



## Media Advisory

# Beyond Basics celebrates National Reading Month at March 25 annual event

## Nonprofit introduces the Jack Aronson Radiating Character Award and presents annual honors

DETROIT, March 22, 2022 – Beyond Basics is thrilled to celebrate National Reading Month at its Coming Together for Children Annual Event on Friday, March 25. The celebration marks 20 years as a nonprofit working to achieve literacy for everyone.

“When I think back to our origins, I am amazed at the distance we have traveled. Thanks to the generous support of our partners, our proven solution moves students who are reading below grade level onto a path towards success,” said Pamela Good, cofounder and CEO of Beyond Basics. “Intensive one-on-one tutoring is the best way to narrow the literacy gap for students, and literacy investments are the pathway to a bright future.”

The event honors Literacy Chair Award Recipient Kathleen McCann; “Whatever It Takes” Award Recipient The Webber Foundation, Wayne and Joan Webber; and will announce The Jack Aronson Radiating Character Award, honoring the memory of the past Beyond Basics board chairman who passed away in 2021. The award is given to a student who demonstrates outstanding character.

Kevin Dietz, WJR Radio Host, will emcee the event. Alumni speakers Jacob Durrah and Damari Covington-Woods will also be featured speaking about the impact the program made on them. “Beyond Basics gave me the confidence to finish high school,” said Covington-Woods, a 2019 Southeastern High School graduate.

**Date:** Friday, March 25, 2022

**Time:** 5:30 p.m. cocktail hour followed by dinner and program

**Location:** Detroit Athletic Club, 241 Madison Street, Detroit

**Tickets:** <https://www.beyondbasics.org/annualevent2022>

### Honorees

#### Literacy Chair Award Recipient Kathleen McCann

McCann has been a literacy advocate for more than a decade, forging partnerships in the communities we serve. She is an Executive Partner with Nonantum Capital Partners, a private equity firm focused on the middle market. She is past CEO and current Executive Chairman of United Road Services, a leader in vehicle transport logistics. She's passionate about community, nonprofit, and Catholic organizations and currently provides leadership support to the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, AOD Catholic Schools Council, Acts XXIX and the Catholic Foundation of Michigan, among others. She was inducted into the Michigan Business Hall of Fame in 2020.

**“Whatever It Takes” Award Recipient – The Wayne and Joan Webber Foundation**

Wayne and Joan Webber were among Beyond Basics' earliest supporters. They understood the urgency of the issue of illiteracy and predicted the day that Beyond Basics' work would be a “beacon of light” for the nation. Through the establishment of the Wayne and Joan Webber Foundation, they support Henry Ford Macomb Hospital, the Munson Medical Center, McLaren Macomb, and the Webber Cancer Center. They also support Gleaners, Capuchin Soup Kitchen, Forgotten Harvest and the Salvation Army. The DIA's Education Wing is named for the couple.

**The Jack Aronson Radiating Character Award** – given to a student demonstrating outstanding character Jack Aronson, founder of Garden Fresh Gourmet and president of Great Fresh Foods, joined the Beyond Basics Board of Directors in 2015 and served as Chairman from 2016 to 2020. Jack and his wife Annette also supported Beyond Basics through their Artichoke Garlic Foundation. Jack loved with a big heart to meet the needs of the community and felt a particular moral obligation to get high school students reading to set them off on the right path. Known as the “salsa king” for his popular Garden Fresh Salsa, Beyond Basics CEO Pamela Good joked with Aronson that he was “still in the food business – only now feeding minds.”

The first recipient, Dajuan Grandberry, was born and raised in Detroit. Except for one year in South Carolina, he has lived his entire life here. He is currently a junior at Central High School. Dajuan is passionate about football, and has always dreamed of playing in the NFL. During the school season, he plays both running back and linebacker for the Central Trailblazers. In the off-season, he works with Sound Mind, Sound Body Sports Academy. Dajuan appreciates the great bond formed between Beyond Basics tutors and students. “You can talk to them in sessions. They really care for you and make sure you are ok in the morning.” Dajuan is preparing for multiple college visits this spring. Outside of school he enjoys working out and spending time with his family.

**About Beyond Basics**

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 movement in reading in an average of six weeks. In addition to its structured literacy interventions, Beyond Basics cultivates curiosity and encourage a love of lifelong learning with fine arts activities that expand horizons.

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