



Olympic skater Kristi Yamaguchi launches keiki literacy program

By Web Staff

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Olympic gold medal skater and “Dancing with the Stars” champion Kristi Yamaguchi launched an early childhood literacy program Tuesday with Kalihi Kai Elementary School and Linapuni Elementary School as part of her Always Dream Foundation.

More than 120 kindergartners at these two schools will be participating in Always Reading, a program designed to increase literacy by encouraging more family involvement.

“You know if we can give that kind of support and advice to kids in underserved areas who don’t have books at home,” Yamaguchi said, “this is the program that will help them get on the right track.”

The Always Reading program is a partnership with Raising a Reader, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping families develop, practice and maintain literacy habits for children birth to age 8 that are critical for a child's success in school and in life.

Always Reading will provide e-books and tablets, as well as hard copy books and book bags for the schools' kindergarten students and their families to develop a reading habit at home to support literacy development in young children.

The program allows students to bring home a book bag filled with award-winning books each week. Books will be exchanged for new ones with more than 50 books rotated through the home during the year.

Always Reading also trains parents on engaging their children in reading, and connects families to local libraries to sustain the habit of borrowing and reading books after completion of the program.

Yamaguchi founded the Always Dream Foundation in 1996, which launched the early childhood literacy program in 2012. Always Reading now serves 17 schools and over 1,500 students in California, Arizona and Hawaii.

Yamaguchi herself is the author of two children's books.



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