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Eureka Community Initiative Reaches New Milestones with Mesquite Reads

MESQUITE, NV – As summer heats up, so does one of Mesquite's most impactful community initiatives. The Mesquite Reads program, now in its 11th year, is underway at JL Bowler Elementary School in Bunkerville. With 85 students enrolled and more joining daily, the program is on track to serve 100 local children in grades K–4, the largest group ever served at the Bunkerville location.

Launched and funded in part by the Eureka Community Initiative (ECI), the Mesquite Reads program aims to ensure all local children are reading at grade level by the third grade. Since 2014, more than 1,500 students have participated in the program. In total, \$291,488 has been donated by ECI to support this mission, alongside the distribution of over 4,000 free books through community giveaway events.

"At Eureka, our commitment goes beyond hospitality — it extends directly into the classroom," said Andre Carrier, CEO of Eureka Casino Resort. "Mesquite Reads embodies the very heart of the Eureka Way — creative collaboration, compassionate service, and a relentless belief in the potential of our community's children."

This summer's four-week session, running from May 27 to June 18, is designed around small-group instruction with class sizes of just 10 to 15 students. Each day begins with a healthy breakfast and outdoor activity, followed by focused literacy sessions.

Younger students work on sight words, fluency, and reading comprehension, while older students explore storytelling and writing. After lunch, the curriculum shifts to individualized math instruction, and the day concludes with special activities such as loom-knitting hats for NICU babies — teaching students not only academic skills, but also compassion and community involvement.

A highlight of the program is Super Summer School Spaghetti Thursdays, when Eureka employee-owners and community partners volunteer to serve hearty lunches of spaghetti and meatballs. According to Gerri Chasko, Director of Eureka Community Initiative, it's "85 smiling faces that make it all worth it." To date, more than 800 lunches have been served through this beloved program tradition.

"We test the students at the beginning and again at the end. This way, we can show donors and the community that their support results in real academic growth," said Chasko, who has led ECI for 19 years. "The goal isn't just better grades — it's a better future."

The Eureka Community Initiative, formed in 2012, is rooted in the company's deep investment in its hometown. Founded in 1997 and 100% employee-owned since 2015, Eureka Casino Resort has powered more than 50 community programs across education, outreach, economic development, and citizenship.

That mission also extends into mental health. As part of its Mental Health Initiative, ECI has donated \$71,000 to help fund the mental health professional at Virgin Valley High School, enabling extended availability for students, staff, and parents.

"Our employee-owners are personally invested in this town. Their kids go to these schools. That's why programs like Mesquite Reads matter so much to us," added Carrier. "It's not just philanthropy — it's personal for every one of us."

For more information on Mesquite Reads or other Eureka Community Initiative efforts, visit www.eurekamesquite.com