



## Beyond Basics Welcomes New Board Chairperson and Board Members

### For immediate release

March 9, 2022 - Beyond Basics is thrilled to announce a new Board Chairperson and three new Board Members. Each leader will be serving the literacy nonprofit at an exciting time as the organization expands to serve more students in Southeast Michigan.

The organization will celebrate 20 years since incorporation during National Reading Month at its annual [Coming Together for Children](#) event on Friday, March 25, 2022, at the Detroit Athletic Club.

“The combined energy of these accomplished business professionals helps Beyond Basics change the narrative for students who cannot yet read, bringing literacy and better educational outcomes for those who need it most, in Detroit and around the state,” said Pamela Good, Beyond Basics’ cofounder and CEO. “Our work together ensures students go to school knowing how to read so that they can meaningfully access their education and participate in society.”

**Chairman Patrick A. Rugiero** is the Executive Director at Roman Village Restaurant Group. He has served on the Beyond Basics board since 2018. Deeply involved in several charitable organizations, Rugiero serves on other boards, including that of youth peer mentoring group Life Directions. Rugiero succeeds past Beyond Basics Chairman of the Board Jack Aronson, founder of Garden Fresh Gourmet, who passed away in 2021.

“Jack and I were connected by our shared love of philanthropy,” Rugiero said. “When he asked me to take up the mantle of Board Chairman for Beyond Basics, I felt I had to follow him in the position. I am compelled by the stories of the students we serve to take on this role for the board.”

**Board member Charles D. Bullock** is a founding member of the law firm Stevenson & Bullock, P.L.C. He has dedicated his 25+ year career to serving as a fiduciary and representing stakeholders in countless federal and state court proceedings. Chuck serves on the Board of Directors or Board of Trustees of several organizations, including The Pewabic Society, Inc. (Pewabic Pottery), The Children’s Foundation f/k/a Children’s Hospital of Michigan Foundation, Oakland County Bar Foundation, First Tee of Greater Detroit, Life Directions, and the Detroit Opera. He is the proud father of three wonderful children.

“I am excited to help advance the mission of Beyond Basics to eradicate illiteracy, transforming the lives of students and creating stronger communities,” Bullock said. “Filling the ‘literacy gap’ is an achievable goal that, I am confident, Beyond Basics is well positioned to meet.”

**Board member Selam Sanders** is the co-founder and President of SG Real Estate. Sanders began her real estate career in 1997 with the initial purchase of a small two-family flat on the City of Detroit’s West Side. The Sanders Group was established in 2000. Since then, Sanders has bought, renovated, sold, and managed over 4.5 million square feet of residential and commercial office space and currently owns

and/or has acquired and managed over \$200 million in multifamily apartments. Sanders earned a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering w/honors from Michigan State University. She resides in Southeast Michigan with her husband, Derron, and their children.

“I believe that literacy is a basic right,” Sanders said. “Our children deserve to have every opportunity for success, despite their circumstances, and it all begins with literacy. Literacy is the building block from which all learning stems.”

**Board member David Van Elslander** serves on the Board of Directors for the A.A. Van Elslander Foundation, carrying forward the philanthropic legacy of his father, Art Van Elslander. Van Elslander learned the value of hard work by helping in his father’s business, Art Van Furniture, after school and on weekends since the age of nine. Van Elslander built his career in key roles with the company, leading teams in sales, merchandising, distribution, and customer service, and was President of Art Van Pure Sleep when the company was sold in 2017.

Van Elslander is also a member of the Board of Directors of Mi BANK and has served on the board of the Helen DeVos Children’s Hospital. Van Elslander and his wife, Sue, are the proud parents of four adult children and reside in Grosse Pointe Park, Mich.

“By attacking the literacy problem at a grass-roots level, Beyond Basics is helping to change the trajectory of life for so many, providing assistance to help close the literacy gap. Regardless of what path a young person wants to pursue, almost nothing is possible without literacy,” David Van Elslander said.

*Founded in 2002, [Beyond Basics](#) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit working to eradicate illiteracy, transforming the lives of students and creating stronger communities. Our one-on-one, multisensory tutoring program helps students achieve grade-level proficiency in reading in an average of six weeks. In addition to our structured literacy interventions, we cultivate curiosity and encourage a love of lifelong learning with fine arts activities that expand horizons.*