



MEDIA RELEASE

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Knox County Takes Top Spot as Best-Read Area in Tennessee

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.— Knox County takes the number one spot in Tennessee and ranks high as one of the country’s best-read cities (53 out of 200), according to an online education website, [Preply](#). Trailing Knoxville on the list are Chattanooga (74), Murfreesboro (103), Clarksville (143), Nashville (168), and Memphis (182).

“I’m not surprised to see our high placement on this list. We’ve been very intentional about creating a culture that values reading and literacy here in Knox County. We are partnering with the schools and organizations that serve children across the county. I’m very proud of the work we’ve done so far,” commented Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs.

Knox County has put a strong emphasis on reading through programs such as Mayor Jacobs’ Read City USA initiative which encourages everyone in the community to read and log their hours. The program, administered through the Public Library, is in its fourth year with millions of hours logged by thousands of readers.

This year, the theme for the Read City USA 2022 challenge is Oceans of Possibilities and is broken into three segments. The summer challenge, Dive-in Deep, asks participants to log 30 hours of reading by August 7 to earn prizes. So far, the community has logged more than 610,000 hours toward the million-hour goal. This May, 30,000 Knox County elementary students participated in *One Book Read City* by reading “The Chocolate Touch” by Patrick Skene Caitling. Each student received their own copy of the book to keep.

Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library of Knox County boasts one of the highest percentages of children registered to receive free books in the mail every month. The program mails out nearly 19,000 books each month for a total of 3.5 million books since 2005.

With literary events such as the Children’s Festival of Reading, author visits, and many active book clubs in the area, there’s little wonder that Knox County made the list. The Friends of the Library is an active organization that supports library programming and distributes books in the community. The Dream Center also distributes books to children in under resourced neighborhoods.

Knox County is also home to 55 Little Free Libraries that are officially registered through that program. Knox County Public Library counts 160,000 active card holders and circulates more than 2.5 million items a year.

More on Preply’s methodology in ranking cities

Preply ranked cities according to their reading habits by culling data from various websites including the US Census Bureau, Eventbrite.com, World Population Review “US Literacy Rates by State”, and others. They looked at 17 key indicators grouped into five categories. Knoxville scored highest on Reading Spots (76) followed by Education (58), Events, (55), Resources (46), Events (55).

The top 10 cities ranked by the website are Orange, Calif; Madison, Wis.; Torrance, Calif.; Salt Lake City, Utah; Pasadena, Calif.; Huntington Beach, Calif.; Scottsdale, Ariz.; Roseville, Calif.; Washington DC; and Naperville, Ill.

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