: No. 12

Broadway students keep friends warm for winter 2

More contributions help build our community 2

COMPASSION '11 focuses spotlight on education 3

books. and so much more.

Wandering past the red and blue awning downtown, it’s tempting to see Books at a Steal as just another used bookstore.

That would be a mistake.

While the bright storefront is, indeed, packed with wide-ranging titles, this store is less about turning a profit and more about spreading the joy of reading.

There’s “Mom and Preschooler Story Hour” every Tuesday morning, where former teachers and special guests like Santa and The Cat In the Hat take children on reading adventures to see new things and visit new places.

Authors drop by from time to time to read their work, discuss how they go about writing and sign books for local fans.



Even book sales are not merely a way to generate income. Prices are kept low so everyone can have access to books. Paperbacks are just a dollar; most hardbacks are \$3.50.

And, all proceeds are used by the Lee County Partnership for Children and

The Coalition for Families in Lee County to enhance reading programs in the community.

It’s one of those “win-win” situations for everyone. Customers can find affordable books and every dollar helps foster a community that reads.

Bears and More Bears.
Children enjoy stories about the furry creatures during “Mom and Preschooler Story Hour” at Books at a Steal.

Books at a Steal
106 S. Steele Street
Sanford
919.776.0642

Used bookstore with profit contributed to literacy programs in the community.

507 North Steele Street
Sanford, North Carolina 27330
919.776.5823 :: leecountyunitedway.org

United Way
of Lee County



broadway elementary donates coats for kids



Just when you think people may be losing the spirit of giving, something like the Broadway Elementary coat drives comes along.

Advertised with posters, letters to parents and e-mail to teachers, last fall's effort collected 100 coats so children could stay warm for the winter.

Third-grade teacher Emma Smith, who coordinates the drive, says the new and gently-used coats are cleaned with care before they're given to students at the school. Remaining coats are then provided to others in the community.

Over three years, students and

teachers have made 300 neighbors warm during some very cold winters.

"It's something that's on my heart when I see that kids are coming to school without coats," says Smith. "There was an opportunity."

That opportunity keeps expanding. Last fall, the drive also collected about 1,000 cans of food in a 10-day period for families needing assistance.

Next year, it could become larger still, with some students talking about adding books to the effort.

The school's coat drive not only warms the body, but the heart as well.

united way begins allotting contributions

Volunteers got to work in early March to decide where United Way contributions can do the most good for the next fiscal year.

In what's called the "community investment" process, a team of volunteers begins by reviewing written applications requesting financial help. The evaluation includes a careful look at each organization and its financial situation, as well as on-site visits to

see, first hand, how each operates.

Then, the team gets together to determine the community's most urgent needs within the United Way's goals of helping people achieve their potential through education, a stable income and healthy lives.

Based on the information about nonprofits and community needs, the team decides how to allot the total amount of contributions available.

No decision is made by members of the United Way staff.

It can become a fairly involved process, since the goal is to be good stewards of the contributions people generously provide.

That includes making sure that ministries and nonprofits are effective and operating with integrity. It also means making sure contributions are being invested best for everyone.

▶ local groups offer christmas joy

Thanks to Lee County contributors, the local Salvation Army provided Christmas gifts for 637 local children in December. Whenever you're tempted to believe giving doesn't really matter, consider the joy you just brought to so many families. *News brief from Facebook.com/UWLee.*

thanks to our corporate sponsors

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- Lori Baker & RBC Centura
- Pentair Water Pool & Spa
- Progress Energy
- The Sanford Herald
- WWGP-AM/WFJA-FM

▶ trion donates binders for area teachers

Trion donated what was best described as "boxes and boxes" of three-ring binders to the Communities in Schools Teacher Resource Room in February. A strong supporter of the United Way, Trion manufactures air filtration and humidification systems in Sanford. *News brief from Facebook.com/UWLee.*



Fran Bradley, a retired teacher, reads to preschoolers during "Story Hour" in Sanford.

▶ nonprofits contribute to the local economy

Are nonprofits a valuable part of the local economy? Data show that 58 nonprofits in Lee County have a combined expenditure of \$16.8 million annually and employ 685 people. These 2007 data don't even include churches, nonprofits with expenditures less than \$25,000 and those with three or fewer employees. *News brief from Facebook.com/UWLee.*

UPDATE ON THE UNITED WAY :: JAN HAYES

school innovation is the focus of compassion '11

From its inaugural session three years ago, the COMPASSION community roundtable has tackled many critical problems to improve human services across Lee County.

With Project PK-14 now in full swing, this year's roundtable will focus the spotlight on education.

Led by top community figures and funded through a grant from the United Way Worldwide, Project PK-14 is part of a national effort to cut high school dropout rates and prepare all students for success in a two- or four-year college.



