



# MEDIA RELEASE

OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR GLENN JACOBS

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## **Mayor Jacobs: One Million Hour Reading Goal Achieved**

*Top Readers to be celebrated at a Polar Express event on Wednesday, Dec. 21*

*Knoxville, Tenn.* -- December 15 marked the end of Mayor Glenn Jacobs's 2022 one million hour reading challenge through his Read City initiative. Together with the help of the Knox County Public Library, Knox County Schools, Knoxville Education Foundation and many other groups, more than 40,000 people read and logged for a combined 1.3 million hours.

To celebrate this year's achievement, Mayor Jacobs and Knoxville Dream Center have invited the top readers in first through third grades to join them on the Polar Express for Reader's Theater at 1:00 on December 21. The event will be held in the Barnes and Noble parking lot in Suburban Shopping Center (8029 Kingston Pike).

The 2022 Read City: Oceans of Possibilities Challenge was divided into four parts:

- Anchors Aweigh (January 11-April 30)
- One Book Read City (May 1-19)
- Dive In Deep (May 21-August 7)
- Sailing Home (September 1- December 15)

Participants logged as individuals or as part of a group and earned prizes for reaching reading goals. This year saw a 16% increase in participation through organized groups such as Emerald Youth Foundation, Big Brothers, Big Sisters and Shades of Development. Some of the biggest readers came from senior living facilities.

Mayor Jacobs started the Read City program with the Library in 2018 to encourage families to make reading a priority and to support Knox County Schools in raising the third-grade reading rate. Currently only about 40% of students test as proficient readers.

“I’m pleased to see the growth in our Read City program,” Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs said. “There are a lot of complex issues out there but learning to read is a relatively simple way to prevent a host of problems. The more we can encourage families to open a book and read together, the better able the schools are to teach our children. It takes all of us, and I’m excited about the progress we are making here.”

The 2023 Read City Challenge will be announced on January 24 at 4:00 in the Bijou Theatre.

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