‘Cat In The Hat’ Comes To The Community House

West Haven, CT (March 9, 2015) – About 50 volunteer readers delighted more than 160 pre-school children at the West Haven Community House on March 4 as part of the National Education Association’s (NEA) “Read Across America Day”. The national event, held in honor of Dr. Seuss’ birthday, promotes reading and adult involvement in the education of our community’s students.

Adding to the fun were special in-costume appearances from staff members including “Cat in the Hat” (Kelly Ruickoldt) and “Thing 1” and “Thing 2,” (Rosemary Baez and Amada Vallerie respectively), as well as Jean Vitale of the WH Family Resource Center who dressed up like “Mother Goose”.

Community House Executive Director Patty Stevens noted that agency board members, business leaders, residents and local officials including CT State Representative, Charles Ferrara were among those who took time out of their busy schedule to read to the preschoolers.

“For almost 75 years, the West Haven Community House has provided significant leadership in the education of our youth and is grounded in the principle that an investment in education is key to our community’s well-being and long-term quality of life”, said Stevens.

“We provide a comprehensive pre-school program to 163 children from low-income families as well as assist more than 300 working families by providing before and after school programs for elementary school-aged children in six schools in West Haven”, she continued.

All told, according to the National Education Association, more than 45 million students, parents and educators participated in the event that. Joining Rep. Ferrara who participated locally were Executive Assistant to the Mayor of West Haven, John Lewis; West Haven City Council 1st District Chairman, Nicholas Pascale; former Mayor of West Haven, John Picard; WTNH’s Kent Pierce, Jocelyn Maminta and Ryan Kristafer; Community House board members MaryJane Morrissey, Annette Knobloch, Heatherly Carlson, Bill Heffernan and Grace Hendricks.

In addition, other participants included Pam Lorenzo from Visiting Nurse Association, Jean Vitale of the WH Family Resource Center, Valen Grandelski and Comfort Agaba from Yale School of Medicine, Tami Jackson from The Literacy Center of Milford, Michelle Sullivan from TD Bank, Alan Olenick of the West Haven Voice, Kathleen Donroe from West Haven public schools, Mark Bisaccia and Rosa Richardson from Community Development Administration, as well as members of the community, Mark Knobloch, Trish Pearson, Sean Morrissey, Salvatore Menzo and Lauren Brownstein.

Meanwhile, West Haven Mayor Ed O’Brien in an official proclamation read by Lewis, urged all residents to read to children, noting that “the citizens of West Haven stand firmly committed to promoting reading as the catalyst for our students’ future academic success, their preparation for America’s jobs of the future, and their ability to compete in a global economy.”

Patty Stevens and Board Vice President Bill Heffernan III thanked all those who participated in a special reception afterward featuring Dr. Seuss-inspired decorations, made by Child Care staffers Carol James and Christine DelaCueva and food prepared by Head Start Family Services Manager Viola Waldo.