Exactly what new opportunities will be offered are being discussed now. But the plans could be big; ideas even include guaranteeing two years of financial aid at Central Carolina Community College for any Lee County high school graduate.

The centerpiece of COMPASSION '11 is a panel of education, civic and business leaders discussing education and what might be done as part of Project PK-14.

Everyone participating in the roundtable gets a say during a working lunch, when groups will discuss and suggest ways to enhance local education in several specific areas.

Plan now to attend COMPASSION '11 on April 14, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the McSwain Extension Center in Sanford.



▶ **March 10.** The Cat in the Hat Visits Story Hour. The beloved character from Dr. Seuss reads to preschoolers. 10:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Free. Books at a Steal, 106 S. Steele Street, Sanford.

▶ **March 28.** LaVerne Thornton. The master storyteller and author of the children's book, "Walk in 'e Moon," reads from his work and signs books. Books at a Steal, 106 S. Steele Street, Sanford.

▶ **April 12.** Blood Drive. First Baptist Church, 202 Summit Drive, Sanford. 1:30 to 6 p.m. For an appointment, call the Lee County American Red Cross, 919.774.6857, or visit redcrossblood.org.

▶ **April 14.** COMPASSION '11. The annual community roundtable focuses on enhancing opportunity for students. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. \$10. McSwain Center, Sanford. Contact Michele Bullard, 919.776.5823.

GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.

Descrito como un “ángel disfrazado,” Mark Arey ayudó a construir la tienda Books at a Steal, una librería creada para favorecer la lectura en el Condado de Lee. Arey, alias

“El Capataz,” construyó y pintó estantes, supervisó la construcción, e incluso, ayudó a decorar. Pero él no deseaba ninguna atención. “Cuando tratamos de darle las

gracias,” dice Carolyn Spivey, una de las personas responsables por la tienda, “nos devuelve las gracias a nosotros por permitirle tener parte en ello”.



libros, y mucho más

Caminando al frente del toldo rojo y azul al centro de la ciudad, uno se siente tentado a ver a Books at a Steal como sólo otra librería de libros de segunda mano.

Eso sería un error.

Mientras el escaparate brillante está, verdaderamente, lleno de amplios títulos, el propósito de esta tienda es menos el sacar beneficios que extender el disfrute de la lectura.

Hay horas de lectura para mamá y niños preescolares todos los martes por

la mañana, donde las personas que eran maestros e invitados especiales como Santa Claus y a El Gato en el Sombrero llevan a niños a aventuras de lectura para ver nuevas cosas y visitar nuevos lugares.

Autores visitan de vez en cuando para leer su trabajo, discutir su proceso de escribir y firmar libros para aficionados locales.

Las ventas de libro no son la única manera de generar ingresos. Los precios se mantienen bien bajos para que todos

pueden tener acceso a libros. Los libros de bolsillo cuestan sólo un dólar; la mayoría de los libros encuadernados cuestan \$3.50.

Todas las ganancias son utilizadas por la Asociación para Niños del Condado de Lee y La Coalición para Familias del Condado de Lee para aumentar programas de lectura en la comunidad.

Es una situación de ganancia para todos. Los clientes pueden encontrar libros económicos y cada dólar ayuda a favorecer una comunidad que lee.

► escuela primaria broadway dona abrigos

Tan pronto que usted piense que la gente podría perder las ganas de dar, llega la campaña para abrigos de la Escuela Elemental Broadway.

Anunciado por carteles, cartas a padres y correo electrónico a maestros, el esfuerzo del otoño pasado reunió 100 abrigos para que niños pudieran tener abrigos para el invierno.

La maestra Emma Smith dice que los abrigos nuevos y poco utilizados se limpian

cuidadosamente antes de dárselos a estudiantes en la escuela. Entonces se dan los abrigos que quedan a otros en la comunidad.

“Es algo que está en mi corazón cuando veo que niños vienen a la escuela sin abrigo,” dice Smith. “Había una oportunidad”.

Esa oportunidad sigue creciendo. Durante la campaña el otoño pasado, también se colectaron aproximadamente 1,000 latas de alimentos para familias que necesitan ayuda.

► viene la compasión del año '11

Desde su sesión inaugural hace tres años, la mesa redonda de la COMPASION de la comunidad ha enfrentado muchos problemas para mejorar los servicios humanos a lo largo del Condado de Lee.

La sesión de este año el 14 de abril se enfoca en las escuelas, y representa la discusión entre líderes de la educación, el negocio y la comunidad acerca de los desafíos adelante.

Todos los que asisten el evento podrán hablar durante un almuerzo de trabajo, cuando los grupos debatirán y sugerirán cómo mejorar la educación local en varias áreas específicas.