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**Virginia Bankers Association Education Foundation and Banks Across Virginia Contribute
More Than \$100,000 for Virginia Reads One Book**

Glen Allen, VA — The Virginia Bankers Association Education Foundation (VBA) has contributed \$20,000 as a sponsor of Virginia Reads One Book, a statewide program that will support more than 60,000 public school students and their families from across Virginia as they read the same book on the same schedule starting Friday, March 1. The VBA is one of several sponsors of this initiative, a program from Richmond-based Read to Them, and other sponsors include the Washington Redskins Charitable Foundation, Virginia Council on Economic Education and Tackle Reading.

The VBA's contribution will directly support the participation of 14 elementary schools and more than 6,000 students and staff across the Commonwealth.

In addition to the contribution by the VBA, 12 Virginia banks made a total of more than \$80,000 in contributions to the program at local schools. These banks' contributions supported the participation of more than 22,000 students and staff:

- Bank of Botetourt
- Burke & Herbert Bank
- Chesapeake Bank
- The Farmers Bank of Appomattox
- The Fauquier Bank
- First National Bank
- Fulton Bank
- Powell Valley National Bank
- SunTrust
- Skyline National Bank
- TowneBank
- Wells Fargo

“At kick-off events in each school, students will receive their own copies of *Cleo Edison Oliver: Playground Millionaire* to take home and read with their families,” says Read to Them Program Director Cathy Plageman. “Students will follow along as a mystery reader from the Washington Redskins, through a partnership with the Washington Redskins Charitable Foundation, reads the first chapter aloud on an exclusive video cast. For the next three weeks, students and their families read a chapter each night at home, coordinating with classroom and school-wide activities.”

“*Cleo Edison Oliver* is a chapter book featuring a sassy, confident, independent, enterprising girl who is ready to take on the world. Cleo is an African-American elementary school girl who is focused on business, whether it’s selling avocados, homemade dogfood or concocting a money-making scheme to pull loose teeth. Her story takes place on the playground — and along the way she discovers basic financial principles. We expect the students will have a lot of fun reading about Cleo,” says Plageman. “In fact, we hope it may even inspire some students to become budding entrepreneurs themselves!”

“The program not only boosts students’ reading abilities, but it shows them reading is fun in an atmosphere that strengthens family and community interactions,” says Plageman. “With the support of the VBA and banks across Virginia, the schools receive a book for every student and complimentary staff copies, both family literacy and financial literacy activities, school assembly suggestions, teacher resources, and both family and community engagement tools. These resources turn a book into a community experience so everyone can enjoy and share the story.”

Virginia Bankers Association President & CEO Bruce Whitehurst stated, “the VBA is thrilled to sponsor Virginia Reads One Book for the second year. This program builds on other financial literacy efforts that banks participate with in their communities, including Teach Children to Save, Get Smart About Credit and the VBA Bank Day Scholarship Program. We were drawn by not only the financial literacy focus of the book, but also the idea of bringing families together through this program.”

Virginia schools and school systems supported by the VBA:

- Cumberland County Elementary School, Cumberland County
- Greenfield Elementary School, Botetourt County
- Lawson-Marriott Elementary School, King & Queen County
- King & Queen Elementary School, King & Queen County
- Highland View Elementary School, Bristol City
- McAuliffe Elementary School, Prince William County
- Cashell Donahoe Elementary School, Henrico County
- Brosville Elementary School, Pittsylvania County
- Cool Spring Primary School, King William County
- Boyce Elementary School, Clarke County
- Thurgood Marshall Elementary School, Chesapeake City
- Troutville Elementary School, Botetourt County
- Appomattox Elementary School, Appomattox County
- Belle Heth Elementary School, Radford City

For specific press opportunities, please email mmcdearmon@vabankers.org. For the current list of all participating schools in your area, please email cathy.plageman@readtothem.org.

About Virginia Bankers Association Education Foundation

The Virginia Bankers Association (VBA) formed the VBA Education Foundation in 2007 with funding from the majority of VBA member banks. The Foundation’s mission is to improve personal financial literacy and economic education in all public and private schools in the Commonwealth. The Foundation recognizes the importance of economic education and financial literacy in Virginia and supports the banking industry as a key participant in these areas. For more information, visit www.vabankers.org/vba-education-foundation.

About Read to Them

Read to Them is a Richmond based non-profit promoting family literacy. A growing body of research shows that children who are read to learn to read more easily and become better readers. Literacy skills provide the basis for a lifetime of learning and productivity. For more information, visit www.readtothem.org.

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